

Ballymoney Borough Council
Corporate & Central Services Meeting No 384 – 22nd March 2010

Table of Contents

384.1	Minutes Meeting No 383 – 22 nd February 2010	<i>Approved</i>
 CORPORATE SERVICES		
384.2	Conference Policy	<i>Allocate total budget of £3,000 to CRCS committee and delegate committee power</i>
384.3	Community Safety & DPP – Joint Working	<i>Deferred</i>
384.4	Staff Matters 4.1 Payment of Honorarium 4.2 Career Break	<i>Grant honorarium of £1,573 to employee no. 05147 Extend career break & contracts of employee ref 05147 and 05158 for a further year to 6th July 2011</i>
384.5	Robert Dunlop Memorial Garden	<i>Recommend that Mayor unveil plaque on Saturday 8th May 2010</i>
384.6	Contribution – North Antrim Agricultural Association	<i>£1,200</i>
384.7	Somme Association	<i>Renew subscription of £370</i>
384.8	Publication of Members Allowances, Expenses and Attendance	<i>Circulated</i>
384.9	Audit Fees	<i>Tabled</i>
 CENTRAL SERVICES		
384.10	Accounts for Payment	<i>Grant £565,424.37 for period 11</i>

**BALLYMONEY BOROUGH COUNCIL
CORPORATE & CENTRAL SERVICES COMMITTEE**

Minutes of Corporate & Central Services Committee Meeting No. 384 held in the McKinley Room, Riada House, Ballymoney on Monday 22nd March 2010 at 7.00pm.

IN THE CHAIR Alderman J Simpson

PRESENT

Aldermen
F Campbell
C Cousley, MBE, Deputy Mayor
H Connolly

Councillors
A Cavlan
J Finlay
R T Halliday
I Stevenson
M McCamphill

IN ATTENDANCE Chief Executive [Items 1-9]
Head of Corporate and Development Services [Items 1-9]
Director of Central and Leisure Services [Item 10]
Committee Clerk

APOLOGIES Councillor E Robinson
Councillor M Storey, MLA

384.1 MINUTES OF MEETING NO 383 – 22ND FEBRUARY 2010

It was proposed by Alderman Cousley, seconded by Councillor Stevenson and
AGREED:

that the minutes of meeting no 383 – 22nd February 2009, as circulated, be confirmed as a correct record.

CORPORATE SERVICES

384.2 CONFERENCE POLICY

Arising from Council's decision to reduce members conference budget in 2010-2011 options for revision of existing policy, have been identified by the Chief Executive, as follows, and are presented for members consideration.

Options for revised procedures for appointing members to attend conferences

The current procedure where members are allocated an individual budget each year for attending conferences and choose these from an approved list was introduced several years ago and has worked fairly well, drawing no complaints from members or adverse comments from the LG Auditor. Over recent years the total budget for conference attendance has fallen considerably and with the latest reduction to £3000 for 2010/11 council asked that an alternative procedure be proposed. Some options are set out below:

Option 1 Do nothing – retain current system. Divide up budget (£3000) at £187.50 per member and continue as now, where members select conferences from list.

In favour of this option there is equal access for all members to attend conferences and smaller parties/independents are not reliant on council approval. The arrangement also allows for last-minute decisions on attendance at a conference, as committee/council decision is not required.

Against this option the budget per member is unlikely to allow for attendance at any conferences outside the island of Ireland or even many within it, especially if an overnight stay is involved. The ability to use other members' allowances gives limited flexibility with small budgets. It could become complicated to administer if multiple transfers of budgets between members are used to overcome the budget limitations.

Option 2 Divide the budget among parties in accordance with party strengths; parties decide which conferences are attended and who goes. Other aspects of the current procedure stay as at present.

In favour of this option it will provide some more flexibility than option 1, but only for the larger parties. It also retains the other advantages of option 1.

Against this option, there is little or no benefit for the smaller parties and the independent member. For them the ability to use other members' allowances gives limited flexibility with small budgets. It could become complicated to administer if multiple transfers of budgets between members are used to overcome the budget limitations.

Option 3 Divide the budget over the four standing committees (£750 each); delegate to each committee power to decide the conferences to attend and the number and names of the delegates.

In favour of this option is the fact that committees can prioritise the conferences to be attended, so there could be better targeting of scarce resources.

Against this option it may be difficult to control expenditure as four committees will draw on one budget. Also it is likely that some members will be excluded from attending conferences, although it should be noted that some choose not to go to any under the current system.

Option 4 Allocate the total budget of £3000 to Corporate & Central Services committee and delegate to the committee power to decide the conferences to attend, and the number and names of the delegates.

In favour of this option is the fact that control of expenditure is simplified as one body makes decisions on spending the budget.

Against this option is the problem that as all councillors are not members of CRCS committee, some are excluded from the decision. As with option 2 it is likely that some members will be excluded from attending conferences, although it should be noted that some choose not to go to any under the current system.

- * **Councillor Stevenson left the meeting at 7.05pm and returned at 7.06pm.**
- * **Councillor Halliday arrived at the meeting at 7.09pm.**

Option 5 Allocate the total budget of £3000 to Corporate & Central Services Committee and delegate to the committee power to decide the conferences to attend and how many delegates to send. Leave the decision on which councillors are to be the delegates to Council.

In favour of this option are the facts that control of expenditure is simplified as one body makes decisions on spending the budget and all members have an input into choosing the delegates.

Against this option it is likely that some members will be excluded from attending conferences, although it should be noted that some choose not to go to any under the current system.

With a much-reduced budget the current procedures will struggle to cope with managing the budget and multiple transfers to budgets among members will be needed to permit attendance at conferences outside Ireland. Some change is indicated and of the options presented, numbers 2 or 5 seem to offer the best prospects for ready control of the budget and input by all councillors into the process. As with many decisions in council it may not be possible to reach consensus on every conference decision, but option 5 ensures that all councillors have equal input into choosing which members are delegated to attend conferences.

If any one of options 3-5 is chosen, it is also necessary to introduce an arrangement whereby members apply to attend and the requests are considered. It is assumed that there should be the same opportunity to attend conferences occurring in the last quarter of the year as in the first, so some measure to ration the budget is required. It is suggested that this could be achieved by quarterly decisions on conferences for the following three months, with the budget being split into equal quarters (£750). Any unexpended portion would be carried forward to later quarters in the year (but not beyond year end).

Additional flexibility could be provided if there was a provision in any quarter to exceed the budget of £750 by up to, say, a further £250, with the budget shortfall being recouped by reducing the allocations to succeeding quarters. Obviously this would not apply to the final quarter in the year. Alternatively, members may feel that it is sufficient to have two calls in the year and split the budget into equal halves, with or without some provision to borrow from the second half, if the first half year budget is oversubscribed.

It is recommended that for conferences occurring after 1 April 2010, the committee makes a recommendation to council of a revised procedure for conference attendance and the current arrangements for conference attendance are terminated.

A discussion ensued among members.

It was proposed by Councillor Stevenson, seconded by Councillor Cavlan and **AGREED:**

to recommend that Council adopt Option 4: allocate the total budget of £3000 to Corporate & Central Services committee and delegate to the committee power to decide the conferences to attend, and the number and names of the delegates; based on members making applications to the OCE and the budget being managed and monitored in 2 x 6 monthly tranches.

It was noted that it was Council policy for members to report on conference attendance.

384.3 COMMUNITY SAFETY & DPP – JOINT WORKING

Proposals for removing structural barriers to joint working between the District Policing Partnership (DPP) and the Community Safety Partnership (CSP).

A report on the review of DPPs and CSPs, carried out recently by the NIO, was tabled at the February meeting of committee and noted. As promised, consideration has since been given to how the practical barriers to closer working between the DPP and the CSP can be removed, as a step towards the eventual integration into one partnership after local government reorganisation.

The common structural issues within councils which may be inhibiting effective joint working were identified in the survey and the workshops held by NIO as “different line management structures, separate administrative support, split accommodation and functions sitting in different council departments”; all of these are present in the arrangements in Ballymoney.

Despite these barriers it is the case that the two partnerships enjoy good co-operation and sharing of information and have worked together on common projects. The point being made by the NIO is that structural barriers inhibit closer working to some degree, whereas closer integration of the staff directly involved would encourage it to happen even more.

The CSP is fully funded by NIO while the DPP receives 75% funding for most of its activities from the NI Policing Board. Both agencies now support the closer integration of the two local partnerships in each council and some councils have taken steps towards amalgamation in advance of reorganisation, where local circumstances gave that opportunity. That is not being proposed in the case of Ballymoney but the recommended option will address the four identified barriers.

The current working arrangements are that the DPP Manager (DPPM) reports to the Head of Corporate and Development Services (HCDS) in the Office of the Chief Executive (OCE) and the Community Safety Manager (CSM) reports to the Deputy Director Borough Services (DDBS), who also chairs the CSP. Administrative support for both partnerships is provided by the parent department, so involves a range of different staff who have limited interaction at work through separation within departmental structures. The CSM works in an open plan office within Borough Services Directorate (BSD) while the DPPM has a small office off the corridor leading to the Dalriada Room. Hence there is little opportunity in the course of normal daily activity for contact with the CSM.

To address these issues there are two main options, given that the status quo can be ruled out on the basis that it does not address any of the four. Those options are to move either the DPPM or the CSM so that both partnerships have a common management structure within the same department.

Option 1 is to move the CSM to OCE, reporting to HCDS. This achieves the common management goal and there is existing experience within OCE of managing the DPP function. It has the disadvantage of severing the link between CSP and BSD which remains as relevant now as when the choice was made to site the service within that directorate. There are important linkages between Community Safety and various enforcement activities within BSD, including dog control, noise pollution and drinking in public places and this affinity has led to the development of innovative and effective CSP initiatives which have had national recognition. This move would also break the day to day link between the chair of the CSP and the CSM. Another practical difficulty is that there is limited space available in OCE to accommodate another officer. Finally there is a problem in separating out the administrative support for CSP and transferring it with the function to OCE, as the working arrangements in BSD are

such that clerical support is provided as required from a pool of staff, rather than by one main officer as is the case with the DPP.

Option 2 is to move the DPPM to BSD. This achieves the common management goal and retains the link between CSP and BDS, as well between the CSM and the chair of the CSP. The open plan office arrangement in BSD can accommodate the DPPM, facilitating closer working between the two services. Arrangement can readily be made to transfer part of an administration resource, currently shared between BSD and OCE, to BSD to provide the extra capacity to support the DPP.

Option 2 is clearly the arrangement which best meets the needs of NIO and NIPB in removing the barriers to closer working between the two partnerships, while also securing the best integration with other council services.

It is therefore **recommended** that the committee endorses option 2 i.e. move the District Policing Partnership Manager to Borough Services Directorate reporting to the Deputy Director of Borough Services, and commends it to council for implementation subject to consultation with affected staff.

A discussion ensued among members on the anticipated merits and demerits of the recommendation.

In response to a query from Councillor Finlay, Chief Executive advised members that he did not envisage any additional cost to Council in approving the recommendation would but it would in fact produce savings for Council's throughout Northern Ireland.

It was proposed by Councillor Stevenson, seconded by Councillor Finlay and **AGREED:**

to recommend that Council defer the item to the next committee meeting.

* **Councillor McCamphill left and meeting at 7.25pm and returned at 7.26pm during consideration of the above matter.**

384.4 STAFF MATTERS

4.1 Payment of Honorarium

Since the resignation of the Tourism Coordinator, the part-time Clerical Officer/Receptionist - Employee reference no. 05147 has been undertaking 35% of the duties of the vacant post from 1st June 2009 to 31st March 2010.

It is recommended that an honorarium of £1,573 is paid to Employee reference no. 05147 in accordance with NJC conditions.

The cost will be met from the service budget in 2009/10.

It was proposed by Councillor Cavlan, seconded by Councillor Stevenson and **AGREED:**

to recommend that Council grant Employee reference No. 05147 an honorarium of £1,573 in accordance with NJC conditions, the cost of which to be met from the service budget 2009/10.

4.2 Career Break

The part-time Clerical Officer/Receptionist – Employee reference no. 05043 who has been on a career break for 2 years has applied to have this extended for a further year to 6th July 2011 – the maximum allowed under council's policy.

It is recommended that the request be approved and that the contracts of the part-time Clerical Officer/Receptionist - Employee reference no. 05147 and the Temporary part-time Clerical Officer/Receptionist - Employee reference no. 05158 be extended for a further year to 6th July 2011.

It was proposed by Councillor Finlay, seconded by Councillor Cavlan and **AGREED:**

to recommend that Council approve the extension of contracts of employee reference No. 05147 and 05158 for a further year to 6th July 2011.

384.5 ROBERT DUNLOP MEMORIAL GARDEN.

Giving members an update on the project, the Head of Corporate and Development Services advised that contract work is progressing well on the creation of the memorial garden and is on schedule for completion in advance of NW200. She sought members advice on the Robert Dunlop Memorial Garden opening of the garden.

It was proposed by Councillor Finlay, seconded by Alderman Connolly and **AGREED:**

to recommend that Council invite the Mayor to officially open the Robert Dunlop Memorial Garden on Saturday 8th May 2010.

* **Alderman Cousley left the meeting at 7.59pm.**

384.6 CONTRIBUTION – NORTH ANTRIM AGRICULTURAL ASSOCIATION

The Association has made application for a contribution towards the annual show on 5th June. Each year the show attracts a large turnout of visitors from across the Province for its varied programme of events and exhibits.

The launch of the 2009 show will take place in Ballymoney Rugby Club on 19th April at 7.30 pm and members are invited to register their interest in attending with the Office of the Chief Executive.

It is **recommended** that Council contribute £1,200 in respect of the running costs of the show and sponsorship, as provided for in the budget.

It was proposed by Alderman Campbell, seconded by Councillor Halliday and **AGREED:**

to recommend that Council contribute £1,200 in respect of the running costs of the North Antrim Agricultural Association Show on 5th June and Sponsorship of the 'Champion and Reserve in Horse and Pony Classes', as provided for in the budget.

384.7 SOMME ASSOCIATION

The Association has made application for renewal of annual subscription of £370 plus VAT. It is **recommended** that the subscription be renewed, as provided for in the budget.

It was proposed by Councillor Stevenson, seconded by Alderman Campbell and **AGREED:**

to recommend that Council renew the annual subscription of the Somme Association in the sum of £370, as provided for in the budget.

384.8 PUBLICATION OF MEMBERS ALLOWANCES, EXPENSES AND ATTENDANCE

The information published annually on members' allowances is the information returned to DOE, the format of which has been revised by the Department from time to time. Arising from comments at the last meeting the information published has been revised to also include possible and actual attendance at meetings (circulated).

384.9 AUDIT FEES

Council is required to pay to the Comptroller & Auditor General such audit fees as the Department of Environment may determine. For the year 2008-09 accounts the audit fee was estimated at £17,000 and the actual bill, now

received, is £24,605. The reason for the increase is that more time was necessary due to a range of considerations, including accounting treatment following revaluation of assets, increased work associated with management letters, tendering for major works, additional verification as a consequence of proforma set of accounts provided by DOE, issues relative to landfill provisions. Members are asked to note that in the light of this the estimate for 2010/11 may be understated. The Chief Local Government Auditor has also pointed out that the year ahead will be a challenging one for both audited bodies and auditors with IFRS shadow accounts to be prepared and reviewed and 14 new Joint Committees dealing with Peace III and Rural Development.

- * **Chief Executive left the meeting at 8.07pm.**
- * **Head of Corporate and Development Services left the meeting at 8.07pm.**
- * **Director of Central and Leisure Services arrived at the meeting at 8.10pm.**

CENTRAL SERVICES

384.10 ACCOUNTS FOR PAYMENT

Treasury advise schedules detailing payments for period 12 (1) 2009/10 drawn on the Council's Revenue and Capital Bank Accounts were circulated at the meeting.

It is recommended that the payments are made.

It was proposed by Alderman Connolly, seconded by Councillor Finlay and **AGREED:**

to recommend that accounts to the value of £565,424.37 from the Revenue Account for period 12 (1) - 2009/2010 be approved for payment.

This being all the business the meeting closed at 8.29p