

BALLYMONEY BOROUGH COUNCIL**Table of Contents**

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399.6 Civic engagement – Volunteering *Show support by adopting statement.*

399.7 Electoral Registration *Advice.*

399.8 Election Costs *£41,000.*

399.9 Request to reprint advertisement within 1937 Ballymoney Official Guide *Grant with condition.*

399.10 Records Management (398.8, 397.9) *Update.*

CENTRAL SERVICES

399.11 Accounts For Payment *£704,199.23 from Revenue Account and £434,639.31 from Capital Account be approved.*

399.12 Accounts for Payment in December 2011 *Authority granted to DCLS to approve payments for Period 9.*

399.13 Land & Property Services (LPS) Meeting with Council *Invite Representatives to December or January*

		<i>meeting.</i>
399.14	Annual Accounts 2010/11	<i>Information.</i>
399.15	District Councillors Allowances and Multiple Mandates – Consultation Document	<i>Submit response as detailed in minute.</i>
399.16	Draft Guidance on Councillors Allowances Consultation Document	<i>Defer to December meeting and grant Council powers to committee for this item.</i>
399.17	Budgets 2012/13	<i>Information presented.</i>

BALLYMONEY BOROUGH COUNCIL

Minutes of Corporate & Central Services Committee Meeting No 399 held in the McKinley Room, Riada House, on Monday 28th November 2011 at 7.00pm.

IN THE CHAIR: Alderman C Cousley, MBE

PRESENT: **Aldermen**
F Campbell

Councillors
J Atkinson
W Blair
J Finlay
R Halliday
R McAfee
T McKeown
C McLaughlin
E Robinson
I Stevenson

IN ATTENDANCE: Chief Executive [Items 1-10]
Director of Central & Leisure Services [Items 11-17]
Head of Corporate and Development Services [Items 1-10]
Committee Clerk

APOLOGIES: Alderman B Kennedy
Councillor A Cavlan
Councillor P McGuigan

399.1 MINUTES MEETING NO 398 – 24TH OCTOBER 2011

It was proposed by Councillor McLaughlin, seconded by Councillor Halliday and
AGREED:

to recommend that the minutes of CRCS Meeting No 398 – 24th October 2011, as circulated, be approved.

CORPORATE SERVICES

Chief Executive gave notice of additional items:

- Letter from Age NI regarding gritting of footways.
- Publication of Council document request.
- Retention and Disposal Schedule.

399.2 BUDGET 2012/13

The first draft of estimated budget amendments within Corporate Services Unit was circulated. Chief Executive gave further information in response to questions.

*

Councillor McKeown arrived at the meeting at 7.06pm during consideration of the above matter.

399.3 ARRANGEMENTS FOR CLEARANCE OF SNOW AND ICE**(a) Correspondence: Age NI Consultative Forum**

Correspondence has been received from Age NI Consultative Forum expressing their grave concern over the issue of the gritting of snow and ice on footways and the resulting impact this has on isolating the elderly. Chief Executive has responded to the letter advising of Councils position and its representations and those of NILGA to DRD and suggesting the forum also make their concerns known to DRD Minister.

(b) Snow & ice on footways – emergency response by Council

At the Corporate & Central Services meeting 398 on 24th October 2011 it was proposed by Alderman Kennedy, seconded by Councillor McGuigan and **AGREED**:

to recommend that Council do not sign up to the partnership arrangements with Roads Service but that the Chief Executive explore options as to what could be done in an emergency situation based on arrangements operated last year in town centre including flexibility available for provision of salt supplies to village centres.

The DRD Section Engineer has agreed that even if Council does not sign up to the partnership arrangements, salt and grit as appropriate to the conditions and the method of application will be made available for Council to collect from the Ballymoney DRD depot for application by council to agreed footways in Ballymoney town.

Based on the area cleared by council employees last year to deal with the emergency situation where footways were made treacherous due to compacted snow lying for a prolonged period before Christmas, a draft schedule of footways to be treated if a similar situation occurs this year has been prepared and agreed in principle with Roads Service, subject to approval by Council.

The principle applied for choosing the footways to be treated is that they are in the commercial core of Ballymoney town; or they link the commercial core to main bus and train stops or town centre car parks; or they front council facilities in the town centre. This schedule of footways will be treated where Roads Service requests council to act in an emergency due to prolonged

periods of wintry weather and council agrees to do so within available resources and normal working hours of the council staff redeployed to the task.

Roads Service has indicated that it will not supply salt to community groups. As stated above it will supply it to council where council requires it to treat agreed footways; it is not willing to supply it to council for delivery to other parts of Ballymoney town or to villages.

IT IS RECOMMENDED that committee agrees to recommend to council that, when requested by DRD Roads Service in an emergency due to prolonged periods of wintry weather, staff who are deemed available by council management are redeployed to treat with salt or grit supplied by DRD, the list of footways set out in the schedule and in the drawing circulated at the committee meeting on 28 November 2011.

Schedule to Ballymoney Town footways for winter emergency clearance
High St to Riada House and Town Hall frontages
Townhead St to car park entrance and Town Hall frontage
Charlotte St to Pork Store
Main St including pedestrian links to both car parks
Castle St - frontage of Memorial Gardens
Seymour St – North side to station and Memorial Garden frontage
Meetinghouse St – at signal controlled crossing, including steps to car park
Church St to No 41
Victoria St
Cameron Place
Linenhall St
Market Street – at signal controlled crossing
Charles St to bus stops

In a wide ranging discussion members fully understood the quandary of the situation, however, reiterated the plight of smaller Councils in terms of budget and manpower, the difficulty with categorising streets which were proposing to be treated, the expense to ratepayers, the legalities surrounding indemnities and that it was a Roads Service issue.

* **Councillor Stevenson arrived at the meeting at 8.07pm during consideration of the above matter.**

It was proposed by Councillor Finlay, seconded by Councillor McKeown:

to recommend that Council, when requested by DRD Roads Service in an emergency due to prolonged periods of wintry weather, staff who are deemed available by council management are redeployed to treat with salt or grit supplied by DRD, the list of footways set out in the schedule and in the drawing circulated at the committee meeting on 28 November 2011.

Chair put the proposal to committee, Councillor Finlay requested a recorded vote, 4 members voted for the proposal, 6 voted against and 1 abstained.

For (4)	Against (6)	Abstain (1)
Councillor Blair	Alderman Campbell	Alderman Cousley, MBE
Councillor Finlay	Councillor Atkinson	
Councillor McAfee	Councillor Halliday	
Councillor McKeown	Councillor McLaughlin	
	Councillor Robinson	
	Councillor Stevenson	

Chair declared the motion lost.

* **Councillor McKeown left the meeting at 8.21pm.**

399.4 STRIKE OVER PENSIONS AND PAY, 30TH NOVEMBER 2011

While the final details of changes to pensions are not yet clear for employees in Northern Ireland's Councils, the trades unions have balloted their members over strike and other action to protest the changes announced to date and the effect of the two-year pay freeze. All of the trades unions with members employed by Ballymoney BC have given notice of the ballots held and the common theme is that, in each case, a majority of those voting supports the action.

Due to the significant numbers of employees who are not members of trades unions and the response rate to the ballots, it is unclear what the effect will be for services in Ballymoney BC. Members should be aware that there may be some disruption if large numbers of staff join the call to strike on 30 November 2011. Managers will try to ensure the minimum disruption to essential services, by redeploying staff where appropriate.

If it is necessary to prioritise, every effort will be made to ensure that funerals, weddings, essential health & safety functions and refuse collections proceed as normal. On the morning of 30 November, Council's website www.ballymoney.gov.uk will have information about services affected.

399.5 COUNCILLOR TRAINING

CIPFA has designed a programme of training for elected members and senior executives on the new Finance Act and the Prudential Code "Training on the key issues of the 2011 Local Government Finance Act"

This training course aims to explain the fundamentals of the new Local Government Finance Act and the associated CIPFA Prudential Code. From this session members and senior officers will gain an understanding of:

- * The implications and opportunities that the Act presents
- * How the Prudential Code changes Councillors' responsibilities for the financial management of their authority
- * New governance requirements

* Good practice arrangements in implementing the code

Regarding prices, you probably know that our full one-day training price is £1,500 and £950 for a half-day. However, for the local government sector and for volume of 15 or more councils, the cost of this course would be £600 for a two hour session but if you preferred a longer £750 for a half-day session.

This is a very important subject and it is recommended that Council in collaboration with other councils offer members the opportunity to take up this training.

Expressions of interest are invited.

Expressions of interest were received from Alderman Campbell, Councillor Atkinson, Councillor McAfee, Councillor Robinson and Councillor Stevenson.

399.6 CIVIC ENGAGEMENT – VOLUNTEERING

As part of the celebration of the EU Year of Volunteering, Volunteer Now is inviting Council's to endorse the role of volunteers in community life and has developed a statement to enable Councils to underline and support the important role volunteers play in developing and sustaining local communities.

To underline the role of volunteers in the community development process, Volunteer Now has recently produced a paper as part of the process of producing a community development framework.

IT IS RECOMMENDED that Council shows its support by adopting the following statement, thus providing a real legacy for the year in building local support for volunteering in the future.

“That Ballymoney Borough Council values the positive contribution made by volunteers to creating a vibrant community life and recognises that such civic engagement empowers individuals and develops communities.”

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

to recommend that Council show its support by adopting the statement as outlined at CRCS 399.8, thus providing a real legacy for the year in building local support for volunteering in the future.

399.7 ELECTORAL REGISTRATION

Council made representations about the electoral registration process and its request to re-introduce door-to-door canvassing and enforcement of the requirement to provide information for inclusion in the register.

The Chief Electoral Officer has responded as follows:

The requirement for an annual canvass was abolished by virtue of Part 1 of the Northern Ireland (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 2006 (hereafter referred to as 'the 2006 Act'). This provision requires that a canvass must be conducted in such years as are determined in accordance with section 10ZA of the Representation of the People Act 1983. Paragraph (2)(a) of section 10ZA states that a canvass must be conducted if '...on or before 15th April, the Chief Electoral Officer for Northern Ireland has made a recommendation in favour of a canvass being conducted in that year for the purpose of meeting the relevant registration objectives, and (b)...the Secretary of State...is satisfied that the public interest requires a canvass to be conducted'.

Experience has shown that a canvass can have a detrimental impact on the comprehensiveness of the register: it is not unreasonable to assume that following a canvass the size of the register could be reduced by 15%-20% due to the number of non-respondents. Nevertheless, it is also important to highlight the requirement of the 2006 Act for a canvass to be held at least every 10 years: the next one is due not later than 2016.

The 2006 Act also established registration objectives for the Chief Electoral Officer aimed at improving the accuracy and comprehensiveness of the electoral register. In this regards additional powers have been given to the CEO to require information of certain public authorities including the Department of Work and Pensions, the Business Services Organisation and the General Register Office.

Considerable efforts have been made to increase the comprehensiveness of the register since the introduction of individual registration in 2002. The Electoral Office has pursued a wide range of registration initiatives during the intervening period and as a result the register is now at its most comprehensive since 2000. The School's Initiative is a good example of this work and it involves an annual visit by EONI staff to all post primary schools in Northern Ireland with pupils in the 16-17 years age range. Pupils are asked to complete and sign electoral registration forms and they are also issued with electoral identity cards. Approximately 11,000 young people are added to the register each year as a result of this process.

With regards to the issue of enforcement, policy is very much aimed at encouraging registration by highlighting the many benefits that it brings. Previous attempts at prosecution have, unfortunately, not produced a wholly satisfactory outcome and are not commensurate with the cost and effort applied to the process. In one particular case, whilst the prosecution was successful, the defendant was fined only 1p.

The Chief Electoral Officer assures Council that he and his colleagues will continue to develop initiatives aimed at increasing the comprehensiveness and accuracy of the register, building on the results already achieved in this important area of work.

399.8 ELECTION COSTS

Chief Executive reported the cost of local election was £42,121.00

399.9 REQUEST TO REPRINT ADVERTISEMENT WITHIN 1937 BALLYMONEY OFFICIAL GUIDE

Chief Executive has received a request from Parnell Crest, Ontario, Canada to reprint a Stevenson & Co. advertisement which appeared in the Urban Council 1937 Ballymoney Official Guide, within a book that is being written about *Ballymoney Ancestors*. Chief Executive, having researched the Copyright of the Guide recommends granting the request with the proviso that Ballymoney Borough Council are acknowledged within the book.

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

to recommend that Council grant Parnell Crest, Ontario, Canada permission to reprint a Stevenson & Co advertisement that appears on page 17 of the Urban Council 1937 Ballymoney Official guide, subject to acknowledgement to Council.

* **Director of Central and Leisure Services arrived at the meeting at 8.39pm during consideration of the above matter.**

399.10 RECORDS MANAGEMENT (398.8, 397.9)

Following a request by SOLACE, on behalf of local government, an extension of 6 months has been granted by the Information Commissioner to 31 March 2012. Work to progress the required audit and revised retention and disposal policy, continues.

* **Chief Executive left the meeting at 8.43pm**

* **Head of Corporate and Development Services left the meeting at 8.43pm.**

CENTRAL SERVICES

399.11 ACCOUNTS FOR PAYMENT

Treasury advice schedules detailing payments for Period 8, 2011/12 drawn on the Council's Revenue and Capital Bank Accounts will be circulated at the meeting.

IT IS RECOMMENDED that the payments are approved.

The Director responded to a number of questions.

The Director reminded members that committee had been delegated full Council power to deal with the Accounts for Payments.

The Director advised that the payments for October totalled £704,199.23 from the Revenue Account and £434,639.31 from the Capital Account and would be made on 30 November 2011.

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

to approve the payments for November totaling £704,199.23 from the Revenue Account and £434,639.31 from the Capital Account.

- * **Councillor Robinson left the meeting at 8.59pm and returned at 9.07pm during consideration of the above matter.**
- * **Councillor McLaughlin left the meeting at 9.06pm.**

399.12 ACCOUNTS FOR PAYMENT IN DECEMBER 2011

As the date of the December committee meeting has been brought forward it is recommended that authority is granted to the Director of Central & Leisure Services to approve the payment of the Period 9 accounts.

The value of the payments made in December will be reported to the January committee meeting.

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

to recommend that authority is granted to the Director of Central & Leisure Services to approve the payment of the Period 9 accounts.

399.13 LAND & PROPERTY SERVICES (LPS) MEETING WITH COUNCIL

A letter dated 8th November 2011 has been received from the Office of the Minister for Finance and Personnel advising that LPS have recently reviewed their policy in relation to attending council meetings, and will now be available to attend a meeting if requested.

Committee is asked to consider inviting representatives from LPS to the December or January Committee meeting.

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

to recommend that Council invite representatives of Land and Property Services to the committee meeting in December, or if that is not possible, January 2012.

- * **Councillor McAfee left the meeting at 9.13pm.**

399.14 ANNUAL ACCOUNTS 2010/11

The audit of the 2010/11 Annual Accounts was completed and the Accounts signed off on 1st November 2011.

The following amendments were made to the accounts that were signed off by the Corporate & Central Services Committee on 27th June 2011-

- The Past Service Gain of £1,791,000 was reallocated from Services Expenditure lines in the Comprehensive Income & Expenditure account to Other Services;
- An adjustment of £2,737,366 was made to the opening Buildings Cost or Valuation and to the opening Buildings Depreciation and Impairment to ensure consistency with the Fixed Asset register. (NBV not affected).
- The asset revaluation charge to the Revaluation Reserve was increased by £401,776 as a result of the wrong indices being applied.
- The asset revaluation charge to the Surplus or Deficit on the Provision of Services was increased by £417,780 and moved from being disclosed in the Depreciation and Impairment lines to the Cost or Valuation lines.
- The depreciation charge was reduced by £335,105 resulting in a corresponding adjustment to the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Account, the Balance Sheet, the Reserves and the Cashflow statement.
- An increase of £400,000 was made to the Provision for Landfill Closure.
- An amount of £1,679,349 was moved from the Cash and Cash Equivalents figure to the bank overdraft figure to reverse the effect of netting off.
- The balance of the Capital Fund Account of £1,788,264 was transferred to the Capital Adjustment Account.

Councillor Finlay commented on the £400,000 increase to the Provision for Landfill Site closure.

399.15 DISTRICT COUNCILLORS ALLOWANCES AND MULTIPLE MANDATES – CONSULTATION DOCUMENT

The Department of the Environment is seeking views from consultees about the allowances payable to Northern Ireland District Councillors who are also members of the Legislative Assembly, Members of Parliament and/or Members of the House of Lords.

There are 582 Councillors in Northern Ireland and of these 35 (6%) hold a multiple mandate (as at May 2011).

The allowances currently payable to Councillors are –

- (i) Basic Allowance - £9738 per annum
- (ii) Special Responsibility Allowance - £20,500 per annum for a council with a population not exceeding 50,000
-Maximum payable to individual members is one fifth of £20,500
- (iii) Dependants' Carers' Allowance –
Standard Care - £6.08 per hour, £158.00 per month
Specialised Care - £12.16 per hour, £316.00 per month
Maximum payment per member, per month shall not exceed £316.00.

The scope of the review only takes into account the Basic Allowance and the Special Responsibility Allowance which may be payable to multiple mandate Councillors.

The Department has identified and is seeking views on two possible options.

Option 1 - No Change

Option 2 – Reduce the level of certain allowances for multiple mandate councillors.

Proposal – two thirds reduction in both Basic Allowance and Special Responsibility Allowance.

In the consultation document 5 questions are posed, on which members are invited to comment. DOE are requesting comments by 16th December 2011.

This matter was deferred for one month at last month's committee meeting to enable political parties to consider the 5 questions in the consultation document.

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

to recommend that Council respond to the 5 questions within the District Councillors Allowances And Multiple Mandates – Consultation Document as follows:

Question 1

Do you think that multiple mandate councillors should continue to receive a basic allowance and, if appropriate, an SRA without any reduction being applied?

Response: No.

Question 2

Do you agree that reductions should be applied in respect of councillors who are also -

- 1. MLAs; and/or***
- 2. MPs; and/or***
- 3. Members of the House of Lords.***

Please give reasons for your views.

Answer: Yes to all 3.

Response: Due to drain on public resources.

Question 3

Do you think a reduction should be applied to the amount of:

- 1. Basic allowance; and/or***
- 2. Special responsibility allowance payable to multiple mandate councillors?***

Please give reasons for your views.

Response: Yes, a 2/3rd reduction.

Question 4

If you agree that a reduction should be applied to the allowances of multiple mandate councillors, do you agree that a two-thirds reduction would be appropriate for both basic allowance and special responsibility allowance?

Please give reasons for your views

Response: Yes.

Question 5

Do you think that the reduction should be set at a level other than the proposed two-thirds reduction? If so, please indicate how much, and your reasons for this.

Response: No, content with a two-thirds reduction.

399.16 DRAFT GUIDANCE ON COUNCILLORS ALLOWANCES CONSULTATION DOCUMENT

The Department is seeking views on draft Guidance on Councillors' Allowances which it proposes to make under the powers conferred by the Local Government Finance Act (NI) 2011. A copy of the draft Guidance was circulated.

The main aim of the Guidance is to provide information to Councils to assist them in preparing and administering their schemes of allowances.

The Local Government (Payments to Councillors) Regulations (NI) 2012 will be made early in 2012 and will be fully operational from 1st April 2012. They will provide for the making and publication of Councils schemes of allowances and the publication at the end of each financial year of the total amount of allowances and expenses paid to Councillors. The Regulations will also make provision for the payment of basic allowance, special responsibility allowance, dependants' carers' allowance and travel and subsistence allowances to Councillors.

Closing date for the receipt of comments is 31st December 2011.

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

to recommend that Council defer its views on the draft guidance on Councillors Allowances Consultation Document to the December committee meeting and that Council grant authority to this committee to respond.

399.17 BUDGETS 2012/13

The Director circulated a paper at the meeting on proposed/possible budget increases for 2012/13 relating to Central Services, Members Allowances, Estimated Penny Product and Grants, attached as Appendix A.

The Director explained the factors impacting on the Estimated Penny Product and responded to a number of members' questions.

This being all the business the meeting closed at 10.22pm.

**Appendix A: Central Services Budgets 2012 – 2013
General Budgets 2012 – 2013
EPP & Grants 2012 - 2013**

Appendix A

Paper to Corporate & Central Services Committee - 28 November 2011

Central Services Budgets 2012 - 2013

General Budgets 2012 - 2013

EPP & Grants 2012 - 2013

REVENUE

Central Services

No material increase proposed to all Central Services budgets
Possibly some inflationary increases

General

Non Distributed Costs - Pensions
inflationary increase

Members Allowances

budget to include Special Responsibility Allowance, Carers Allowance, Employers
Pension contributions and any increases in allowances.

Conference
budget.

Estimated Penny Product (EPP)

unlikely to be any significant increase in EPP.
no new developments - either commercial or domestic.
increase in level of debt to be written off.

Grants

Derating Grant - dependent on derated properties

Rates Support Grant - unlikely to be any significant increase.

Reserves/Provisions

£200,000 required for landfill provision.

Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP) - required to be considered before 2012/13
Rates are set.

CAPITAL PROGRAMME - 3 YEAR, 2012-13 TO 2014-15

1. Upgrading of Information & Communication Technology

