

BALLYMONEY BOROUGH COUNCIL**Table of Contents**

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CORPORATE SERVICES

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CENTRAL SERVICES

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420.14 Accounts For Payment

*Payments in period 8
amounting to:
£414,141.50 and
Revenue account and
£129,813.84 Capital
account*

420.15 Ballymoney Cemetery Memorials

Grant permission

420.16 Business Plans 2013/14 Finance & ICT

*Approve Business
Plans*

BALLYMONEY BOROUGH COUNCIL

Minutes of Corporate & Central Services Committee Meeting No 420 held in the McKinley Room, Riada House, on Monday 25th November 2013 at 6.30 pm.

IN THE CHAIR: Councillor E Robinson, MBE

PRESENT: **Aldermen**
F Campbell
C Cousley, MBE

Councillors
W Blair
A Cavlan
J Finlay, Mayor
R Halliday
R McAfee
I Stevenson, Deputy Mayor

IN ATTENDANCE: Chief Executive [Items 1-3 & 6-11]
Head of Corporate & Development Services (Items 1-11)
Director of Central and Leisure Services [Item -12-16]
Business Support Officer

APOLOGIES: **Alderman**
H Connolly
B Kennedy

Councillor
J Atkinson

420.1 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

The Chief Executive declared an interest in items 5 and 7 on the agenda. With the agreement of members, the Chair will deal with these items at 420.4 & 420.5 of the minutes, consecutively, to enable the Chief Executive to withdraw from the meeting for the duration of both items.

420.2 ELECTORAL REGISTRATION

The Chair welcomed Chief Electoral Officer, Mr Graham Shiels and Electoral Officer, Rae Kirk, to the meeting to report on the recent canvass undertaken to update the Electoral Register in Northern Ireland. The presentation is attached as Appendix 1.

Mr Shiels advised that, due to the scale of the process, the canvass has been undertaken in 2013 ahead of election processes commencing in 2014 and concluding with Assembly elections in 2016.

At the request of Councillor Finlay, Mr Shiels advised that following the canvassing process, the register is now more up to date than in recent years, capturing 84% of eligible electors and that the Electoral Office continues to make every effort to make contact with those not yet registered. He stated that Councillor engagement with residents does help in the registration process.

Mr Shiels responded to questions from members including:

- Response rates in relation to areas of deprivation
- Reduction in response rate in urban areas of deprivation
- Provision of ID cards on request
- Law enforcement for non-compliance
- European rule relating to length of residency of European residents prior to registration (three months) and evidence of residency
- The number of people still not registered and what can be done to encourage registration.

Mr Shiels advised that an analysis on the number of people registered will be available in March 2014 but that results are available on EONI website from Monday.

The Chair thanked Mr Shiels and Mrs Kirk for their presentation which concluded at 7.00 pm. The representatives left the meeting at this time.

420.3 MINUTES OF MEETING NO 419 – 28TH OCTOBER 2013

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

that the minutes of meeting No 419 on 28th October 2013, as circulated, be confirmed as a correct record.

CORPORATE SERVICES

Declaration of Interest – Chief Executive declared an interest in items 4 & 5 and withdrew from the meeting at 7.07 pm.

420.4 STAFF MATTERS

The JNC for Chief Executives of Local Authorities in NI has written regarding workload falling on local government as a consequence of local government reform and specifically issues that relate to Council Chief Executives which has been the subject of discussion between the employer and staff sides of JNC. Following conclusions reached by JNC a series of recommendations for consideration by

Council, who consider it appropriate to make a payment to their Chief Executive, are put forward. A copy of Annex setting our recommendations was circulated.

IT IS RECOMMENDED that Committee considers the matter and makes a recommendation to Council.

Following initial discussions, the matter was deferred to the Committee's next meeting and Head of Corporate & Development Services will provide information requested.

- * **Alderman Campbell left the meeting at 7.20 pm and returned at 7.25 pm during discussion of item 4.**

420.5 JNC RECOMMENDATIONS TO STCs ON APPOINTMENT AND EMPLOYMENT OF CHIEF EXECUTIVES

The JNC for Chief Executives of Local Authorities in NI, Employers Side, has issued a circular intended to assist STCs in the appointment and employment of Chief Executives to the new Councils, which come into full operation in 2015. It contains recommendations on both salary levels including progression and employment conditions. The Head of Corporate & Development Services outlined the rationale for assessment of the job by the independent consultant and the issues taken account of by the employer's side in making the recommendations on salary bands and arrangements for progression and employment conditions.

A copy of the recommended salary bands and scales and allocation of councils to bands was circulated. The salary bands represent all inclusive salaries and have been calculated to take into account all demands and features of the posts. The recommendations flow directly from an independent assessment of the new chief executive roles and the Chief Executives trade union (ALACE) has been consulted. The staff side felt unable to agree the recommendations contained in the independent review.

- * **The Chief Executive returned to the meeting at 7.42 pm.**

420.6 STATUTORY TRANSITION COMMITTEE (STC) COSTS

The DoE Minister has written, 12/11/2013, to Chief Executives, referring to the fact that a small number of councils have agreed to defer a decision to pay the costs associated with the operation of their STC and are seeking Executive financial support to cover these costs. The Minister reminds Councils of the Regulation in relation to Councils financial support to STCs, as detailed in the Local Government (STC) Regs NI 2013, set out in his letter, a copy of which is circulated.

The Minister therefore considers the decision to defer payment to cover the costs of the STCs places these councils in breach of both Local Government (STC) Regs NI

2013 and his departmental guidance. He points out that the Executive has already committed to a financial support package of up to £47.8M to deliver local government reform. The £47.8M package is a substantial contribution from the Executive, which has made it clear that all other transitional costs arising from reform, including the costs of STCs, should be met by Councils. The reform of local government will result in substantial longer term savings for councils. It is therefore right that local government should contribute to the initial costs.

Members noted the correspondence.

420.7 REGIONAL TRANSITION COMMITTEE

A copy of the minutes (draft) of the RTC on 25th September was tabled. A copy has been made available in the members' room and copies are also available on request from the Office of the Chief Executive.

420.8 LOCAL GOVERNMENT BILL

NILGA's response was tabled at Consultation Committee on 18th November. The Chair advised that there were 52 responses from a wide range of groups and committees.

420.9 CONFERENCES

9.1 NILGA Annual Conference, Exhibition & Local Government Awards – 27th February 2014

The conference will take place at the Le Mans Hotel in Castlereagh on 27th February 2014 at a cost of £168.00 + VAT with a reduction of 5% for bookings made prior to 30th November 2013.

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

to recommend that Alderman Cousley, Councillor Atkinson and Councillor Stevenson attend the conference.

9.2 Somme Pilgrimage 2014

Council has reserved two places on the Somme Pilgrimage in June 2014, budget provision for which has been provided under Official Visits.

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

to recommend that Councillor Blair and Councillor Finlay attend the Somme event.

The meeting received applications from Councillor Stevenson and Councillor Robinson to attend the Somme event under the conference budget process.

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

to recommend that Councillor Stevenson and Councillor Robinson attend the Somme event in June 2014 at a cost of £660.00 per person (single supplement included) payable from Council's conference budget.

420.10 NILGOSC ANNUAL REPORT 2012/13

The NILGOSC Annual Report and Accounts 2012/13 is tabled. The Pension Fund now exceeds £4.5bn in value and NILGOSC continues to provide employees with an excellent pension service. Changes to the scheme as part of the public sector pension reform have progressed during the year and the report provides some details, and up-to-date information can be found at www.nilgosc.org.uk/lqps-ni-2014-members. The triennial valuation is underway and it is anticipated that the outcome will be communicated to employing authorities in December 2013. In future years it is proposed that the annual report and accounts will be distributed in electronic format.

420.11 TIMING OF MEETINGS

Members requested at the Consultation Committee meeting on 21st October that consideration be given to holding meetings of committees during the day in December 2013.

It was **AGREED:**

to recommend that Committee meet at 4.30 pm on Monday 23rd December 2013.

- * **The Chief Executive & Head of Corporate & Development Services left the meeting at 8.05 pm**
- * **The Director of Leisure & Central Services joined the meeting at 8.05 pm.**

CENTRAL SERVICES

The Chair agreed to receive an addendum as set out at 420.16.

420.12 TREASURY MANAGEMENT STRATEGY 2013/14 – MID YEAR REVIEW

In accordance with the Council's Treasury Management Policy 2013/14 a mid-year review of treasury management practices has been carried out and a report is attached as Appendix 2.

The 2013/14 mid-year review report is recommended for acceptance.

At the request of Councillor Stevenson, the Director advised that to date, Council has not drawn down any money for the project in Dervock. She advised that further information will be made available at the rates workshop on 27th November.

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

to recommend that the 2013/14 mid-year review report be accepted.

420.13 ACTUAL PENNY PRODUCT 2013/14 IN YEAR FORECAST

The Director advised that Land and Property Services (LPS) has completed the second quarters in year forecast calculations of the Actual Penny Product outturn for 2013/14.

The indicative outturn for the Council is a positive sum of £145,837.

An examination of the tax base shows that there has been a slight growth in the non-domestic sector plus LPS have examined in more detail the losses arising from empty properties and have scaled back the losses to reflect the actual loss in LPS accounting systems at 30th September 2013.

The forecast attempts to reflect as accurately as possible the end of year rate revenue outturn position; however this is only the halfway stage of the year and situations of a positive or negative nature could still arise in the period to 31st March 2014.

Members discussed property rates in Ballymoney compared to other areas, values of properties and footfall in the town. The Director advised that LPS are doing a complete revaluation of all commercial properties throughout Northern Ireland based on market strengths in 2013. New rates will not be effective until 2015 and overall rate valuations could drop which would impact on the Councils income. Other issues discussed included the role of Land & Property Services in monitoring empty properties, new builds and extensions and the new festive lighting which has been appreciated by traders and residents in the borough.

420.14 ACCOUNTS FOR PAYMENT

Treasury advice schedules detailing payments for Period 8, 2013/14 drawn on the Council's Revenue and Capital Bank Accounts were made available for members to inspect at 6.00pm on Monday 25th November 2013 in the McKinley Room, Riada House. The Director of Central and Leisure Service was in attendance to deal with any queries and provide any information requested.

***Payments made in period 8 amount to:
£414,141.50 and Revenue account and
£129,813.84 Capital account***

420.15 BALLYMONEY CEMETERY MEMORIALS

The following applications have been received for the erection of memorials in Ballymoney Cemetery –

Section E3 Nos. 26 & 27

Mr Philip Coyles, 33 Semicock Road, Ballymoney
Grey All Polished Headstone and Base

Section I4 No 53

Mrs Ethel Pollock, 26 Bann Road, Ballymoney
Black Granite Headstone & Base

IT IS RECOMMENDED that Council grants permission for the erection of the above memorials.

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

to recommend that Council grants permission for the erection of the above memorials.

420.16 BUSINESS PLANS 2013/14 – FINANCE AND ICT

Business plans for Finance and ICT services were circulated to members. It is **recommended** that the plans are approved.

16.1 ICT

The Director advised members of the work currently being undertaken within the cluster Councils regarding ICT systems including telephony. She advised that all 4 Councils had signed up to Network NI.

16.2 Finance

The Director advised that a revised copy of the Finance Business Plan will be appended to the minutes (attached as Appendix 3). She further advised that Causeway cluster financial systems need to be in place for the Shadow Council (May 2014). She responded to questions from members relating to:

- Disposal of equipment under WEE
- Update of computers in Member's room
- Provision of wifi in Riada House
- Provision of laptops to members
- Electronic clocking system at JDLC

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

to recommend that Council approves the Finance and ICT Business Plans

This being all the business the meeting closed at 8.50 pm.

Appendices listed:

- Appendix 1 - Electoral Registration Presentation
- Appendix 1 - Treasury Management Policy 2013/14
- Appendix 2 – Finance & ICT Business Plans 2013/14

APPENDIX 1



Electoral Registration

APPENDIX 2**Treasury Management Policy 2013/14 – Mid Year Review**

In accordance with Ballymoney Borough Council's Treasury Management Policy we are required to report mid-year on the performance of and compliance with the policy. This short report sets out the main areas of activity during the 2013 – 2014 financial year up to and including 30 September 2013.

1 New loan finance

During this financial year no additional loans have been taken out.

2 Loans Outstanding

At 30 September 2013 the amount of outstanding debt owing on Council loans was £9,670,212.18.

3 Repayment of loans

During August 2013 Council paid the Department of Finance & Personnel (DFP) a total of £561,966.26 in loan charges, this figure being broken down into principal of £311,207.30 and interest of £250,758.96.

4 Deposit Funds

Currently all surplus Council funds remain on instant access deposit with Bank of Ireland. There are currently no longer fixed term deposits due to the utilisation of reserves to fund projects as referred to in paragraph 1.

All activity complies with Councils Treasury Management Policy and there are currently no conditions, either existing or anticipated, which would necessitate setting aside or reviewing this newly adopted policy.

The next report will be after the end of 2013-14.

APPENDIX 3**ICT Business Plan 2013/2014**

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|-----------------------------|--|
| <u>Vision</u> | To provide and maintain ICT systems using the latest technology to a minimum of 99% availability |
| Business Development | <p>Ensure all available upgrades applied within 30 days of availability</p> <p>Respond to IT fault reports within 2 hrs</p> <p>Maintain 99% availability of central IT systems</p> <p>Disposal of obsolete equipment under WEEE regulations</p> <p>MS Office upgrade to 2010 version</p> <p>Co-operation with Cluster grouping</p> <p>Implementation of Cluster ICT infrastructure</p> <p>Timeware upgrade to include access control</p> <p>MRM Web enabled</p> <p>Tascomi on-line portal</p> |
| Staff | <p>1 part-time</p> <p>1 full-time</p> <p>2013/2014 Budget £87,792</p> <p>Attend courses/seminars as and when required to keep up to date with latest technology</p> <p>Train full-time employee in Server 2008 management</p> <p>Exchange training</p> |
| External Liaison | Maintain membership of Local Government IT Officers Group |
| Resource Management | Maintain and develop ICT systems within budgetary limits. |
| External Standards | Systems developed in conjunction with current best practice and utilising latest technology |
| Results | <p>Ensure all available upgrades applied within 30 days of availability - ongoing</p> <p>Respond to IT fault reports within 2 hrs - ongoing</p> <p>Maintain 99% availability of central IT systems - ongoing</p> <p>Disposal of obsolete equipment under WEEE regulations - ongoing</p> <p>MS Office 2010 upgrades – ongoing</p> <p>Hardware upgrades – server, desktops and laptops</p> <p>Firewall upgrade</p> <p>Timeware roll-out to additional sites</p> <p>Managed print service extended to additional sites</p> <p>Installation of 100MB leased line</p> <p>Installation of public wifi – JDLC and Town Hall</p> |

Finance Business Plan 2013/2014

| | |
|-----------------------------|--|
| <u>Vision</u> | To provide accurate, relevant, timely financial information and ensuring the timely and accurate payment of staff, councillors and creditors enabling effective management |
| Business Development | Continual updating of relevant standards, guidelines, legislation, best practice Reports provided by deadlines All returns completed on time Implement and update internal financial controls Accurate payment of wages and salaries Ensure accurate payment of creditors within 10 days Maximise recovery of outstanding debt Maximise return from investments Electronic purchase ordering – authorisation and processing Causeway Cluster financial systems development and implementation STC/Shadow Council financial systems/procedures |
| Staff | 4 full-time and 2 part-time 2013/2014 Budget £299,263 Attend courses/seminars as and when required to keep up to date with latest standards/practice Train staff in latest standards/legislation |
| External Liaison | Maintain membership of Association of Government Finance Officers Maintain membership of Local Government Benchmarking Group Regular communication with external Auditor CIPFA guidance |
| Resource Management | Work within budgetary limits Accurate completion of statutory returns |
| External Standards | Compliance with IFRS Meet external deadlines Implementation of new accounting guidelines |
| Results | Continual updating of relevant standards, guidelines, legislation, best practice – ongoing Reports provided by deadlines - ongoing All returns completed on time - ongoing Implement and update internal financial controls - ongoing Accurate payment of wages and salaries - ongoing Ensure accurate payment of creditors within 10 days – ongoing Recovery of outstanding debt - ongoing Maximise return from investments – ongoing Staffing review – efficiency savings Implementation of BACS for suppliers Implementation of electronic Fixed Assets Register Email functionality introduced for payroll and creditors' advices On-line receipting of payments received Implementation of weekly supplier payments Electronic clocking systems installed at JDLC and Knock Road Implementation of internal transfers system Movement to A4 purchase orders – removing need for additional printers |