

BALLYMONEY BOROUGH COUNCIL

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Ballymoney Borough Council

Minutes of Council Meeting No 990 held in the Council Chamber, Riada House, on 7th January 2014 at 6.30 p.m.

IN THE CHAIR

Mayor, Councillor John Finlay

PRESENT

Aldermen:

F Campbell
H Connolly
C Cousley, MBE
B Kennedy

Councillors:

J Atkinson
W Blair
A Cavlan
R Halliday
R McAfee
P McGuigan
C McLaughlin
A McLean
E Robinson, MBE

APOLOGIES:

Councillors

T McKeown
I Stevenson

IN ATTENDANCE

Chief Executive
Director of Borough Services
Director of Central & Leisure Services
Head of Corporate & Development Services

990.1 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None.

990.2 RATE ESTIMATE 2014/15

The Mayor advised that the purpose of the meeting was to consider the estimates of income and expenditure for 2014/15, the Rates Estimates Book 2014/2015 having been issued on Monday 30th December 2013.

He invited the Director of Central & Leisure Services to update the meeting on changes to the estimates book. She commented on haulage costs (p.23) and impact on the rate as set out in summary page, now an increase of 3.94. She advised that insurances premium information had not yet been received and this may lead to a change; the penny product figure had not been finalized. She was awaiting confirmation from LPS; reserves had been applied to cover STC and Shadow Council costs, for 3 months and 9 months respectively, the method of proportioning yet to be confirmed (population/pp, default basis being population, which was basis of calculation in the current rates book).

The Mayor then invited Director of Borough Services to comment. He reminded members with regard to services in his directorate where policy decision had to be considered:

- Street cleansing enhancement
- Interim residential waste services options
- Maintenance and sale of land at Cloughmills and Loughiel and play area upgrades

He also outlined the additional posts required to support events and seasonal activities and to meet service delivery, including additional estate arising from recent developments, and legislative commitments, as set out in the analysis contained in the rates book. Further clarifying the matter with particular regard to comments on grounds maintenance the Director advised that Councillors had indicated they were not content with how Council properties had been kept so additional labour to maintain to better standard and restoring staff taken out in previous rates rounds, e.g at Riverside Park.

A range of questions put by members were responded to by officers. The Director of Central & Leisure Services undertook to circulate to members a written definition of penny product. In response number of questions raised by Councillor Robinson on behalf of the DUP Group the Chief Executive advised that these had been submitted in writing by Councillor Stevenson earlier in the day and he had committed to provide responses by beginning of week. Members from various parties pointed to the benefits of sharing the questions and answers to facilitate the decision making process and the Chief Executive undertook to speak to the member with regard to sharing the list of questions from the DUP.

The Director of Central and Leisure Service in response to request by Alderman Kennedy confirmed that the 8 month variance would be available for circulation within the next two weeks. She also responded in relation to queries about increases in electricity and phone costs.

A lengthy discussion ensued on sale/retention of land and upgrade/provision of play parks at various locations, some being closed on health & safety grounds. The need to consider and agree the capital programme going forward also engaged members attention. The Director of Borough Services indicated that a decision was required on what areas are to be developed and within what timescale. It was agreed that the options paper on play areas should be circulated again to members.

The Director of Central & Leisure Services emphasized that the approval of the capital programme was critical to the preparation of the MRP policy statement and the calculation of the prudential indicators.

990.3 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

It was agreed that Council meet again to further consider the draft rate estimate on 28th January at 6.30 p.m., with the Health & Environmental Services meeting being brought forward to 4.00 p.m. to facilitate this and a snack supper prior to the rates meeting. The final meeting to strike the district rates for 2014/15 was fixed for Tuesday 11th February 2014 at 7.00 p.m.

The meeting concluded at 8.27 p.m.