

BALLYMONEY BOROUGH COUNCIL**Table of Contents**

992.1	Declarations of Interest	<i>None</i>
992.2	Rate Estimate 2014/15	<i>Considered</i>
992.3	Profiled Variance Report (8 months)	<i>Tabled</i>
992.4	Date of next meeting	<i>11th February 2014</i>

Ballymoney Borough Council

Minutes of Council Meeting No 992 held in the Council Chamber, Riada House, on 28th 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
T McKeown
C McLaughlin
A McLean
E Robinson, MBE
I Stevenson

IN ATTENDANCE

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

992.1 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None.

992.2 RATES ESTIMATE 2014/15

The Mayor explained that the purpose of the meeting was to give further consideration to income and expenditure for the year 2014-15, the rate estimate book having been issued on 30th December 2013 and to decide on issues to assist the final decision making process on the approval of expenditure and income and to strike a rate for the next fiscal year.

Specific issues identified at the last rates meeting were addressed as follows, some of which having been considered earlier at the meeting of Health & Environmental Services Committee.

Amenities:

[a] – Sale of land at Cloughmills and Loughgiel

Following consideration of options to sell or retain land at Cloughmills and Loughgiel it was proposed by Alderman Kennedy seconded by Councillor McLaughlin and

AGREED:

[i] - *that the land at Cloughmills be placed on the market.*

[ii] – *that an alternative site identified at Scally Park, owned by NIHE, be explored, ownership secured and play facilities provided, with the option of selling the other site where planning permission has been secured.*

Environmental Services Change Options:

[b] – Street Cleansing enhancement

Members were advised that this option requires a sweeper and crew. The Health & Environment Services Committee meeting held earlier in the day had considered the options and decided to defer the matter to the rates meeting.

- The Director of Central & Leisure Services joined the meeting during consideration on the above matter.

[c] – Waste Recycling Enhancement

[i] - Slim the “black” bin Options to reduce bin size or introduce alternative 3 week collection regime.

[ii] – Provide “kitchen” waste service options - via brown bins and caddies (green & kitchen) or via caddies (separate green & kitchen)

The Director of Borough Services advised that the committee had resolved to recommend:

- that consideration of the Slim the “black” bin options be left for consideration by the new Cluster Council;
 - that a report be produced for consideration at the next committee meeting on “kitchen” waste collection utilizing potential WRAP funding.
- Discussion ensued on the £1.65m of capacity building funding announced, noting that it was not 100%. It was decided that this matter be left to the Council meeting to consider.

Amenities:

Options Paper on Borough Play Areas, copy circulated.

There was discussion on a number of locations. It was noted that £150K had been provided in the draft estimate for capital programme for play area upgrade and there was not the need to identify play areas as this would be addressed by Leisure & Amenities Committee in due course. Councillor McAfee asked that Carnany Play Park refurbishment be added to the options paper and this was noted.

Proposed Budget Increases/Decreases:

The Director of Central & Leisure Services advised that approval of the capital programme would allow the MRP and prudential indicators to be produced. A balance had been applied to cover Council's share of Shadow Council and STC costs for 2014-15, so that the costs of these bodies would be cost neutral to Council. Population figures had been used to apportion costs and it was possible this could be changed to penny product. Guidance has been provided and population figures is to be used so the figure in the estimate remains unchanged. In addition subsequent to the last meeting further information has been received and there is possibility to capitalize some of the costs associated with local government reform (LGR).

In the ensuing debate members raised issues on the service cost estimates, including JDLC (p.6) electricity costs & chemical costs; SGPOS/Riverside Park (p.9) wage levels; tourism product development (p.11) and officers responded, with responses to questions requiring examination to be examined with response to next meeting.

Following comments by Councillor Robinson to the Director of Borough Services on staffing levels at Riverside Park and the alleged failure of officers to provide a response to a question she had submitted outside the meeting the Chief Executive intervened confirming that the member's question had been put to him and referred to the Director. However, since the question was included on the list of questions submitted by Councillor Stevenson on behalf of the DUP grouping and responded to by the Director he (The Chief Executive) had presumed that the response supplied had been shared with members of that grouping and hence there had not been a direct response to Councillor Robinson. The member indicated that she had not had sight of the replies to the DUP group's questions and believed she should have had a direct response from an officer. The Chief Executive apologised that, arising from his assumption that the responses would be shared, the member had not received the response given, but said that if the member was finding fault in the handling of the matter, it did not lie with the Director, but with him. As the member continue to pursue her line of questioning the Director indicated that he was withdrawing from the meeting as he believed his integrity was being called into question.

- The Director of Borough Services retired from the meeting.

Councillor McAfee referred to discussion at the previous meeting when copies of written questions and responses to DUP group questions had been requested and there appeared to be no issue then. She expressed the view that these should have been shared with all members as they were all part of the decision making process, and it would also have the advantage of other members outside the DUP group possibly asking the same questions of officers which was not good use of time.

The Chief Executive advised that he had contacted Councillor Stevenson, who was not present on the night in question, regarding members desire that the questions and management responses be shared, but the member had declined.

Question raised by Councillor Stevenson on proposals for tourism trails and estimated spend in current year to be responded to at next meeting (p.11)

- Members left the meeting during discussion on the above.

Councillor McGuigan – 7.20pm

Alderman Kennedy, Alderman Connolly Councillor McLaughlin and Councillor McKeown - 7.34pm

The Chief Executive explained proposals for event to mark end of current local government structure in Ballymoney included in official/courtesy budget – P.30. and additional resource to deal with procurement, an internal audit requirement. £19K.

- The Mayor retired from the meeting at this stage to undertake another commitment and the Deputy Mayor assumed the chair - time 7.50pm.

Capital Programme 2014-15 v.2

A copy of the capital programme had been circulated. The Director of Central & Leisure Services advised that agreement on the programme will enable the production of Prudential Indicators and MRP Policy for approval at a subsequent meeting.

Councillor Robinson asked the Director of Central & Leisure Services what information she needed to calculate the MRP and Prudential Indicators. She indicated that these were critical matters for council to enable draw down of loans and Council decision on the capital programme required to allow these to be prepared.

It was proposed by Alderman Campbell seconded by Councillor Atkinson and **AGREED:** that the capital programme for 2014-15, as published, at £7,612,450, with a charge on rates of £479,330, be approved with the following additions and estimates provided by members, and including £2M in each of the years 2015-16 and 2016-17 and that estimates be obtained for all projects listed for 2014-15.

- 1) Does the additional pitch project at Riada playing fields include a path, if not budget provision to be added.
- 2) Former Teachers/Music Centre purchase and refurbishment. Est. £50K
- 3) Killyrammer Community Centre. Alterations to hall to provide rectangular space to facilitate the popular dancing classes. Also flat roof at front of building to be changed to pitch roof. Est. £160K
- 4) Internal repainting in Town Hall, where required for inclusion in Capital, or if more appropriate revenue.

Proposed New Posts

- 1) Student Building Control Officer – removed
- 2) Technical Officer (p/t – 1 day) – removed
- 3) Environmental Health Officer (p/t) – removed
- 4) Estates Officer – removed
- 5) 2 season Grounds Maintenance – defer to consider at next meeting
- 6) 2.5 staff at Megaw Park – defer to consider next meeting. (noted that facility was due to open for public use in August 2014.

992.3 PROFILED VARIANCE REPORT 2013-14

The eight month variance report, circulated, was tabled.

992.4 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The next meeting has been fixed for 11th February to consider the draft estimates and fix the district rate for the year commencing 1st April 2014.

The meeting concluded at 8.27 p.m.