

**LIMAVADY BOROUGH COUNCIL
COMHAIRLE BHUIRG LÉIM AN MHADAIDH**

**SUPPORT SERVICES COMMITTEE
1 MARCH 2011**

Minutes of meeting held in the Council Offices, 7 Connell Street, Limavady at 7.00 pm on the above date.

PRESENT:

Aldermen J Rankin and M Coyle. Councillors A Brolly, P Butcher, M Carten, B Chivers, L Cubitt, M Donaghy, B Douglas, G Mullan, J F McElhinney, C Ó hOisín, A Robinson and E Stevenson.

IN ATTENDANCE:

Committee Clerk, Head of Finance, Head of Human Resources and the Chief Executive.

APOLOGIES: - Alderman Robinson.

MINUTES:

The minutes of meeting dated 1 February 2011 were approved on the proposal of Councillor Ó hOisín, seconded by Councillor Mullan.

MATTERS ARISING: - None.

MINUTES OF SPECIAL SUPPORT SERVICES MEETING:

The minutes of special Support Services meeting dated 13 January 2011 were approved on the proposal of Councillor Mullan, seconded by Councillor Chivers.

PAYMENT OF ACCOUNTS:

The Head of Finance answered queries put to him by members on payment of accounts for January 2011 which were approved on the proposal of Councillor Carten, seconded by Councillor Robinson.

HUMAN RESOURCES:

IN COMMITTEE on the proposal of Councillor Brolly, seconded by Councillor Ó hOisín.

Human Resource Report: The Head of Human Resources presented the Human Resource Report for March 2011, which detailed recruitment & selection, absenteeism and cause of absence, issues relating to investors in people and requests for carry over of annual leave. The report was adopted on the proposal of Councillor Mullan, seconded by Councillor Carten subject to the following:

Community Wardens: The Head of Human Resources reminded members that a number of external organisations provided funding for the two Community Wardens up to 31 March 2011. She said that due to economic constraints, additional funding had not been identified in the 2011/12 budgeting process and

Council had been unable to secure any funding from external organisations at this time. As a result the posts were at risk of redundancy and consultation was taking place with the Wardens with regard to this.

A discussion took place on funding options for the posts and members were advised that until funding was confirmed from external sources, the posts would continue to be at risk.

Absenteeism: The Head of Human Resources confirmed that officers would endeavour to meet the target set at 10 days annualised for absenteeism in the year 2010/11. A member pointed out that the Auditor had commended the actions of Council in relation to reducing absenteeism in his last report.

General: The Head of Human Resources advised that the NJC for Local Government Services had confirmed that an additional public holiday would be held on 29 April 2011 to mark the Royal Wedding of Prince William to Catherine Middleton.

TENDER REPORT:

The tender report and recommendations for window cleaning; horticultural supplies; plant hire; chippings, spawls & gravel; tyres, tubes & batteries and petrol & lubricant was approved on the proposal of Councillor Butcher, seconded by Councillor Cubitt.

NOTICE OF MOTION SUBMITTED BY COUNCILLOR B CHIVERS:

Councillor Chivers proposed that:

‘In welcoming Minister Michelle Gildernews’ proposal to decentralise DARD’s Headquarters, I propose that this Council sends a letter to the Executive requesting that she considers Limavady as a possible location.’

Councillor Chivers stated that it had been argued within the George Bain report and by others that there was a need to distribute government departments rather than having them all based in Belfast. She said that it was not justifiable that people from Limavady were not able to access jobs due to the travel distance and the subsequent disruption this would cause to their lives. She added that if the Executive were committed to addressing regional disparity, this would be one small step in rebalancing the distribution of public jobs.

Councillor Chivers pointed out the advantages for DARD relocating to Limavady, which included accommodation space, infrastructure, availability of land, cheaper rent, helping the local economy, less congestion and IT access. She said that an internal trawl of staff within the civil service should be carried to gauge their views on area for location as this could provide job opportunities for local people to fill the posts for those who wished to remain and work in Belfast. The motion was seconded by Councillor Butcher.

Points made in the discussion which followed included:

- Alderman Robinson had already been in discussion with DARD to relocate to Limavady.
- The cost and benefits for relocating were highlighted.
- It was pointed out that DARD had closed the Limavady Agriculture Office.
- There was a need for Council to put down a marker for Limavady as a location for DARD's new Departmental headquarters.

In summing up, Councillor Chivers asked for Council to support the motion by sending a letter to the executive detailing what Limavady had to offer if DARD or any other upcoming department decided to relocate to the Borough.

The proposal was put to the meeting and declared carried, 7 for, 4 against and 3 abstentions.

ANY OTHER BUSINESS:

Cheque Signatory: Alderman Rankin proposed, seconded by Councillor Cubitt for the Head of Human Resources to be a cheque signatory.

Flexi Leave and Training: In response to a member, the Chief Executive agreed to discuss with the SMT flexi leave and offices having cover at all times. It was suggested that training be kept to a minimum and that staff should only be allowed to attend courses that were essential to their post.

Programmes at Roe Valley Leisure Centre: It was agreed that the Leisure Service Manager would present to the new council details of programmes and the work undertaken at Roe Valley Leisure Centre.

NEXT MEETING: - 5 April 2011.

THE BUSINESS CONCLUDED AT 8.00 MP.

Chair: _____