

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

**SUPPORT SERVICES COMMITTEE  
1 JUNE 2010**

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

**PRESENT:**

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

**IN ATTENDANCE:**

Committee Clerk, Director of Support Services and the Chief Executive.

**APOLOGIES:** - None.

**CONDOLENCES:**

Reference was made to Dr Paul Bateson who had sadly passed away the previous weekend. It was agreed that a letter of condolence would be forwarded to his wife Deirdre. Members stood in silence as a mark of respect.

**PRESENTATIONS ON CHANGES TO GP OUT OF HOURS SERVICE:**

***Health & Social Care Board (HSCB):***

The Chair welcomed Mr Paul Cavanagh, Commissioning Lead, Western Office to the meeting.

Mr Cavanagh explained that in order to bring expenditure into line with available funds and to deliver a more efficient service, the HSCB had changed the staffing arrangements for the GP out of hour's service in the Western area. He said that the service was currently provided by Western Urgent Care (WUC) from 6 pm to 8.30 am weekdays and 24 hours at weekends in five centres, Limavady, Londonderry, Strabane, Omagh and Enniskillen. However, an analysis of activity has highlighted that there are low numbers of patients contacting the service after midnight.

Mr Cavanagh outlined that from 1 July 2010 a nurse would be employed to triage the out of hours calls; the number of GP's on duty would be reduced from five to three. The three GP's would be mobile to cover all five centres, thus ensuring that patients would still be seen in their local centre. In addition, there would be a further three GP's on call if required during any unexpected busy periods.

Mr Cavanagh advised that timescales for appointments would continue to be met and that the HSCB and WUC would monitor waiting times for an agreed period and if requested, a fortnightly monitoring report would be sent to Council. He said that these changes would have minimal impact to patients and that home visit would continue as usual.

In the discussion which following the following was highlighted:

- This was a community issue and residents were signing a petition against the changes to the out of hour's service. Residents' views should be taken into consideration.
- The changes would result in a small percentage budget saving and the Board should look at cutbacks elsewhere.
- The changes would impact on people lives and put a strain on the service.
- The Board should take account of secondary care cost, for example ambulances.
- Money could not be put on the loss of life and the Board should reconsider implementing the changes.

***GP Covering Out of Hour's Service:***

The Chair welcomed Dr Joe Devlin, GP covering Roe Doc out of hours service to the meeting.

Dr Devlin highlighted that prior to the announcement of the changes, no GP stationed in Limavady or Strabane or any of the other coal face working staff had been consulted on the cuts. He said from 1 July 2010 it was proposed that from 11 pm there would be no on-call GP based at Limavady or Strabane and that these bases would be covered by one GP who would be expected to cover Limavady, Strabane and Derry from the GP base at Altnagelvin. He added that the Triage Nurses had not completed their training and that they could not undertake house calls, nor were they able to treat or examine patients.

Dr Devlin advised that in his opinion, it would be unlikely that the two GP's based at Omagh and Enniskillen would be able to help out in the northern sector. He said that the proposal for a GP to travel from Derry to bases in Strabane and Limavady was unlikely to be feasible and that the response times were likely to be poor. Thus, spending most of the night in a car travelling potentially from Magilligan to Castledearg was not an effective use of a doctor's time.

Dr Devlin indicated that monitoring of the service was well and good, but this could be too late for some patients to discover in retrospect if the service was inadequate. He said urgent care was too important to try and manage with a scaled down service and the figures did not take account the type of patients who used the out of hours service. He added that in his experience these patients were generally sicker & more complex, for example palliative care patients, sick children, nursing home patients and those suffering from strokes/heart attacks and other serious illness.

In conclusion, Dr Devlin requested that members send a strong message to those making the decision regarding the out of hour's service and state that the proposals were not in the public interest and would be vigorously opposed.

Members indicated that Dr Devlin was courageous and applauded him for voicing his professional opinion for the out of hours service to remain unchanged.

Mr Cavanagh and Dr Devlin left the chamber at 9 pm.

In the short discussion which followed, Alderman Robinson proposed, seconded by Councillor Carten that Council do not accept the proposed changes to the out

of hours service by the Board and that a letter would be forwarded to the Minister for Health with regard to this. Agreed.

#### **MINUTES:**

The minutes of meeting dated 4 May 2010 were approved and signed on the proposal of Alderman Coyle, seconded by Councillor Cubitt.

**MATTERS ARISING:** - None.

#### **PAYMENT OF ACCOUNTS:**

The payment of accounts for the month of April 2010 were tabled and noted.

#### **ACCOUNTS FOR 12 MONTHS ENDING 31 MARCH 2010:**

The Director of Support Services presented the accounts for 12 months ending 31 March 2010, which showed a surplus of £36k for the year. This resulted in Council's District Fund reserve being £558k at 31 March 2010 which was within a recommended level in relation to net operating expenditure. He highlighted the main variances from budgeted as follows:

- district rates - £227k adverse, mainly due to the MoD vacating their properties in Ballykelly
- RVLC - £106k favourable. This was due to VAT recovered from the tax authorities
- landfill site closure costs - £73k
- landfill site post closure - £61k adverse

The Director of Support Services explained in detail the adverse/favourable variances for salaries and wages; loan charges, other income, grants, bank interest, general grant, district rates, landfill closure costs and rates reserve claw back. The accounts as presented were approved by members.

It was pointed out that most businesses were downsizing and that Council should look where cutbacks could be made in the next year.

#### **COUNCILLORS EXPENDITURE 2009/10:**

The Director of Support Services outlined details of Councillors allowances & expenditure for year 2009/10. This included details of basic allowance, special responsibility allowance, mileage allowance, DPP allowance, Transition Committee allowance, conference costs and other expenses.

#### **HUMAN RESOURCES:**

**Human Resource Report: IN COMMITTEE.** The Director of Support Services presented the Human Resource Report dated 1 June 2010 which detailed recruitment & selection, absenteeism, cause of long term absences and issues relating to Investors in People. The report was adopted on the proposal of Councillor Cubitt, seconded by Alderman Rankin subject to the following:

**Absenteeism Target:** It was noted that the target for absenteeism for 2010/11 had been lowered to 10 days per full time employee annualised.

**Sponsorship Requests:** The request from the Human Resources Manager for sponsorship to undertake Certificate in Coaching and Mentoring at Queens University at a cost of £660 + mileage was approved. **OUT OF COMMITTEE.**

**DOE CIRCULAR NO LG 02/10 – TRAVELLING ALLOWANCE:**

The DOE Circular No LG/02/10 which advised of revised levels of travelling allowance payable to members of district councils incurred in the performance of an approved duty were tabled and noted.

**ANY OTHER BUSINESS:** - None.

**NEXT MEETING:** - 3 August 2010.

**THIS CONCLUDED THE BUSINESS**  
**(The meeting ended at 9.25 pm)**

**Chair:** \_\_\_\_\_