

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

02 FEBRUARY 2010

Minutes of meeting held in the Council Offices, 7 Connell Street, Limavady at 8.15 pm on the above date.

PRESENT:

In the Chair: Councillor Ó hOisín.

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

IN ATTENDANCE:

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

APOLOGIES: - None.

MINUTES OF MEETING DATED 14 JANUARY 2010:

The minutes of meeting held 14 January 2010 were approved and signed on the proposal of Alderman Coyle, seconded by Councillor McElhinney.

MATTERS ARISING:

Gritting of Footways: Members were advised that Roads Service had confirmed that liability should only arise if the actions taken by traders to clear snow and ice negligently create traps, hazards or obstructions on footways for pedestrians or motorists. However, individual traders were advised to get their own legal advice. Roads Service confirmed that if the severe winter conditions returned, grit would be made available for collection at a chosen location.

It was noted that consultation on establishment of a Partnership Agreement with councils for the treatment of footways would be progressed by Roads Service through NILGA.

Notice of Motion: Councillor Cubitt requested that his Notice of Motion on establishment of a body to enquire into the systematic abuse of children in institutions be forwarded to NILGA. Agreed.

MINUTES OF SPECIAL MEETING:

The minutes of special meeting held 8 January 2010 was approved on the proposal of Councillor Butcher, seconded by Councillor Carten.

MINUTES OF AUDIT COMMITTEE:

The minutes of Audit Committee held 7 October 2009 were tabled and noted.

CHIEF EXECUTIVE'S REPORT – FEBRUARY 2010:

RPA Update: The Chief Executive updated members on RPA process, including progress on legislation, Severance Scheme for Staff, programme Management system for RPA and the role of the Programme Management Office. It was agreed that Council would await the outcome of joint paper by NILGA and SOLACE on alternatives to the Business Service Organisation approach.

April Meeting – Reschedule: It was agreed that the April 2010 Support Services and Monthly meeting would be rescheduled from 6 to 8 April 2010.

Civic Centre Name: The Chief Executive reminded members that Council had looked at 5 names for the Civic Centre and that it was agreed from a proposal at a previous meeting that the name 'Roe Valley Arts & Culture Centre' would be considered at the February 2010 Monthly meeting.

Alderman Coyle stated that he had talked to members and as there was no objection to the name, he would second the proposal and that other rooms & spaces could be named separately.

Alderman Rankin confirmed he had talked to various people from both sides of the community on his proposal and felt it was acceptable to all. He said individual rooms could be named with the other names proposed.

Councillor Robinson said he also had spoken to residents who wanted the name to be Limavady Town Hall and that he intended to make an amendment to the suggested name.

Councillor Butcher asked if the name would be bilingual. Councillor Ó hOisín responded that he thought the name should linguistically represent the culture of the area.

Councillor Mullan outlined his displeasure that the name 'Danny Boy' had not been chosen as in his opinion an opportunity had been missed.

Councillor Brolly pointed out that Council had a good debate on the issue and that she would go along with the proposal, although it was not her first choice, as long as it was bilingual. Councillor Butcher said he would second that.

Councillor Ó hOisín then put the proposal to the vote saying the name would be 'Roe Valley Arts and Culture Centre and repeated the name in Irish 'Ionad Cultúir agus Ealaíne Gleann na Ró'. The name Roe Valley Arts and Culture Centre was agreed, 9 for, 2 against and 4 abstentions.

EXTERNAL MINUTES NOTED:

Western Health & Social Care Trust – 5 November 2009.

CONSULTATIONS:

Members reviewed the following consultation documents which were noted:

- ◆ NIO Policing Policy and Strategy Division – Draft Police and Criminal Evidence (NI) Order 1989 (Codes of Practice) (Temporary Modification to Code A) Order 2010.
- ◆ Northern Ireland Audit Office – Study for Improving Economy, Efficiency and Effectiveness (Absenteeism in Northern Ireland Councils 2009/10).

DRAFT ESTIMATES:

The Director of Support Services tabled revised estimates update that incorporated changes from the previous meeting on 14 January 2010 as follows:

- ◆ Following correspondence from Land & Property Services regarding vacant MOD properties, the penny product had gone from £274,590 to £265,250 resulting in an additional increase of 3.7% for the 2010/11 rate.
- ◆ The two items referred to at the previous meeting were included - £35k for village renewal and £91k towards the car ferry running costs.
- ◆ To offset some of the above costs, the gate fee for 8850 tonnes of waste to Coleraine Borough Council had been reduced by £2 per tonne saving £17.7k and the balance applied had been increased from £154k to £230k.

The overall effect would mean that the new rate would be an increase of 7.58% from the previous year.

The following points were made in the discussion which followed:

- It was deeply disturbing that Council was being hit by the adjustments.
- It was suggested that Land & Property Services attend a meeting and give an in-depth explanation for the adjustments. It was also queried if the repayment to the MOD would be delayed.
- It was suggested that the car ferry and town hall were millstones to Council. It was queried if some of the project set within the rates could be delayed but the opposing view was that this suggestion would have little effect on the rate increase as the projects were capital expenditure.
- Ratepayers would be disappointed at the rates being one of the highest in Northern Ireland.
- It was felt that the adjustments were out of Councils control.
- The Director of Support Services was thanked for trying to keep the rates as low as possible.

Councillor Butcher proposed, that the rate be put to Council to strike. This was seconded by Councillor McElhinney.

A recorded vote was requested on the proposal and on being put to the meeting was declared carried, 9 for, namely Councillor Carten, Alderman Coyle, Councillor Mullan, Councillor Chivers, Councillor Butcher, Councillor Donaghy, Councillor Brolly, Councillor McElhinney and Councillor Ó hOisín, with 4, Councillor Douglas, Alderman Rankin, Councillor Robinson and Alderman Robinson voting against. Councillor Cubitt abstained from the vote and left the meeting at 9.05 pm.

Councillor Donaghy Chairperson of the Support Services committee proposed:

- The adoption of the projected estimated net expenditure of £9,039,395 for 2010/2011;
- The authorisation of the expenditure as set out in the Estimates; and
- The adoption of a Domestic Rate of 0.4034 pence and a Non-Domestic Rate of 27.6182 pence for the year 2010/2011.

This represents an increase of 7.58% from the year 2009/2010.

Councillor Donaghy stated that Council will continue to implement its corporate plan for the period 2009-2011 with the overall mission of serving the community of Limavady Borough in a way that meets its needs for service provision, economic prosperity, sustainable development and quality of life. She said that in so doing, Council is most conscious of the need to maintain tight and effective budgetary control, strike a reasonable rate for the incoming year and endeavour to maintain reasonable reserves in line with Local Government Auditor Guidance.

Councillor Donaghy outlined that Council's reserves at 31 March 2009 were £522k and it is anticipated that Council will retain this level at 31 March 2010. This equates to 5.8% of Council's net expenditure which is in line with the recommended 5% to 7.5%. She referred to correspondence received from Land & Property outlined earlier

Councillor Donaghy explained that correspondence received from Land & Property Services on 29 January 2010 which clarified that two Ministry of Defence basis in the borough had been declared vacant from 1 July 2008. This will mean that Council's reserves at 31 March 2011 may fall below the recommended level. The more immediate impact of this announcement will be an increase in the rate for 2010/11 of 3.7% due to a reduced penny product as a result of a loss of approximately £225k annual rate income from these properties.

In order to improve services and facilities, Council will be involved in the following activities

- Completion of a new multi-purpose Civic Centre at Town Hall site, Limavady.
- Provision of 3 new play areas.
- Undertaking various works to improve access for the disabled to our services and our facilities.
- Implementation of the Tourism Strategy for the Borough.
- Provision of joint funding to ensure the continuation of the Lough Foyle Car Ferry service.
- Implementation of a Good Relations Strategy.
- Provision of a civic amenity site for Dungiven area.
- Development of a recycling education and awareness programme.
- Upgrading various playing fields and sports facilities.
- Carrying out improvements to Benone Tourist Complex and Roe Valley Leisure Centre.
- Provision of toilet facilities in Ballykelly.

Many of these activities attract other sources of funding to support the ratepayers contribution thus helping to provide better value for money.

The Rates Estimates for 2010/2011 consist of:

Loan Charges of £1,055k – this represents an increase of £44k or 4.31%. This increase is due to the provision of a new multi-purpose Civic Centre costing £75k off-set by savings of £31k achieved through reduced interest rates and the timing of draw down of loans.

Wages and Salaries of £5,110k - this represents an increase of £108 k or 2.16% and is due mainly to the staffing of the new civic centre costing £135k, an increase in employer's pension contributions rate from 16% to 17% costing £44k. These increases are offset by savings in the cost of living increase of £38k. This is due to the fact that the actual increase for 2009/10 was less than budgeted for and also as a result of a nil increase being allowed for in 2010/11.

Other Expenses of £4,961k - this represents an increase of £127k or 2.64%. The increase in these expenses is due to:

- Overheads and arts programmes associated with the new Civic centre costing £151k,
- a contribution of joint funding to ensure the continuation of the Lough Foyle Car Ferry Service costing £91k,
- landfill tax associated with the disposal of 8850 tonnes costing £45k,
- a contribution of £35k towards a village renewal measure which is part of the Rural Development Programme and match funded.

These additional costs are offset by savings achieved as a result of:

- recycling initiatives resulting in a reduction of 2000 tonnes saving Council £91k,
- a reduction in central overheads of £28k,
- a saving of £23k as a result of Council no longer requiring security at the car ferry terminal and;
- reductions in local community fund spend and Councils training budget of £26k and 22k respectively.

Income of £2,086k - this represents a decrease of £20k or 0.93%. The decrease is due to lower bank interest earned due to lower rates costing £33k and a reduction in waste disposal recycling sales due to market conditions costing £20k. These reductions in income are offset by an increase in receipts at the new Civic Centre generating £36k.

This results in net expenditure of £9,039k - an increase of £298k or 3.41%.

The General Grant generates £1,484k - a decrease of £81k.

A balance applied of £230k means the net amount to be raised by the rates is £7,326k which is equivalent to a district domestic rate of 0.4034 pence in the pound - an increase of 7.57% and a district non-domestic rate of 27.6182 pence in the pound - an increase of 7.58%.

The draft regional rates increases are nil for domestic and 2.7% for non-domestic respectively. This means a net overall increase of 3.86% or £28 for the average

householder in Limavady and an increase of 4.95% for the non-domestic business.

Councillor Butcher seconded the proposal and on being put to the meeting was declared carried, 9 for, 3 against and 2 abstentions.

NILGA DRAFT RESPONSE TO THE DRDNI CONSULTATION ON PUBLIC TRANSPORT REFORM:

The draft response by NILGA to the DRDNI consultation on Public Transport Reform was tabled and noted.

COURSES/CONFERENCES: -None.

SEAL LEGAL DOCUMENTS: -None.

FORMAL CORRESPONDENCE:

- Cabinet Office – Prospectus April 2010 to March 2011
- 13th Annual Report on Public Appointments (www.ofmdfmi.gov.uk/public-appointments)
- National Industrial Symbiosis Programme – The Pathway to a Low Carbon Sustainable Economy)
- Ombudsman – Rights, Responsibilities and Redress, A Framework for Effective Complaint Handling

ANY OTHER BUSINESS:

Roads Works – Limavady: The Chief Executive agreed to identify who to make contact with regarding ongoing roads work and impact on trade at lower Main Street, Limavady.

NEXT MEETING: - 2 March 2010.

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

Signed: _____
Chair of Meeting