

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

SUPPORT SERVICES COMMITTEE

3 FEBRUARY 2009

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

PRESENT:

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

IN ATTENDANCE:

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

APOLOGIES: - Councillor McElhinney.

MINUTES:

The minutes of meeting held 28 January 2009 were approved and signed on the proposal of Councillor Carten, seconded by Councillor Butcher.

The Chief Executive confirmed that for the most part comments made during discussion were not attributed to a particular member, except when a recorded vote was requested or when a item was proposed and seconded.

MATTERS ARISING:

Revised Rates Estimates: The Director of Support Services informed members that Council had received correspondence earlier in the day from Land & Property Services which outlined that as a result of the recent vacancy inspection exercise carried out, that it was estimated that Limavady Borough Council's revenue would increase by £93,886 in the year 2009/10. The Director pointed out that this amount when used on a balance applied had the effect of reducing the rates increase from 6.86% to 5.49% and that the new lower rate would be used when striking the rate at the Monthly meeting.

PAYMENT OF ACCOUNTS:

The payment of accounts for the month of December 2008 were noted.

HUMAN RESOURCES:

IN COMMITTEE on the proposal of Councillor Chivers, seconded by Councillor Coyle.

The Director of Support Services presented the Human Resources Report dated 2 February 2009, which detailed recruitment & selection, employee training &

development, absenteeism and requests to carry over annual leave. The report was adopted on the proposal of Councillor Coyle, seconded by Councillor Chivers subject to the following:

Northern Ireland Local Government Awards 2009: Members were informed that Council was a finalist in the Northern Ireland Local Government Awards 2009 in the category ‘Change Champions in Practice.’ Council’s submission “Celebration the Total Value of Workplace Health and Wellbeing” detailed the comprehensive programme of Health and Wellbeing initiatives delivered throughout Council during 2008.

It was agreed that the Mayor, Deputy Mayor, Chief Executive, Foyle Health at Work Co-ordinator and other staff who developed and participated in the programme would attend the awards ceremony, which would be held as part of the NILGA Annual Conference on 26 February 2009 in the Armagh City Hotel.

OUT OF COMMITTEE on the proposal of Councillor Ó hOisín, seconded by Councillor Coyle.

ABSENTEEISM IN NORTHERN IRELAND COUNCIL’S 2007/08 – REPORT BY THE CHIEF LOCAL GOVERNMENT AUDITOR:

The Director of Support Services presented the above report on Absenteeism in Northern Ireland Councils for 2007/08 from the Local Government Audit Office. The main findings and recommendations within the report were noted.

Officers were congratulated on it being highlighted in a case study within the report that Limavady Borough Council had reducing absenteeism from 14.35 days in the period 2002-05 to 12.62 days in 2005-08.

REMUNERATION FOR THE POST OF INDEPENDENT CHAIR OF THE INTERNAL AUDIT COMMITTEE:

Councillor Butcher declared an interest in the topic under discussion and left the meeting.

The Director of Support Services outlined that the internal Audit Committee was chaired by a qualified accountant who had wide experience in both private practice and the public sector. He said that the chair had received a very small fee for this important role since the committee had been established in February 2006. It was agreed on the proposal of Councillor Douglas, seconded by Alderman Rankin that in line with other Councils, that the Independent Chair of the internal audit committee would be paid £250 per meeting, plus travelling expenses at 45.8p per mile.

ACCOUNTS FOR 9 MONTHS ENDING 31 DECEMBER 2008:

The Director of Support Services summarised the accounts for the nine months period ending 31 December 2008, which were noted as follows:

- ◆ Surplus - £113k for the 9 months ended 31 December 2008, an adverse variance of £88 from £201k forecast.

- ◆ Technical Services Salaries & Wages - £69k favourable due to (a) Technical Services Manager post not being replaced (b) using employees for capital projects instead of contractors and (c) brown bin collection starting in June and not April.
- ◆ Vehicle Costs - £50k adverse mainly due to higher than expected vehicle hire costs.
- ◆ Energy Costs - £77k adverse mainly due to higher than expected DERV, electricity and heating oil costs.
- ◆ Waste Disposal Gate Fees - £103k favourable due to less Civic Amenity Waste tonnage than expected.
- ◆ Fair Employment Legal Fees - £30k adverse which was money set aside to cover future legal fees.
- ◆ Loan Charges - £67k favourable as no new loans had been taken out in the first nine months.
- ◆ Building Control Fees - £33k adverse due to less house building.

NEXT MEETING: - 3 March 2009.

THIS CONCLUDED THE BUSINESS
(The meeting ended at 7.30 pm)

Chair: _____