

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

SUPPORT SERVICES COMMITTEE

3 MARCH 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 P Butcher, M Carten, B Chivers, L Cubitt, M Coyle, M Donaghy (chair), B Douglas, Councillor McElhinney, C Ó hOisín, E Stevenson and A Robinson.

IN ATTENDANCE:

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

APOLOGIES: - Councillor Brolly.

MINUTES:

The minutes of meeting held 3 February 2009 were approved and signed on the proposal of Councillor Coyle, seconded by Councillor Chivers.

MATTERS ARISING:

Page 2 – Northern Ireland Local Government Awards 2009: The Director of Support Services agreed to pass on members congratulations to staff on Council being one of the top three finalists in the Northern Ireland Local Government Awards 2009 in the category Change Champions in Practice.

PAYMENT OF ACCOUNTS:

The Director of Support Services answered a number of questions relating to the payment of accounts for January 2009 which was approved by Council.

HUMAN RESOURCES:

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

The Director of Support Services presented the Human Resources Report dated 3 March 2009, which detailed recruitment & selection, employee training & development, absenteeism, additional request to carry over annual leave and initiatives identified as part of the Health & Wellbeing Programme 2009. The report was adopted on the proposal of Councillor Carten, seconded by Councillor Ó hOisín subject to the following:

Interchange/Secondment: Concern was raised that the DPP could be without a manager until the possible return of Linda McKee to the post.

Analysis of Cause of Absenteeism: Members were informed that the main causes of absenteeism were back and neck problems, musculo-skeletal problems, stress, depression & mental health issues and genitor urinary/gynaecological illnesses. It was suggested that Council target the reason for the high level of back and neck problems in an attempt to reduce absenteeism to 11 days annualised per year.

Gender Action Plan: The Gender Action Plan for November 2008 to April 2011 was approved by members.

Equality Commission – Welcoming Statement: The Director of Support Services explained that following consideration of Council’s Article 55 Review, the Equality Commission had recommended that Council no longer included a welcoming statement in relation to the Roman Catholic community as there now exists fair participation within the Council. He said it was proposed that Council continue to encourage applications from females who were underrepresented within the Council. Agreed.

Vacancy Control System: The Director of Support Services outlined that the Local Government Staff Commission for Northern Ireland had issued for consultation a ‘Vacancy Control System’ which detailed guidance on managing vacancies and safeguarding the employment of existing council staff as a result of the decisions arising from the Review of Public Administration.

In response to a member he said that Council would take into consideration the recommendation to thoroughly examine replacing posts when the document was adopted later in the year.

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

NOTICE OF MOTION SUBMITTED BY COUNCILLOR STEVENSON:

Councillor Stevenson proposed:

‘That this Council takes no further action on the extension of its use of the bilingual logo thereby maintaining its policy as it was prior to the Support Services meeting on 7/10/08. I made this proposal in the interest of good community and staff relations in an effort to save our ratepayers more expense.’

Speaking in support of the motion Councillor Stevenson stated that one third of staff had complained about wearing PPS equipment with the bilingual logo; the decision to put the logo on clothing was divisive and could cause dissent; option to wear or not to wear the clothing should not be given; it was a pointless exercise as Council would not exist in a few years time and that the proposal to extend the policy to clothing did not take the point of view of staff into consideration. The motion was seconded by Alderman Rankin.

In the debate which followed views expressed were that the corporate logo should be used consistently, that it would create division if some staff wore the logo and others not and that the motion was premature as the result of the EQIA was unknown. It was also pointed out that those unemployed would be happy to wear the clothing as long as they had a job.

The motion was put to the meeting and declared lost, 6 for, 8 against and no abstentions.

ANY OTHER BUSINESS:

Management Letter Recommendation: Members were informed that the Auditor had recommended in the 2007/08 Management Letter that Councillors should sign their travel claims and produce a copy of car insurance which should cover the insurer in connection with his/her business or profession.

NEXT MEETING: - 7 April 2009.

THIS CONCLUDED THE BUSINESS
(The meeting ended at 7.55 pm)

Chair: _____