

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

SUPPORT SERVICES COMMITTEE

3 JUNE 2008

Minutes of meeting held in the Council Offices, 7 Connell Street, Limavady at 7.50 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, Councillor Ó hOisín, J.F. McElhinney and E. Stevenson.

IN ATTENDANCE:

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

APOLOGIES: - None

APPOINTMENT OF CHAIRPERSON:

The Mayor took the chair and sought nominations for the appointment of chair for the year 2008/09. She reminded members that it had been agreed at the 2005 AGM that Sinn Féin would chair this committee.

Councillor Donaghy was agreed on the proposal of Councillor Butcher, seconded by Councillor Brolly.

Councillor Donaghy took the chair and thanked members for nominating her as chairperson.

MINUTES:

The minutes of meeting dated 6 May 2008 were approved and signed on the proposal of Councillor Butcher, seconded by Alderman Rankin.

MATTERS ARISING: - None.

PAYMENT OF ACCOUNTS:

The payment of accounts for the month of April 2008 was approved on the proposal of Councillor Butcher, seconded by Councillor Coyle.

ACCOUNTS FOR 12 MONTHS ENDING 31 MARCH 2008:

The Director of Support Services presented the accounts for 12 month ending 31 March 2008, which showed a surplus of £11k for the year. He highlighted the main variances from budgeted as follows:|

- ◆ Single Status job evaluation (wages) had resulted in an adverse variance of £159k, higher than expected due to job redesign.

- ◆ Single Status and other job evaluations (salaries) had resulted in an adverse variance of £79k due to staff buyout when Council moved from 35 to 37 hour contracts and final results of 2003 job evaluation.
- ◆ Vehicle costs were £91k adverse due to higher fuel prices and additional vehicle hire.
- ◆ Waste Disposal Gate Fees were £60k favourable as there was less tonnage than expected, especially from Civic Amenity Waste (mixed) and Central Composting (brown bins).
- ◆ Contribution to voluntary body were £74 adverse due to payment to Feeny Community Association which was part of the £500k contributions to community/voluntary groups agreed in 2003/04.
- ◆ Central overheads were £47k adverse main reason being increased computer related expenditure, the recruitment of HR Manager and staff uniforms.
- ◆ Loan charges were £130k favourable as only 3 loans were taken out in 2007/08 and all in the last week of March 2008.
- ◆ Income from RVLC were £53k favourable due to increased pool usage and increased usage of main and minor halls.
- ◆ Income from Building Control was £86k adverse. In 2006/07 a large amount of income was received due to a statutory deadline and the effect of this had been to reduce the income in 2007/08, with the other main factor being the downturn in the property market.
- ◆ The General Grant was £63k favourable as original grant allocation for 2007/08 was revised by the DOE to £1,699k after the rates were struck.

The Director of Support Services explained in more detail the adverse/favourable variances for salaries and wages; other expenditure; loan charges; other income; grants and the district rates. The accounts as presented were approved on the proposal of Councillor Coyle, seconded by Alderman Robinson.

COUNCILLORS' ALLOWANCES & EXPENSES FOR YEAR 1 APRIL 2007 – 31 MARCH 2008:

The Director of Support Services outlined details of Councillors allowances & expenditure for year 2007/08. This included details of basic allowance, special responsibility allowance, mileage allowance, conference costs and other expenses. In response to a query, the Director of Support Services explained that other expenses included mobile phones and equipment. It was agreed that attendance figures at Council meetings would be circulated to members.

HUMAN RESOURCES:

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

The Director of Support Services presented the Human Resources Report dated 3 June 2008 which detailed recruitment & selection, employee training & development and absenteeism. The report was adopted on the proposal of Councillor Butcher, seconded by Councillor Coyle subject to the following:

- Members were informed that following the retirement of Technical Services Manager due to ill health, it was intended to review the structure of the Technical Services Department and to consider options which were available

for the future management of the service. It was agreed that a report would be forwarded to members at the August 2008 meeting.

- The Director of Support Services outlined that the theme of the annual staff conference to be held 24 September 2008 in the Radisson Hotel was Unlocking Potential. He said it was intended to provide employees with an overview of the Council's strategic and operational goals over the next year but also to provide them with the opportunity to look ahead to RPA and to consider challenges which would exist and how to best prepare to meet these. Members noted that the conference would continue to promote Health & Wellbeing issues and the work already started by the Health & Wellbeing Committee.
- The Director of Support Services reminded members that in April 2007 Council had approved the use of Carecall to provide an Employee Assistance programme for one year. He said managing absence from work due to stress continued to be a priority for Council and the Chief Local Government Auditor had highlighted the importance of having mechanisms in place to tackle this.

The Director of Support Services answered queries in relation to absenteeism and provided statistics on use of Carecall over the year. It was agreed that Council would continue to avail of the services of Carecall at a cost of £2,228 plus £70 per counselling session for the year 2008/09.

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

ANY OTHER BUSINESS:

- Members were informed that the Department of Environment had revised the levels of travelling allowance payable to members of district councils where expenditure was incurred in the performance of an approved duty and that the was set at 58.7p per mill, effective from 1 April 2008.
- It was agreed on the proposal of Councillor Coyle, seconded by Councillor Butcher that the Chief Executive, Director of Support Services, Director of Environmental Services, Director of Development and the Finance Manager would be approved as cheque signatures for Councils banking details with Northern Bank.
- In response to a query, the Director of Support Services explained that Council's position on the Domestic District Rate Table had been largely determined by the change since 2007/08 from rates calculated using NAV rental values to that of using capital values of properties.
- Council was congratulated on its spring clean initiative.
- It was agreed that complaints received in relation to litter being dropped and bins removed in lower main street would be forwarded to Technical Services Department.

NEXT MEETING: - 5 August 2008.

THIS CONCLUDED THE BUSINESS
(The meeting ended at 8.20 pm)

Chair: _____