

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

**SUPPORT SERVICES COMMITTEE**

**03 OCTOBER 2006**

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

**PRESENT:**

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

**IN ATTENDANCE:**

Committee Clerk, Director of Support Services and Corporate Policy Officer.

**APOLOGIES** - none

**PRESENTATION BY ULTACH:**

The chair welcomed Mr Gordon McCoy, Development Officer ULTACH to the meeting.

Mr McCoy explained that the principal aim of ULTACH was to promote the Irish language throughout the entire community of Northern Ireland and to encourage cross-community involvement in the language. He said the ULTACH Trust had been established in 1989 and was originally supported by both the Central Community Relations Unit, a branch of the Department of Finance and Personnel in Northern Ireland and by the Department of the Gaeltacht in the Republic of Ireland. He added that the Trust had been for some time the only dedicated Irish language funding body in Northern Ireland and since 1990 £1.5 million had been distributed in grant aid to hundreds of Irish language projects. Members noted that the Trusts key area of activity included:

- development learning resources;
- forming strategic partnerships with relevant community, research, educational and statutory agencies;
- advising government and statutory agencies on language planning and policy issues;
- campaigning for the establishment of an Irish-language broadcasting sector in Northern Ireland;
- publishing material on the Irish language arts policy for Northern Ireland;
- initiating innovative language projects and
- funding Irish language projects.

Mr McCoy clarified that he had studied the experiences of contemporary Protestant learners of the language and other members of the Trust had explored the hidden tradition of Protestant involvement with Irish in the past. He said the

Trust sought to identify obstacles to Protestant and unionist engagement with the language and to raise awareness within the Catholic and nationalist community to the difficulties experienced by learners from other traditions.

Mr McCoy outlined that 10% of the population had some knowledge of Irish, either in the form of placenames, surnames or by common everyday words used throughout Ulster. He said Rev. Bill Boyd, a retired Presbyterian minister had set up a workshop group 'An Tor ar Lasadh' (The Burning Bush), which meets on the third Sunday of each month in Fitzroy Presbyterian Church and that the group welcomed Catholics and other speakers of Irish. He added that other projects included the publication in Irish of the Church of Ireland's 'Book of Common Prayer'.

Mr McCoy answered a number of questions in relation to use of the Irish language and to the benefits of speaking Irish. The chair thanked Mr Coy for attending the meeting.

#### **MINUTES:**

The minutes of meeting dated 5 September 2006 were approved on the proposal of Councillor Brolly, seconded by Councillor Butcher.

#### **MATTERS ARISING:**

**Roads Service – Overhanging Branches:** The Director of Support Services explained that Roads Service staff carried out inspections to identify defects likely to create hazard to road users, including identification of trees which might prevent safe passage to vehicles. He said the landowner alongside Dreenagh Estate was making arrangement with the PSNI regarding road closures for a short period in order to trim the trees. Members noted that the trees at Tamlogh Bridge had been trimmed.

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

The payment of accounts for the month of August 2006 were signed and approved on the proposal of Councillor Butcher, seconded by Councillor Butcher.

It was suggested that Council ask for feedback regarding LATCH Rock the Valley Festival.

#### **HUMAN RESOURCES:**

**IN COMMITTEE:** The Director of Support Services presented the Human Resources Report and enlarged thereon. The report was adopted on the proposal of Councillor Carten, seconded by Councillor Butcher subject to the following:

**Diversity, Equality and Good Relations Training:** The Director of Support Services outlined that Red Hat Consulting have submitted proposals for delivering Diversity, Equality and Good Relations Training and that part funding was being sought from the Local Government Training Group. In response to the suggestion that the Good Relations Officer deliver the training, the Director of Support Services said as Red Hat Consulting had previously been employed by Council to draw up a Good Relations Strategy, it would be preferable if this organisation would be used to provide training for elected members and staff.

**Single Status Job Evaluations:** Members noted that the review of all remaining job evaluations required under single status was underway and that when all job descriptions were updated these would be reviewed by a consistency panel comprising the SMT and HR Manager for submission to BIS for evaluation by the end of October 2006. **OUT OF COMMITTEE.**

**EMPLOYEE STATISTICS – FAIR EMPLOYMENT MONITORING RETURN 2006:**

The Director of Support Services explained that under the Fair Employment (NI) Order 1998, registered employees and public authorities had to complete a Fair Employment Monitoring Return. Members noted the statistics within the monitoring return in relation to gender and religious persuasion of Council employees.

Councillor Cubitt suggested that the figure for total employees was inaccurate as this did not take into consideration agency staff. The Director of Support Services agreed to provide details of total employees, including agency staff employed by Council at the end of September 2006.

**APPRAISAL AUDIT – REORGANISATION, IMPLEMENTATION PROPOSALS:**

The Director of Support Services reminded members that following decision in April 2003 to carry out an appraisal audit of Council services, ASM Howath/Capita had been appointed and in May 2004 Council adopted in principle the report and recommendations provided by the consultants. He said a Change Management Sub Committee had been established and this had met on a number of occasions between June 2004 and April 2005 to oversee the implementation of the Audit recommendations. He added that the recommendations had been implemented in a phased process, with Phase 1 being the establishment of the new Directorates and appointment of Directors.

Members noted that a Cross Departmental Implementation Team had been established in October 2004 and that this comprised of officers at senior officer level (third tier) across the range of Council services. Members also noted that the team produced a report in November 2004 (adopted 1 July 2005) which concurred with the recommendations of the Appraisal Audit with respect to creation of three Directorate structure together with the Town Clerks Office but this also went on to consider the impact that such a restructure would have on staffing resources throughout the organisation and the ability of the new structure to deliver continuity of service. The Implementation Team made further recommendations as to how their level and departments should be further restructured.

A Reorganisation Implementation proposal was produced and adopted by Council in August 2005 and the Director of Support Services explained the main recommendations in this proposal, provided a summary by Directorate of the ongoing costs/savings over the remaining cycle of the Council, costs associated with the implementation of the above recommendations and members noted that the total cost would be £138K, which excluded the Appraisal Audit cost of £39K and the recruitment costs associated with replacement of staff. Noted.

**REPLACEMENT OF COUNCIL'S PHOTOCOPIERS:**

It was agreed on the proposal of Councillor Butcher, seconded by Councillor Cubitt to accept tender of £8,815 submitted by Calvert for Council photocopiers.

**REPORT & DRAFT POLICY STATEMENT FROM EMBLEMS WORKING GROUP:**

The Director of Support Services explained that an amended Report & Draft Policy Statement from the Emblems Working Group had been tabled for information. Councillor Cubitt said members should be given reports 7 days before the meeting and proposed that the report be discussed at the October 2006 Monthly meeting. Alderman Robinson seconded the proposal.

The chair pointed out that he had not been consulted regarding this agenda item and said in the future he would like to be made aware of agenda items before distribution to members.

The proposal to discuss the report at the Monthly meeting was put to the meeting and declared carried, with 9 voting for and 6 against.

**FUNDING TOWARDS CAMPAIGN BY NORTHERN CORRIDOR RAILWAYS GROUP:**

The Director of Support Services explained that the Northern Corridor Railway Group had decided to instigate a number of actions within a required budget of £30,000 and that the cost to each Council based on rateable valuations. It was agreed on the proposal of Councillor Robinson, seconded by Alderman Rankin to give final confirmation of Council's willingness to commit £2,022.09 to this continuing effort to secure this vital infrastructure for the region.

**ANY OTHER BUSINESS:**

**Striking of Rate for 2007/08:** It was agreed that a special meeting to discuss the estimates for 2007/08 would be held after the Environmental Services Meeting on 16 January 2007.

**Roads Service Autumn Consultation:** The Director of Support Services reported that Road Service had requested a meeting with Council to present their Autumn Report and recommended that this be held directly after the Support Services meeting on 5 December 2006. Alderman Robinson objected to two meetings being held on the same night but was advised that due to the large number of requests for presentation, this was the only date acceptable to Roads Service. On being put to the meeting the recommended date was carried, with 8 voting for, 6 against and 1 abstention.

**Presentation by Taxi Firms:** Councillor Brolly requested that a local taxi firm present their views to Council regarding proposal for a Draft Order in Council: The Taxis (Northern Ireland) Order 2006. Agreed.

**13<sup>th</sup> Annual Development Control Forum:** It was agreed that Councillor Butcher would attend the above conference to be held 25 October 2006 in Belfast City Hall at a cost of £75.

**Shackleton Barracks, Ballykelly:** The Director of Support Services informed members that representatives from Limavady Borough Council along with representatives from other areas of the public sector were invited to view the facilities at Ballykelly on Thursday 12 October at 11 am. Noted.

**NEXT MEETING** – 7 November 2006.

**THIS CONCLUDED THE BUSINESS**  
(The meeting ended at 8.45 pm)

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_  
**Chair of Meeting**