

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

**MONTHLY COUNCIL MEETING
4 DECEMBER 2012**

Minutes of meeting held in the Council Offices, 7 Connell Street, Limavady at 8.35 pm on the above date.

PRESENT:

In the Chair: Councillor C McLaughlin.

Aldermen M Coyle, J Rankin, G Robinson. Councillors O Beattie, A Brolly, B Chivers, B Douglas, T McCaul, J McCorkell, S McGlinchey, G Mullan, D Nicholl, A Robinson and E Stevenson.

IN ATTENDANCE:

Chief Executive, Head of Finance and the Committee Clerk

APOLOGIES: None

MINUTES:

The minutes of meeting held 6 November 2012 were approved and signed on the proposal of Alderman G Robinson, seconded by Councillor S McGlinchey subject to the following amendment:

Page 2 – Treasury Management Plan Mid-Year Review – 30 September 2012 – second paragraph: Councillor Douglas queried the accuracy of the wording “Members were of the opinion that this money must be used on capital projects which would give maximum benefit to ratepayers especially in areas of deprivation” and stated that he believed that it was not fully discussed at the meeting and no decision had been taken. After discussion Councillor McCorkell suggested that if it was a point of accuracy he proposed that the wording be amended to “*members were advised that this money must be used on capital projects which would give maximum benefits to rate payers in areas of deprivation*”. The proposal was seconded by Councillor G Mullan and members agreed to the amendment to the minutes. Councillor B Douglas accepted the amended wording.

MATTERS ARISING: -

Page 5 – Business Waste Disposal – It was agreed that the Director of Environmental Services would bring the information regarding business waste disposal to the next Environmental Service Committee meeting on the 18 December 2012.

CHIEF EXECUTIVES REPORT:

The Chief Executive presented his report for December 2012 as follows:

RPA Update: The Chief Executive reported that the DOE's bid for the funding to cover the transition costs had yet to be decided upon by the Executive. He explained that the funding bid of £40m only covered costs of a one off nature necessary to transition by 2015 such as change management staff, attendance costs and severance cost for outgoing Councillors but would not cover costs associated with changes which lead to future savings such as staff severance. He advised that the Minister had confirmed the decision to progress the setting up of Statutory Transition Committees which would have the powers to enable them to make key decisions in preparation for the Shadow Council following elections in June 2014. He continued that the Transition Management Team would meet monthly and had finalised an initial implementation plan to cover 12 key and important issues to ensure a smooth transition of services.

Officer Working Groups have been established covering Development Services, Environmental Services, Finance/ICT, Human Resources and Chief Executive's Group.

Reform/Inform Issue 5 – 4 December 2012 (DOE): The Chief Executive summarised the information provided in the document which has been e-mailed to members for information.

- 550 days to the election of 11 new Councils in 2014 and 850 days until these new Councils assume full responsibility in 2015.
- No going back, at the point of no return.
- Funding bid circulated to Executive Ministers
- If package of funding agreed it will only be a contribution. Funding will need to come from “a family of funds”. Councils may need to consider re-profiling debt, borrowing through capitalisation and making efficiencies.
- Transferring functions – main functions are planning, (DOE), urban regeneration (DRD), local sports facility (DCAL) and rural development (DARD).
- Reform programme delivery structures now included NILGA office bearers on the Regional Transition Committee. A political reference group has been established. Voluntary Transition Committees will become statutory next year.
- The Local Government (Reorganisation) Bill - Final policy proposals to go to Executive – this will ensure legislation is in place in good time.
- Minister to consult on Severance for Councillors to argue a fully funded severance scheme.
- Remuneration panel to be established to consider the appropriate level of remuneration for Councillors.
- The financial implications of rates and debt convergence to be examined.

It was agreed on the proposal of Alderman M Coyle, seconded by Councillor G Mullan that Council should write to the OFMDFM and to the Finance Minister encouraging them to look at the bid put forward by Minister Attwood. Councillor McCorkell suggested that the letter should also ask about the implication of possible 20% increase on our rates.

Members agreed to Councillor McCorkell's addition to the letter about the rates implications

RGRJF – issue 13 – November 2012

The CE highlighted the main points on this bulletin which included the Draft Scheme of Transfer for Local Government Staff and the RPA Staff Severance Scheme for Local Government.

Magilligan Prison Update – The Chief Executive confirmed that a meeting had taken place between prison officials, Chief Executives and Councillors. He reported that there was a suggestion from the Minister that there would be some form of Prison Services at Magilligan for lower category prisoners but there was a need to look at rehabilitation issues for offenders. A further meeting will be held in Limavady Borough Council 19 December 2012.

Social Investment Fund – The Chief Executive recapped on the objectives of the Social Investment Fund (SIF) and the initiatives from OFMDFM which plan to provide £80m to target the zones of high level deprivation. Consultation had taken place and now 9 zones have been identified - Limavady is in the western zone with Fermanagh, Omagh and Strabane. In response to a members query about the equal division of funding between the 9 zones, the Chief Executive confirmed that the zones would not have an apportionment of this fund and there would be no guarantee of any funds going to a particular area But the money would have to be spent by March 2015. He went on to reiterate the four key themes of the SIF and advised that a call had been put out for people to apply to join the steering groups, which would have political and community sector representation and one Chief Executive for each zone. Nominations were still required for 2 representatives from the private/business sector and 2 nominations from statutory bodies. He advised that a meeting with the steering group would be held when the long list of projects had been prepared and from that 10 projects needed to be identified and could include small/large projects e.g. Community Infrastructure/Community halls. OFMDFM have taken a keen interest and will apply criteria to these projects and the results will be known after Christmas. The final date for approach for Technical Assistance is Friday 7 December, and the list must be with OFMDFM by 18 December. Whilst the Chief Executive acknowledged that there was no guarantee that this Borough would receive any funding he agreed that we had high levels of dereliction in the Borough which could be targeted. Ultimately it would boil down to who would be best able to spend this money in the time frame.

Dungiven Right of Way issue – The Chief Executive confirmed that in line with the decision taken at the previous meeting a formal intention to defend the “Equity Civil Bill” has been entered and the Council has been given a brief on the issue by our Solicitor.

Scorecard Report – the scorecard report for the period July – September 2012 was agreed.

Use of Council Car Park over Christmas period – Council agreed to the use of the staff car park to members of the public on the run up to Christmas from 9am-6pm on the following dates:

8, 15 and 24 December 2012. Council’s insurers to be advised and a disclaimer notice to be put in place.

PRESENTATIONS TO COUNCIL:

Post Office Ltd: It was agreed that Mr Mark Gibson, Senior Stakeholder from Post Office Ltd would address members on upcoming changes to the Post Office Network at the Monthly Council meeting on the 8 January 2013.

British Telecom: Members agreed that Mr Michael Spiers, Senior Wholesale Services Manager (BT Ireland) would update members on the level of

connectivity for fibreoptic broadband in the Borough at the Development Committee meeting on 15 January 2013.

Group Environmental Health Services: Agreed that Mr B Heywood, Group Environmental Health Officer would present the Group Environmental Health Services annual report at the Environmental Services meeting on 18 December 2012.

The Chief Executive's report was approved on the proposal of Councillor G Mullan and seconded by Councillor B Chivers.

EXTERNAL MINUTES NOTED:

- Western Group Environmental Health Committee 4 September 2012 noted

NOTICE OF MOTION SUBMITTED BY COUNCILLOR A BROLLY:

Councillor Brolly proposed, seconded by Councillor T McCaul

“That this Council

Rejects the welfare cuts agenda and austerity policies being pursued at Westminster which are targeted at the most vulnerable and disadvantaged in our society and which will create significant hardship and difficulties for many individuals and families living in already socially disadvantaged communities.

Call on the Assembly to amend the Welfare Reform Bill consistent with the specific circumstances and needs of the people living in the north of Ireland and to work together to ensure that the most vulnerable in our society are protected.”

During discussion the following points were made:

- Every person on DLA would be assessed and it was estimated that 90% of those will fail.
- If the reform does not proceed, it would cost in the region of £1.2 billion and hospitals may be closed as a result.
- Sinn Fein should have taken their concerns to Westminster where they could have blocked the bill.
- First time in 60 years there has been a reform of the Welfare system but within the reform there will be a state of protection for those with the greatest need.
- It will be all the people who will suffer – we need to think of those who have lost their jobs.

Councillor A Robinson proposed, seconded by Alderman J Rankin that the motion be amended to

“That this Council recognises that the Welfare Reform Bill poses significant challenges to the people of Northern Ireland but welcomes the changes achieved by DSD from HM Government in this regard and urges the Executive to continue the efforts made to date to protect the vulnerable and disadvantaged”.

In the discussion that followed the following points were made:

- Concerns raised over the direct payment of rent benefits to tenants
- Concerns raised over the multiple occupancy of houses
- More simple benefits system required.

Councillor A Robinson submitted the amendment in writing to the Chair and it was read it out again to members. The amended motion was seconded by Alderman J Rankin and when put to the vote it was declared lost 6 votes for, 9 votes against.

Councillor A Brolly's original motion, seconded by Councillor T McCaul was read out again and when put to the vote the motion was carried 9 votes for, 6 votes against.

CONSULTATIONS:

Members reviewed and noted the consultation list for December 2012.

COURSES/CONFERENCES:

NILGA Annual Conference and Exhibition, Thursday 28th February 2012 in the Everglades hotel Londonderry – Delegate Fee £149 plus VAT. Agreed that Alderman Coyle and Councillor Nicholl attend this conference.

Local Government Staff Commission, People and Organisation Development Strategic Framework Conference “Supporting Reform and the ICE Agenda” on Thursday 13th and Friday 14th December at the La Mon Hotel and Country Club, Belfast – delegate fee £150 (Incl. Vat). Overnight accommodation £65. Agreed that 2 Officers will be attending this conference.

FORMAL CORRESPONDENCE:

- Patient and Client Council's Our plan 2012-2015.
- Children with Disabilities Strategic Alliance “Children with Disabilities Manifesto Review and Update 2012”.
- Western Education and Library Board Annual Report and Accounts 2011/12.
- The Historic monuments Council – State Care Monument Visitation Survey, Executive Summary.
- The Future Homes Commission Final Report “Building the Homes and Communities Britain Needs”.

SEAL LEGAL DOCUMENTS: It was agreed on the proposal of Alderman Coyle seconded by Councillor McGlinchey that the NIE – wayleave agreement for an electric vehicle charge post at Benone Tourist Centre be signed.

ANY OTHER BUSINESS:

Extension of Slurry Spreading period: the CEO tabled a copy of the reply from Minister Alex Atwood in connection with the extension of the slurry spreading period which clarified the regulations pertaining to the spreading of the slurry.

Provision of a Railway Halt at Ballykelly: A copy of the reply from Michelle O'Neill, Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development was tabled to members,

she confirmed that she has written to Minister Kennedy, Minister of Regional Development to seek a meeting with the view to discussing with him the viability of installing a halt at Ballykelly to facilitate the Civil Servants relocating to DARD Headquarters in Ballykelly.

Translink Invite: The Chief Executive drew members' attention to an invite from Translink to attend a Hard Hat Tour of the Bannbridge/Londonderry Line Upgrade Works on December 18th 2012 at 9.30am, members to advise the Chief Executives Department if they wished to attend.

Dungiven PSNI Station: Councillor A Brolly proposed that in light of the Consultants report on the feasibility study for Community Sports Facilities in Dungiven there was a need for the Chief Executive to write to the Policing Partnership Board and to the Policing Estates Officer asking them to gift the disused Police Station to the Community. The Chief Executive explained that irrespective of the feasibility study, Council was within its rights to "express an interest" at this stage.

Members agreed that the Chief Executive would write to the Policing Board and to the Policing Estate Officer to register an expression of interest in acquiring the disused PSNI Station for the use of the local community.

Civic Reception – It was agreed on the proposal on Councillor Robinson seconded by Councillor Mullan that a civic reception be held for Ryan O'Neill and Leigh Harrison who were successful at becoming British Isles Indoor Bowling Champions.

NEXT MEETING: - 8 January 2013

THE BUSINESS CONCLUDED AT 8.15 PM

Signed: _____
Chair of Meeting