

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

**MONTHLY COUNCIL MEETING
5 MARCH 2013**

Minutes of meeting held in the Council Offices, 7 Connell Street, Limavady at 7.45 pm on the above date.

PRESENT:

In the Chair: Councillor C McLaughlin.

Aldermen M Coyle, J Rankin and 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, Director of Development and the Committee Clerk.

APOLOGIES: - None.

PRESENTATION BY NIPSA ON ABOLITION OF NIHE:

The Chair welcomed Ms Alison Millar, Mr John McCaffrey and Mr Eamon McLaughlin, NIPSA to the meeting.

Ms Millar informed members that the Minister for Social Development announced on 9 January 2013 proposals for reform of the Social Housing Programme. She said the Minister claimed that his proposals on the way forward had been agreed by the Executive on 13 December 2012, however the only thing that had been agreed was to enter into a process of considering the future delivery of social housing and the mechanisms for that. She stressed that NIPSA would suggest that the announcement signalled the demise, destruction and abolition of the NIHE. She added that the proposals included the abolition of the Housing Council without any consultation with the housing sector.

Ms Millar referred to the reasons for the current housing crisis, the role of the Housing Executive and Housing Associations in providing social housing, the importance of accountability to the Department, potential job losses & higher rents if the proposals went ahead.

Points raised in the discussion which followed included:

- the Ministers proposals were rash in light of RPA and that the SDLP would be asking the Minister to reconsider the proposals;
- the Minister should consider alternative proposals around housing reform;
- given the number of unfinished housing developments the Department should be looking towards co-operation to ensure these were completed;
- the ease of contacting the local Housing Executive office compared with the difficulty in contacting Housing Associations was highlighted;

- Housing Associations in Northern Ireland did not have the capacity to take on 9,000 Housing Executive properties and concern was raised that English or Scottish Housing Associations would be looking after the properties and
- it was suggested that a representative from the Department of Social Development attend a council meeting;

Ms Miller requested that Council consider passing a motion to ensure that tenants, prospective tenants and Housing Executive staff were fully consulted on any proposals which would affect them and to reject the Minister's proposal on the strategic direction to split the NIHE into a Regional Housing Body, with separate landlord functions.

The Chair thanked the deputation from NIPSA for attending the meeting.

MINUTES:

The minutes of meeting held 5 February 2013 were approved on the proposal of Alderman Coyle, seconded by Councillor Chivers.

MATTERS ARISING: - None.

PRESENTATION BY OTIUM – ECONOMIC APPRAISAL REPORT ON DUNGIVEN SPORT & LEISURE FACILITIES:

IN COMMITTEE: The Chair welcomed Mr Tony Morrison, Otium Leisure Consultancy to the meeting.

Mr Morrison presented an overview of the Economic Appraisal relating to the development of indoor and outdoor sports facilities for Dungiven and surrounding areas. This included assessment of need and demand; the project aims and objectives; identification and costing of options; cost & benefits and risks & uncertainties. He outlined details of six options which had been ranked by net present cost divided by the non-monetary score. On the basis of the economic appraisal it was recommended that Option 2 be adopted as the preferred Option, that is:

- a new indoor community sports complex and MUGA (70m x 30m) at Ballyquin Road;
- outdoor facilities at Curragh Road – 6 room changing pavilion, multi-sport 3G floodlit and fenced pitch, approximately 150m x 104m including run off;
- multi-sport grass pitch, approximately 140m x 90m including run off;
- existing grass soccer pitch retained and upgraded approximately 105m x 70m including run-off;
- existing shale pitch retained, approximately 60m x 40m;
- car parking and
- existing play area retained.

There following a discussion in which several points were made for and against the proposals. Alderman M Coyle proposed, seconded by Councillor A Brolly that Council approve the recommendation and adopt Option 2 as the preferred Option which would cost in the region of £7.1 million.

The proposal was put to the meeting and declared carried, 9 for and 6 against.
OUT OF COMMITTEE.

CHIEF EXECUTIVES REPORT:

The Chief Executive presented his report for March 2013, which was approved on the proposal of Alderman Robinson, seconded by Alderman Coyle subject to the following:

RPA: The Chief Executive informed members that at a meeting held on 21 February 2013 it had been agreed that the Causeway Coast & Glens Voluntary Transition Committee would meet monthly, with the next meeting due to be held on 28 March 2013 in Ballymoney Borough Council offices. A copy of the minute from meeting held on 3 January 2013 was circulated for information.

The Chief Executive explained that on 21 February 2013 Minister Attwood wrote to advise that as a result of extensive negotiations, the Executive were expected to announce a funding package of £47.8 million to support local government reform. He said that the Minister stated that he had listened carefully to the views of Councils on costs and agreed that such costs for local government reform should not be passed to the ratepayer.

It was noted that £13.8 million would be allocated over the next two years to fund the new councils working in shadow form; elected members would be invited to respond to a consultation on Councillor Severance Package; £4 million would be committed to cover the cost of borrowing for ICT costs and systems convergence for the next two financial years and £30 million would be committed for rates convergence.

The Chief Executive outlined that the Minister stressed that it was important that Councils join in getting fresh momentum behind the reform process and to push ahead with implementation workstreams with the help of the funding package.

Network NI: The Chief Executive outlined that the DoE were offering funding of £13.5k towards the costs of joining Network NI, which would enhance council's ability to modernise their systems and service delivery in accordance with the requirements placed upon them through RPA. He said that the specific objectives of the project included:

- to provide Departments, which were devolving functions, a secure portal that would enable a seamless transfer of the functions and maintain service delivery;
- to enable individual councils to communicate safely and securely within their new council clusters;
- to provide a platform that will enable the new council clusters to communicate safely and securely with each other and
- to provide a network that would allow the new council cluster to share services.

The Chief Executive pointed out that if Council accepted the offer of funding, it would be responsible for a £10k per year maintenance fee.

It was agreed on the proposal of Councillor J McCorkell, seconded by Alderman J Rankin to accept the terms and conditions of the DoE's letter of offer on funding and for Council to take responsibility for the annual maintenance fee.

Magilligan Prison Update: The Chief Executive informed members that the inaugural meeting of the Magilligan Prison Elected Members Liaison Group was held on Monday 4 March 2013. He explained that representatives from Limavady, Ballymoney and Coleraine councils were in attendance to hear a presentation on the Northern Ireland Prison Service (NIPS) estate strategy; NIPS employability strategy and on partnership working. He said that Minister Ford was due to make a statement to the Assembly on 19 March 2013 to confirm that Magilligan Prison was to remain open subject to evidence being provided that issues around rehabilitation were being addressed. He added that the next stage for the councils would be to issue a briefing to the public that provision was being made for work placements in the area and that this was extended not just to councils but to all sectors of the community.

Following discussion it was agreed that the NIPS would be invited to present details of their employability strategy and partnership working to the full Council.

Capacity Building & Training in Respect of the Transfer of Planning Functions: The Chief Executive referred to letter from Helena O'Toole which invited members and officers to contribute to the initial scoping exercise to pull together baseline information and to forward the names of organisations that had made approaches on training in respect of the transfer of planning functions. Members were also requested to provide information on areas which members would like to see covered by a future training and capacity building action plan. It was stressed that it was important that training courses should be consistent to avoid confusion by members. It was suggested that the new Planning Reform Bill be reviewed as there was a need to know what responsibilities were coming to Council. Government control and ethical standards was highlighted as being of importance in light of the fact that elected members were often lobbied. It was pointed out that training was essential on the power and role of councillors on how to make decisions around planning. The Chief Executive agreed to forward the points made to Ms O'Toole.

District Housing Plan: It was agreed that the Housing Executive would present their district housing plan to Council at the Development Services meeting to be held on 18 June 2013.

Dungiven PSNI Station: The Chief Executive advised that an expression of interest had been submitted for purchase of the former PSNI station in Dungiven. He said the Chief Inspector Sam Donaldson was seeking local opinion through the Council on whether or not to recommend that the station be demolished before possible disposal which could take up to 12 months or to dispose of the property as is in which case disposal could be completed by May/June 2013.

It was queried what it would cost Council to purchase the site if the station was demolished and the cost if not demolished. It was suggested that Council ask the PSNI if they were aware of any hazards on site, particularly as the site had been used as a petrol station in the past. The Chief Executive agreed to highlight the points made with the PSNI.

EXTERNAL MINUTES NOTED: - None.

CONSULTATIONS:

Members reviewed the consultation list for March 2013. It was agreed that details of the consultation from the Loughs Agency on proposed Foyle Area and Carlingford Area Complimentary Permit Regulations 2013 would be forwarded to elected members and that the consultation would be brought back to Council in April 2013 for discussion.

COURSES/CONFERENCES:

- It was agreed that Councillor D Nicholl would attend the Irish Planning Institute Conference ‘Promoting Innovation: The Future Role of Planning’ being held on 25-26 April 2013 in Belfast City Hall at a cost of £256. .

FORMAL CORRESPONDENCE:

- The Real guide to VfM in Housing, Saving Money and Protecting Standards
- Annual Report to Public Bodies for year ending 31 March 2012
- Consumer Council Magazine – Utility Week

SEAL LEGAL DOCUMENTS: - None.

ANY OTHER BUSINESS:

Ecar Event: Members were advised that an Ecar event that was being held on 6 to 8 March 2013 in Titanic Quarter Belfast and that public organisation were invited to attend on the 7 March, with the 8 March 2013 being open to the general public.

Magilligan Ferry & Building: IN COMMITTEE. The Director of Development updated members on contract for the Ferry Service & use of the Terminal Building. Following discussion, it was suggested that Council would try to help Mr Norman Thorpe find a suitable location for the Aviation Museum which was currently housed in the Terminal Building. Alderman G Robinson said he would raise the request for a site at Shackleton with OFMDFM and suggested that officers meet Mr Thorpe with regard to finding an alternative location for the museum. **OUT OF COMMITTEE.**

Addendum to Monthly Meeting: A report was circulated to Council regarding a Notice of Application for Renewal of Registration of a Club and Notice of Application for the Transfer of a Licence. Council had no objection to the application for the Renewal of Registration of a Club from St Canices Gaelic Athletic Club, Dungiven. Council also had no objection to the application for the Transfer of a Liquor Licence to Morans Retail Ltd, Supervalu, Ballykelly.

NEXT MEETING: - 9 April 2013.

THE BUSINESS CONCLUDED AT 10.45 PM

Signed: _____
Chair of Meeting