

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

**SUPPORT SERVICES COMMITTEE
07 NOVEMBER 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, L Cubitt, M Donaghy, B Douglas, J F McElhinney (chair), C Ó hOisín, A Robinson and E Stevenson.

IN ATTENDANCE:

Committee Clerk and Director of Support Services.

APOLOGIES – Councillor Coyle

CHAIR OF MEETING:

In the absence of Councillor Coyle, it was agreed on the proposal of Councillor Brolly, seconded by Councillor Ó hOisín that the Mayor would chair the meeting.

PRESENTATION BY NILGA:

The chair welcomed Ms Heather Moorhead, Chief Executive and Mr Sean McPeake, President of NILGA to the meeting.

Ms Moorhead explained that NILGA was undertaking a process supported by the Improvement and Development Agency (IDeA) to model out future arrangement in light of RPA and in parallel with this process, DoE and other stakeholders were working with the IDeA to develop robust implementation structures to ensure political leadership would be at the centre of the RPA process.

Ms Moorhead outlined that officer bearers agreed with the recommendations set out within the IDeA final report for a strengthened NILGA to create a strong effective local government; to have greater responsibility within the modernisation process and remain accurately aware of the challenges facing all stakeholders.

Members noted that the office bearers from NILGA agreed that:

- Councils were a key stakeholders;
- there was a need to prioritise urgent issues;
- there should not be a greater level of subscriptions from Council but funding should be sought from central government and
- that additional staff (senior and administrative) were required by NILGA to facilitate modernisation over the next 2 – 3 years.

Ms Moorhead outlined that to further encourage confidence in NILGA, the office bearers proposed that:

- NILGA design a policy framework to be agreed with all Councils and that the Executive be given delegated authority to act within that framework;
- any decisions which would fall outside the framework would be further consulted upon and discussed in more detail at full meetings and that
- the decision making process be defined, transparent, accountable and timely.

Ms Moorhead requested that Council support NILGA for taking this strategic approach and commit to engage by having RPA a standing item on Council agenda. She said the key question was whether Councils supported the need to have full partnership arrangements with central government and if yes, give support to a renewed role for NILGA.

Ms Moorhead and Mr McPeake answered a number of queries regarding modelling NILGA's future and the RPA process. It was agreed on the proposal of Alderman Rankin, seconded by Councillor Brolly that Limavady Borough Council support the recommendations outlined by Ms Moorhead.

MINUTES:

The minutes of meeting dated 3 October 2006 were approved on the proposal of Councillor Carten, seconded by Councillor Cubitt.

MATTERS ARISING:

The NI Taxi Order 2006: The Director of Support Services outlined that the Corporate Policy Officer had forward a response on Council's behalf in relation to the NI Taxi Order 2006.

Single Status Evaluations: The Director of Support Services explained that all job descriptions had been agreed by a consistency panel on which the CE, 3 Directors and the HR Manager set. He said that the job descriptions had been forwarded to Business Improvement Service and that the evaluations should be completed by end of February 2007.

Number of Employees in Council: In response to a request by Councillor Cubitt, the Director of Support Services tabled report which outlined variances in total number of staff (in house and agency) employed by Council as at January 2006 (148); August 2006 (186.5) and September 2006 (169.5). Members noted that the variances in figures were mostly due to seasonal staff employed at Benone.

PAYMENT OF ACCOUNTS:

The payment of accounts for the month of September 2006 were signed and agreed. Councillor Cubitt queried payment of £42,807.14 to City Industrial Waste and it was agreed that this would be raised at the next Environmental Services meeting.

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 Stevenson, seconded by Alderman Rankin subject to the following:

Absenteeism: Members welcomed that absenteeism figures for the year to September 2006 which were in line with those for 2005/06 and a dramatic improvement on 2004/05.

HR Policies: The Flexible Working Policy, Career Break Policy and Job Share Policy were adopted on the proposal of Alderman Rankin, seconded by Alderman Robinson.

In response to an observation by Councillor Cubitt, the Director of Support Services stated that flexi working time was a separate issue from a Flexible Working Policy and that a policy on flexi working time would be dealt with under single status negotiations in early 2007. **OUT OF COMMITTEE.**

ACCOUNTS FOR 6 MONTHS ENDING 30 SEPTEMBER 2006:

The Director of Support Services submitted Accounts for the 6 months ended 31 September in respect of Limavady Borough Council, Roe Valley Leisure Centre, Benone Tourist Complex and Vehicle Repair/Hire/Loans. He explained variances from budgeted figures in relation to salaries & wages, other expenses, loan charges, grants and other income. Members were informed that Council would receive an additional £120K from Central Government as a result of the finalisation of general grant and penny product for the year 2005/06 and that this one off windfall could be offset against the adverse variances for 2006/07.

Alderman Robinson suggested that Council consider using gas in preference to oil in an attempt to reduce fuel costs. Noted.

ANY OTHER BUSINESS:

Remembrance Church Parade and Service: It was agreed on the proposal of Alderman Robinson, seconded by Alderman Rankin that Council would continue to support the Limavady Branch of the Royal British Legion by laying a wreath at the War Memorial and that the Legion made use of Council's platform units and chairs on Remembrance Sunday.

NEXT MEETING – 5 December 2006.

THIS CONCLUDED THE BUSINESS
(The meeting ended at 8.15 pm)

Signed: _____
Chair of Meeting