

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

SUPPORT SERVICES COMMITTEE

10 JANUARY 2012

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

PRESENT:

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

IN ATTENDANCE:

Committee Clerk, Head of Finance, Head of Human Resources and the Chief Executive.

APOLOGIES: - None.

MINUTES:

The minutes of meeting dated 6 December 2011 were approved on the proposal of Alderman Coyle, seconded by Councillor Chivers.

FLYING OF THE FLAG IN COUNCIL CHAMBER:

Councillor Chivers drew member's attention to the fact that Councillor Douglas had placed a flag on his desk. She proposed 'that Council does not agree with, and disassociates itself with the flying of the flag in Council Chamber.'

The proposal was seconded by Councillor McGlinchey and on being put to the meeting was declared carried, 6 for, 5 against and 3 abstentions.

MATTERS ARISING: - None.

HEAD OF FINANCE MONTHLY REPORT:

The Head of Finance presented his Monthly Report for the month of January 2012.

Payment of Accounts: The Head of Finance presented the payment of accounts for the month of November 2011 and answered queries on a payment for advice service.

Accounts for 8 Months Ending 30 November 2011: The Head of Finance presented the accounts for 8 months ending 30 November 2011 which showed a surplus of £91k for the period. He said that the budgeted surplus had been forecast at £142k, there was an adverse variance of £51k, mainly due to the Rates Reserve clawback variance of £73k. He added that the main variances from budgeted were as follows:

- salaries & wages - £3k favourable
- other expenditure - £10k adverse
- loans/lease charges - £14k favourable
- other income - £15k adverse
- government grants - £35k favourable
- rates reserve clawback - £73k adverse.

The in-depth variances set out within the Accounts for the 8 months were noted by members.

Report by the Chief Local Government Auditor in the year to 31 March 2011: Members noted that the aim of the above report was to provide key messages from audits performed during the year to 31 March 2010 and to highlight a number of important issues that would impact on Councils in the future.

Members congratulated staff on the work completed over the year and that it was a credit that Limavady Borough Council had not been mentioned within the report.

Annual Audit Letter year to 31 March 2011: The Head of Finance reported that the Local Government Auditor had given an unqualified opinion on the accounts in the Annual Audit Letter for the year to 31 March 2011. He said that the Accounts had now been published and that the most significant adjustments made as a result of the audit finding were:

- the past service gain on pensions, £2,176,000 had been reclassified as Other Services Income
- In respect of landfill site costs there were transfers from the District Fund to the Capital Fund of £61,605 and to the Renewal and Repairs Fund of £35,272 in accordance with the new accounting treatment of closure and aftercare costs. Furthermore, the adjusted balances on the Capital Fund, £2,820,312 and the Renewal and Repairs Fund, £511,225 were transferred to the Capital Adjustment Account.

It was noted that the Annual Audit Letter had been approved by the Audit Committee at a meeting held 14 December 2011.

Prudential and Treasury Indicators – Examples: The Head of Finance circulated examples taking into consideration guidance set out within the Prudential Code and Local Government Finance Act on capital expenditure, loan requirements and forecasts. He said that the main Prudential and Treasury Indicators were as follows:

1. External Debt Indicators - operational boundary (maximum level of external debt projected), authorised limit (the operational boundary plus headroom for unusual cash movements) and actual external debt (considered at a single point in time).
2. Capital Expenditure Indicators - capital financing requirements & capital expenditure.

3. Affordability Indicators - ratio of financing costs to net revenue stream & estimate of the impact of capital investment decisions on the District Council Rates.
4. Prudence Indicators – net borrowing and capital financing requirement.
5. Treasury and External Debt Indicators – compliance with CIPFA Code of Practice for Treasury Management in the Public Sector, interest rate exposures, maturity structure of borrowing and total principal sums invested for periods longer than 364 years.

A member said that whilst the accounts were more open, the tools used in calculations were complex.

The 5 items within the report by the Head of Finance was approved on the proposal of Councillor Brolly, seconded by Councillor McLaughlin.

HEAD OF HUMAN RESOURCES MONTHLY REPORT:

IN COMMITTEE on the proposal of Alderman Robinson, seconded by Councillor McLaughlin.

The Head of Human Resources presented the Human Resource Report for January 2012, which detailed the total number of employees & temporary workers, recruitment & selection, absenteeism & cause of absence, long term sick details, Health & Wellbeing, issues around Investors in People; Reduction in Hours of Work and Cluster Approach to Agency Tender. The following was noted:

- Actual annualised absenteeism was 8.3 days at the end of November 2011.
- The major cause of absenteeism was musculo-skeletal problems
- There had been a good response from staff to the advice and guidance given by Jane McClenaghan on 10 January 2012 on nutrition to maintain good health
- A ‘Recognition of Achievement’ event had been held on 13 December for employees who had completed Wamitab/Essential Skills Level 2, First Aid at Work, Level 2 in Conflict Management and NSPCC Designated Safeguarding Children Officer Training,
- Leisure Watch had provided Child Protection/Vulnerable Adult training to 23 employees at Roe Valley Leisure Centre.
- During 2011 Council had facilitated 25 work placements and 4 students were currently completing placements within Environmental Health, Technical Services, Leisure Services and Building Control and a further 5 placements are due to commence in 2012.

Request for Reduction in Hours of Work: Council agreed to the request for reduction in hours of work from a Senior Administrative Officer within Technical Services department from 5 to 3 days per week. It was also agreed that the current part time administration support provided by a casual worker would now become full time and would be externally advertised.

Cluster Approach to Agency Tender – Update: The Head of Human Resources reminded members that Ballymoney, Coleraine, Moye and Limavady Councils had been working together to procure one Master Agency to provide all the

agency workers required across the Cluster Council's. She said this had now progressed to tendering stage and that it was anticipated that tender documents would be issued in January 2012.

In response to a member, the Head of Human Resources advised that officers took cognisance of costs and size of advertisements before these were placed in local newspapers. She said that as part of the ICE Programme all regional advertising was co-ordinated through Belfast City Council under the heading Local Government Jobs. This resulted in considerable financial savings to Councils.

The Human Resource Report was approved on the proposal of Alderman Robinson, seconded by Councillor McGlinchey.

OUT OF COMMITTEE on the proposal of Councillor McGlinchey, seconded by Councillor McLaughlin

ANY OTHER BUSINESS: - None.

NEXT MEETING: - 7 February 2012.

THE BUSINESS CONCLUDED AT 7.40 PM.

Chair: _____