

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

SUPPORT SERVICES COMMITTEE

11 JANUARY 2011

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

PRESENT:

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

IN ATTENDANCE:

Committee Clerk, Director of Support Services and the Chief Executive.

APOLOGIES: - None.

WELCOME BACK:

Members gave a warm welcome back to Councillor Robinson who had been absent from Council meetings for a number of months through ill health. Councillor Robinson thanked members for their welcome and said he was glad to be mobile and staying out of hospital.

CONDOLENCES:

It was agreed that a letter of condolence would be forwarded to the family of Ronnie Cartwright who has served as a Councillor for the Limavady area for a number of years. It was also agreed that a letter would be forwarded to the Harte family to offer Councils sincere sympathy on the death of 27 year old Michaela who had died tragically while in honeymoon in Mauritius. Members stood in silence as a mark of respect.

MINUTES:

The minutes of meeting dated 9 December 2010 were approved on the proposal of Councillor Cubitt, seconded by Councillor Carten.

MATTERS ARISING: - None.

PAYMENT OF ACCOUNTS:

The Director of Support Services answered queries put to him by members on payment of accounts for November 2010 which were then approved by Council.

Alderman Robinson entered the chamber at 7.15 pm.

HUMAN RESOURCES:

Human Resource Report: The Director of Support Services presented the Human Resource Report for January 2011 which detailed recruitment & selection; and absenteeism. The report was adopted on the proposal of Councillor Cubitt, seconded by Councillor Chivers.

ACCOUNTS FOR 8 MONTHS ENDED 30 NOVEMBER 2010:

The Director of Support Services presented the 8 months accounts for the period ended 30 November 2010 which were prepared on an accrual basis. The deficit for the 8 months was £110k, however as a budget surplus of £19k had been forecast, there was an adverse variance of £129k.

The Director of Support Services gave a detailed explanation of the main variances as follows:

- salaries & wages - £21k favourable
- other expenditure - £62k adverse
- loan/lease charges - £30k favourable
- income/grants/bank interest - £31k adverse
- general grant - £15k adverse
- rates reserve clawback - £72k adverse.

The accounts for the 8 months ended 30 November 2010 were approved by members.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT PENSION SCHEME – COUNCILLORS’ PENSIONS:

The Director of Support Services informed members that Minister Poots had decided that councillors should be provided with pension provision from the date of the next local government election. He said that the Councillors’ Remuneration Working Group had recommended that:

- ✓ pension provision should be open to all councillors
- ✓ councillors should be able to join the LGPS
- ✓ normal retirement age should be 65
- ✓ calculations should be based on career average to reflect the possibility that councillors may hold positions of responsibility with higher remuneration at various times in their council career and
- ✓ pension provision should be available from the next local government elections.

It was pointed out that the pension scheme was voluntary. It was agreed that the Corporate Policy Officer would draft a response to the proposed pension scheme.

REPORT SEEKING AGREEMENT TO CHALLENGE HMRC IN RELATION TO WHETHER OUTPUT VAT SHOULD BE CHARGEABLE ON LEISURE SERVICES ACTIVITIES:

A report in relation to VAT issue was presented to Council by the Director of Support Services. The following recommendations were contained within the report:

- Limavady Borough Council agrees to participate in the action to challenge HMRC in relation to whether leisure services activities should be subject to VAT.
- Limavady Borough Council agrees to jointly (together for the other 25 councils in Northern Ireland) appoint DLA Piper LLP & VAT Support and Solutions Ltd to pursue the action in the Tribunal in accordance with the terms of their proposal previously submitted to The Association of Local Government Finance Officers (ALGFO) – assuming a 3 day hearing at First Tier Tribunal which would involve each Council incurring professional fees of £4,500 and
- Limavady Borough Council agrees to authorise ALGFO and Belfast City Council's Legal Services Directorate (BCCLSD) to finalise contractual arrangements between DLA Piper LLP & VAT Support and Solutions and councils, but not limited to agreement of letter(s) of engagement performance monitoring and authorisation of payments under the contract(s) to be adopted by Limavady Borough Council in due course.

It was agreed on the proposal of Councillor Cubitt, seconded by Alderman Robinson that the recommendations would be accepted.

ANY OTHER BUSINESS: - None.

NEXT MEETING: - 1 February 2011.

THIS CONCLUDED THE BUSINESS
(The meeting ended at 7.35 pm)

Chair: _____