

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

SUPPORT SERVICES COMMITTEE

16 JANUARY 2008

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

PRESENT:

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

IN ATTENDANCE:

Committee Clerk, Director of Development, Director of Environmental Services, Director of Support Services, Finance Manager, Finance Assistant and the Chief Executive.

APOLOGIES: - None

MINUTES:

The minutes of meeting dated 4 December 2007 were approved and signed on the proposal of Councillor Butcher, seconded by Councillor McElhinney.

MATTERS ARISING: None

PAYMENT OF ACCOUNTS:

The payment of accounts for the month of November 2007 were noted.

SURVEY OF MEMBER/OFFICER WORKING RELATIONSHIPS IN DISTRICT COUNCILS:

The Director of Support Services outlined that following discussions between Councillor Stevenson and Linda Leahy from Local Government Staff Commission, it was proposed that Limavady Borough Council would be included in a planned research into Member/Officer Working Relationships within local government. He explained that Red Hat Consulting would carry out the research at a cost of £2,300, with the Commission paying 50% of the price quoted.

Members discussed the proposal in detail, including costs, research methods, staff to be included in the research, current relationships between Officers and the value in taking part in the pilot scheme, given that Council had a Grievance Procedure and Whistle Blowing Policy in place. After further debate the proposal was put to the meeting and declared lost, with 5 voting for and 8 against.

HUMAN RESOURCES:

IN COMMITTEE on the proposal of Councillor Butcher, seconded by Councillor Chivers. The Director of Support Services presented the Human Resources Report and enlarged thereon. The report was adopted on the proposal of Alderman Mullan, seconded by Alderman Robinson, including the following information contained therein:

Absenteeism: Councils year to date absence per full time equivalent was 12.15 days for the first 9 months. This was the first time in the year that the average had exceeded the Council target of 11 days.

Single Status Implementation: Councillors were updated on the latest negotiations with the ATGWU & NIPSA Unions and that a meeting had taken place on 19 December following which a revised Management Proposal had been drafted and circulated to the Unions. Council was still working towards an implementation date of 1 April 2008.

It was indicated that the effective date for back pay could be 1 October 2006 or 1 April 2006 depending on various factors, one of which was affordability. The officer indicated that he would be providing costings for both options in the rates presentation later.

Job Evaluation Outcome: In accordance with Single Status implementation the post of Director of Support Services had been evaluated with the pay band for the post being Scale Point 70 – 73. It was agreed that the post holder would start at point 72 and the effective date for back pay would be that negotiated under Single Status for all employees. It was also agreed that although the two other Directors had not availed yet of the opportunity to have their posts evaluated, they could still do so providing it was before Single Status was finally implemented. **OUT OF COMMITTEE** on the proposal of Alderman Robinson, seconded by Councillor Ó hOisín.

RATES ESTIMATES 2008/2009:

The Director of Support Services gave a detailed presentation on the main elements of the rates which were loan charges, other expenses, salaries & wages and income. He highlighted areas where there were variances from last year and/or from the previous two years actual figures. He drew attention to the fact that a balance applied of £64K was included in order to build up Councils reserves, which were £389K at 31 March 2007. He then gave a supplementary explanation of the main areas that were causing an increase in the rates as follows:

Loan Charges of £846k – represents an increase of £5k or 0.56% due to improvements being carried out at Roe Valley Leisure Centre and Benone Tourist Complex costing £31k in loan charges, provision of 3 play areas costing £15k and provision of a Civic Amenity Site costing £11k. Off set against these loan charges is a saving from 2007/2008 of £51k as a result of the decision not to proceed with the provision of a new Multi-purpose Civic Centre until all other options are explored.

Wages and Salaries of £4,698k - represents an increase of £447k or 10.52% and is due mainly to a cost of living increase of 2.5% costing £112k, an increase in employer's pension contributions rate from 13% to 15% costing £81k, implementation of single status for all employees costing £151k, additional employees required for 'brown' bin collections £53k and a waste management officer and sports development officer costing £53k, for which there is £15k grant aid.

Other Expenses of £4,587k - represents an increase of £137k or 3.09%. The increase in Other Expenses being mainly due to a contribution of £50k for the provision of an all weather pitch, increased oil and electricity prices costing £32k and landfill tax associated with the disposal of 8,885 tonnes of waste costing £59k.

Income of £1,736k - represents a decrease of £55k or 3.05% mainly due to Building Control income being down as a result of the downturn in the property market £70k. This loss would be off-set by an increase in income from Roe Valley Leisure Centre.

This results in net expenditure of £8,395k - an increase of £644k or 8.31%.

The General Grant generates £1,650k - an increase of £14k. Therefore, the amount to be raised by the rates is £6,808k which is equivalent to a Domestic Rate of 0.3550 pence in the pound - an increase of 6.45% and a Non-Domestic Rate of 24.3090 pence in the pound - an increase of 6.45%.

The Director of Support Services answered queries from various Councillors and pointed out that a play area for Dernaflaw included in 2007/08 had been overlooked. Councillor Cubitt requested that provision for toilets in Ballykelly be included and Alderman Rankin felt that a play area should be provided in the Bovally area. The Director indicated that inclusion of the 2 play areas and toilet facilities would increase the percentage from 6.45 to 6.6% approximately.

It was unanimously agreed on the proposal of Councillor Butcher, seconded by Alderman Mullan that the estimated expenditure outlined above would be adopted and approved, including additional loan charges for the provision for the two play areas and toilet facilities and that the rate would be struck at a Special Monthly meeting on 5 February 2008.

ANY OTHER BUSINESS: - None.

NEXT MEETING: - 5 February 2008.

THIS CONCLUDED THE BUSINESS
(The meeting ended at 9.05 pm)

Chair: _____