

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

16 DECEMBER 2008

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

PRESENT:

In the Chair: Councillor Chivers

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

IN ATTENDANCE:

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

APOLOGIES: - None.

MINUTES:

The minutes of meeting held 25 November 2008 were approved and signed on the proposal of Councillor Coyle, seconded by Alderman Mullan.

MATTERS ARISING:

Page 2, Condolence: In response to a query, the Chief Executive confirmed that he had written to the PSNI to pass on Councils' condolence to the families of the 4 PSNI officers killed in a road traffic incident in Co. Down.

Page 4, Notice of Motion: A member stated that Ms Hunt had indicated that under no circumstances would she agree to the Mayor visiting her.

CHIEF EXECUTIVE'S REPORT – DECEMBER 2008:

RPA – Transition Committee: The Chief Executive reminded members that it had been agreed at the December 2008 Support Services meeting that the d'Hondt methodology would be used to nominate the five members from Limavady Borough Council to the Transition Committee for the new Causeway Coast Council. He said that using Councils' d'Hondt listing based on current political strengths, the five Council positions would be 1 – SF, 2 – SF, 3 - SDLP, 4 – SF and 5 – UUC.

A document was tabled from the DUP which set out which parties could be nominated to the Transition Committee via the d'Hondt methodology as used by the Assembly. The document suggested that the way Limavady Borough Council interpreted d'Hondt was inaccurate as under each way outlined within the document, it was clear that 2 seats should be allocated to SF, 1 to SDLP and 2 to unionist parties.

Alderman Robinson proposed that the decision to use the Councils current method of d'Hondt be rescinded as this was inaccurate and not a fair reflection of party strength. He said if there was to be any fairness within Council, there was still time to bring in a notice of motion to rescind the decision.

The Chief Executive outlined that a rescinding motion could be brought forward with 7 days notice in advance but must be signed by 4 members, a quorum of Council.

Members were advised that Councils methodology used since 2005 was in some ways different to that used in the Assembly, which had been devised based on information received at that time and was the same methodology used to draw up the d'Hondt list for the DPP.

A member was of the opinion that Councils methodology could be challenged by judicial review and said the decision by Council to use this method should be screened and an EQIA carried out.

The discussion ended with it being agreed to defer decision on the Transition Committee until early in 2009.

Council Meetings Dates – 2009: Council agreed to the following changes to meetings in 2009:

- 15 January 2009 – Special Support Services meeting to set the rate.
- 20 January 2009 – Planning & Services meeting with Mary McIntyre, Divisional Planning Officer being in attendance.
- 27 January 2009 – Special Monthly meeting with Western Health & Social Care Trust.
- 24 March 2009 – Planning & Services meeting and Environmental Services meeting rescheduled from 17 March 2009.

Loan Sanction Approval: It was agreed that loan sanction approval would be sought as a matter of urgency for the following:

- provision of equipment and vehicles - £114,706
- works to improve Disability Access in line with DDA 10095 - £74,060
- provision of play areas at Magilligan, Greysteel, Curragh Road, Drumsum and Greysteel area upgrade - £209,471
- upgrade Dungiven Mini Pitch - £42,477
- capital improvement at Council Depot - £78,960
- Benone improvements - £39,780
- Tourist Promotion - £12,000
- Roe Valley Leisure Centre improvement - £59,295.

FOI Publication Scheme: It was agreed on the proposal of Councillor Butcher, seconded by Councillor Ó hOisín the new model FOI Publication Scheme would be adopted by Council.

ANNUAL AUDIT LETTER YEAR TO 31 MARCH 2008:

The Director of Support Services gave an overview of the points raised by the Auditor in the 2007/08 Annual Audit letter for Limavady Borough Council. He said that the Auditor had commented on:

1. the need to have sufficient balance in the District Fund to cover unexpected revenue expenditure or unexpected drop in income. For example unforeseen costs associated with employment issues or reduced rate income from that estimated by Land & Property Services.
2. Council should seek funding as a matter of urgency for £834,156 capital expenditure.
3. the final penny product finalisation adjustment for the year amounted to £226,257, in addition Council had been notified of MOD adjustment backdated to 2003, which would result in a refund of rates of £390,139.
4. the need to review effective system of internal audit at least once in financial year.
5. the steps taken by Council to address weaknesses under Governance from previous year were welcomed.
6. absenteeism rate decreased to 12.62 days, which was lower than the Northern Ireland average of 13.75 days for three year period.

It was pointed out that the Auditor had praised officers for being one of the best Councils for having in place documentation to support the accounts. Council responded positively to the comments raised.

EXTERNAL MINUTES - NOTED:

- Western Health & Social Care Trust – 30 September 2008

CONSULTATIONS:

It was agreed that the Corporate Policy Officer would respond on Council's behalf to the following consultation documents:

- ◆ Northern Ireland Ambulance Service – proposals for Efficiency Savings and Comprehensive Spending Review Investment 2008-2011 – *13 February 2009*
- ◆ Department of Regional Development – consultation on the Amendment of the Water Supply (Water Quality) Regulations (NI) 2007 – *13 February 2009*
- ◆ Department for Social Development/Social Security Agency – Delivering a Better Service for Customers – changes to how services are delivered through the Jobs & Benefits and Social Security Office Network – *29 January 2009*
- ◆ Roads Service – Policy Proposals for a Roads (Miscellaneous Provisions) Bill – *6 March 2009*.

COURSES/CONFERENCES: - None

SEAL LEGAL DOCUMENTS: - None.

ANY OTHER BUSINESS:

- ◆ It was agreed on the proposal of Alderman Mullan, seconded by Councillor Butcher that the report compiled by Ken Crothers regarding development of

the former market yard would be forwarded to the Department of Social Development.

- ◆ Members were informed that a draft EQIA with regard to the use of the bilingual logo was being compiled by an independent assessor and that this would be funded through the Good Relations budget.
- ◆ It was agreed that the tender submitted by Otium in the sum of £7,350 to undertake a full green book appraisal on the development of a 3G pitch at Scroggy Road would be accepted.
- ◆ A member requested that the seating in the chamber be changed. He also asked that the sockets for internet cables be relocated for ease of access.
- ◆ Members voiced their appreciation at the selection of snacks and drinks that were provided to mark the last meeting of Council for 2008.

FORMAL CORRESPONDENCE:

- ◆ Marine Reserves in Northern Ireland: The Way Forward
- ◆ Criminal Justice in a Shared Future: Making Progress
- ◆ Advice NI – Membership Profile Report and Annual Report 2008
- ◆ Leonard Cheshire Disability – Tapping into (untapped) Resources
- ◆ Carson McDowell – Projects Update
- ◆ Deloitte: Building the capacity to lead in NI Local Government – What is capacity building and how should it happen?
- ◆ Social Care Institute for Excellence – publications and resources list October 2008
- ◆ Social Care Institute for Excellence – Working together, informing change Annual Review
- ◆ Social Care Institute for Excellence – National Skills Academy magazine
- ◆ The Community Foundation for Northern Ireland – Foundation News Autumn 2008
- ◆ Northern Ireland Museums Council – Annual Report & Financial Statements 2007/08

NEXT MEETING: - 3 February 2009.

THIS CONCLUDED THE BUSINESS
(The meeting ended at 9.50 pm)

Signed: _____
Chair of Meeting