

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

PLANNING & SERVICES COMMITTEE

18 SEPTEMBER 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, G Robinson and J Rankin. Councillors O Beattie, A Brolly, B Chivers, B Douglas, T McCaul, J McCorkell, S McGlinchey, C McLaughlin, G Mullan, D Nicholl, A Robinson and E Stevenson.

IN ATTENDANCE:

Chief Executive, Committee Clerk and Ms Andree McNee, Planning Service.

APOLOGIES: - None

CONDOLENCES:

A minutes silence was observed to mark the tragic deaths of Mr Noel Spence and his sons Graham and Nevin who all died in a slurry pit accident at the weekend. It was agreed on the proposal of Councillor Brolly, seconded by Councillor Stevenson that a letter of sympathy would be sent to the family and that Council would write to DARD expressing their concern over the number of farm accidents which involved slurry pits.

MINUTES:

The minutes of meeting dated 21 August 2012 were approved and signed on the proposal of Councillor McLaughlin, seconded by Councillor McCaul.

MATTERS ARISING: -

Page 4 - Proposed Closure of Magilligan Prison: Members were informed that the Prison Officers' Association was launching a petition on Friday 21 September 2012 to object to the proposed closure of Magilligan Prison. It was agreed on the proposal of Councillor Robinson, seconded by Councillor McCorkell that Council would allow a copy of the petition to be made available to the public for signature in the foyer of the Council offices.

Page 2 - B/2012/0190/O – site for dwelling and garage 60m NE of 76 Ringsend Road, Limavady (Mr I McAllister). It was confirmed that the office meeting originally scheduled for last month would be rescheduled for this month.

Page 2 - B/2012/0191/O – site for dwelling and detached garage immediately north of 38 Seacoast Road, Limavady (Mr Howe). It was confirmed that the office meeting originally scheduled for last month would be rescheduled for this month.

SCHEDULE OF PLANNING APPLICATIONS: (Deferred applications – see appendix):

Ms McNee answered queries on the applications listed on the deferred applications schedule and the decisions were accepted subject to the following:

D1 - B/2010/0388/F – Proposed wind turbine, 50kw generator, hub height 37m on a site 240m north west of 89 Teeavan Road, Dungiven (Solo Renewables (NI) Ltd). Members were informed that the appeal was found invalid by the Planning Appeals Committee as it had not been advertised. It has since been advertised and on issue of notice the applicant will be allowed to appeal the decision.

SCHEDULE OF PLANNING APPLICATIONS: (New applications – see appendix)

Ms McNee answered queries on applications listed on the new applications schedule and the recommendations were accepted subject to the following:

B/2012/0129/F – single storey rear extension to dwelling at 9 Benevenagh Drive, Limavady (Mrs R Hasson). Ms McNee agreed to visit both the applicant and the objectors prior to the approval being issued.

B/2012/0162/F – proposed 250kw wind turbine to serve a farm 45m to Hub 335m west of 120 Curragh Road, Dungiven (Mr James Semple). Office meeting agreed.

Outside the Schedule - B/2012/0119/RM It was agreed on the proposal of Councillor Douglas, seconded by Councillor McCorkell that an office meeting would be facilitated for Councillors and objectors to the proposed development of 115 houses in the Bovally area.

Ms McNee confirmed that the office meetings would be held on Friday 28 September 2012.

APPEALS LODGED WITH PAC:

B/2011/0049/F – 2 storey dwelling, detached garage and associated landscaping at farm at 4 Larch Road, Ballyharigan, Dungiven (Mr Kieran Farren): *Alderman Coyle declared an interest in this appeal.*

Ms McNee left the meeting at 7.15 pm.

PRESENTATION BY THE HOUSING EXECUTIVE – LIMAVADY DISTRICT HOUSING PLAN & LOCAL HOUSING STRATEGY 2012/13

The Chair welcomed Mr Clarke Baillie, Director of Finance, Mr Walter Mullan, Principle Housing Officer, Mr Brendan Adams, District Manager, Limavady and Ms Ailbhe, Area Planner to the meeting.

Mr Baillie, Director of Finance advised members that the current economic circumstances continued to present unprecedented challenges with reduced overall investment in housing, lack of capital receipts from house and land sales and an increased number of people who have applied for social housing and Housing Benefit. He added that there were over 20,300 applications on the social housing waiting list deemed to be in urgent housing need, including 9,000 accepted as statutorily homeless. Members were advised that during the year 1,410 new social homes were started, planned maintenance carried out to over 19,000 houses and double glazing installed in over 5,000 homes with a further 8,500 more planned for the current year.

Mr Baillie reported that the welfare reform programme would have implications for the Housing Executive and presented a number of contributing factors to Council:

- Around 70% of their tenants were on housing benefit.
- Approximately 27,000 of Housing Executive properties were under occupied.
- Housing benefits would be paid directly to the tenants.
- 43% of all households were estimated to be in fuel poverty.
- 15% of the housing stock does not meet the Decent Homes Standard.

He concluded that the ongoing efficiency targets would have an impact on staff numbers and the way services were delivered.

Alderman Robinson joined the meeting at 7.35 pm.

Mr Mullan, the Principle Housing Officer spoke about the Housing Executive's planned investment of £3.38 million in the Limavady Borough Council area for 2012/13 and gave a detailed breakdown of how this money would be spent. He highlighted the planned new build of 35 houses, the provision of services to support the homeless, supported housing for the most vulnerable people in the Borough and a programme of maintenance work to include new kitchens, double glazing, heating installation and external maintenance.

Members were given the opportunity to question the Housing Executive representatives on issues concerning the Borough and following a lengthy discussion members were advised that:

- Homeless single males were usually housed in the private sector.
- The Housing Executive had partnered with Firmus Energy for the provision of gas as the preferred option for heating.
- Housing Executive tenants retained the right to buy their homes but were finding it difficult to find the funds to purchase the properties.
- No difficulties were experienced in housing migrants in the Limavady Borough area if they were in the country legally and had a right to access of services.
- Repossessions did not always lead to homelessness - all cases were dealt with in a private, professional and sensitive manner.
- The Housing Executive was endeavouring to raise awareness in the Borough of the boiler replacement scheme which would replace inefficient boilers over 15 years old.

Mr Mullan took the opportunity to thank Alderman Coyle for his representation on the Northern Ireland Housing Council.

At a member's request Mr Mullan agreed to look at the issue of moss totally covering the roofs of a number of north facing houses and asked that he be provided with the addresses of the affected houses. Mr Adams, District Manager acknowledged the difficulties and the delays experienced by two families in the Limavady area who have been without permanent heating for 6 weeks. He assured Councillors that the 2 cases would be approved on Thursday morning and work started on the two houses next week.

It was agreed on the proposal of Alderman Coyle, seconded by Councillor Chivers that a letter be sent to Mr Sean Mackey, Regional Housing Manager to thank him for his work with Council and to mark his retirement from the Housing Executive.

The Chair thanked Mr Baillie, Mr Mullan, Mr Adams and Ms Hickey for attending the meeting.

ROADS: - None

WATER & SEWERAGE: - None

HOUSING: - None.

ANY OTHER BUSINESS:

Citizens Advice Bureau Course – It was agreed that Councillor Nicholl attend the Overview of the Changes to the Social Security Benefit System and Welfare Reform course run by the Citizen's Advice Bureau at a cost of £95 plus Vat.

DATE OF NEXT MEETING: - 16 October 2012.

THE BUSINESS CONCLUDED AT 8.15 PM.

Chair: _____