

LIMAVADY BOROUGH COUNCIL
COMHAIRLE BHUIRG LÉIM AN MHADAIDH

23 FEBRUARY 2005

Minutes of monthly meeting held in the Council Offices, 7 Connell Street, Limavady, which commenced at 7.30 pm on the above date.

PRESENT:

In the Chair: Councillor Rankin

Other Members: Aldermen Dolan and Carten. Councillors A. Brolly, B. Chivers, L. Cubitt, M. Donaghy, B. Douglas, D. Lowry, G. Mullan, M McGuigan and E Stevenson.

In Attendance: Committee Clerk, Chief Finance & Administration Officer, Chief Recreation & Tourism Officer, Corporate Policy Officer and the Acting Town Clerk & Chief Executive.

APOLOGIES:

Alderman G. Robinson and Councillor Coyle.

GOOD WISHES:

Members welcomed the Chief Finance & Administration Officer to his first meeting of Council since returning to work.

It was agreed that a letter conveying Council's best wishes would be forwarded to Councillor Coyle whose wife was recovering in hospital.

MINUTES:

The minutes of monthly meeting dated 26 January 2005 were approved and signed on the proposal of Alderman Dolan, seconded by Councillor Cubitt.

MATTERS ARISING:

Multi Function Civic Centre: Councillor Cubitt said he had been approached by local artists who had shown an interest in staging plays at the Multi Functional Civic Centre and suggested that the planned 250 seat theatre would not be big enough for staging such events. The Acting Town Clerk & Chief Executive responded that consultations regarding the seating arrangements had already taken place.

CHANGE MANAGEMENT SUB COMMITTEE:

The minutes of Change Management Sub Committee meeting which took place on Wednesday 19 January 2005 were approved on the proposal of Alderman Dolan, seconded by Councillor Cubitt.

REFORM OF WATER & SEWERAGE SERVICES IN NORTHERN IRELAND – INTEGRATED IMPACT ASSESSMENT SUMMARY AND CONSULTATION QUESTIONS:

The Corporate Policy Officer provided background information on the executive decision of May 2000 to Reform Water & Sewerage Services in Northern Ireland and Council's subsequent response to this decision. He said that a Policy Proposal Paper of November 2004 concluded that the service should be provided by a Government owned company (GoCo), that a new independent regulator needed to be established and that the General Consumer Council would be the statutory customer representative.

Members noted that charges to begin in April 2006 would mean that all households would pay a direct charge for water & sewerage, which would have two elements; a standing charge and a variable element based on property value.

The Corporate Policy Officer said that following a detailed screening process, the need for four assessments had been identified as follows:

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|---------------------------------|--|
| 1. <i>Targeting Social Need</i> | 2. <i>Rural Proofing</i> |
| 3. <i>EQIA and</i> | 4. <i>Regulatory Impact Assessment</i> |

Councillor Lowry commented that the government should not have let the water system become dilapidated over the years and suggested that the proposed charges should only be introduced once the system was brought up to standard. He said that the consultation was more about quality assessment than water charges and that despite Council's previous objections and unified political views, the government was intent on bringing the charges in.

Councillor Stevenson pointed out that Northern Ireland was not well represented in rejecting the government proposal and said that most people would be happy to pay the charges if these were sensible and reasonable. Councillor Douglas concurred with this view and said that the less well off and senior citizens would not be able to afford the charges currently proposed.

Councillor Cubitt reiterated that all new housing developments should have water metres installed as standard and Councillor A Brolly suggested that Council should request that meters be installed in all houses before the charges were introduced.

It was agreed that the Corporate Policy Officer would respond with member's comments on the Reform of Water & Sewerage Service document before the consultation period ending 4 March 2005.

The Corporate Policy Officer left the meeting at 8.10 pm.

LICENCES:

Application for Grant of Licence Authorising Sale of Intoxicating Liquor: It was agreed on the proposal of Councillor Cubitt, seconded by Councillor A Brolly that Council offer no objection to granting a provisional restaurant licence authorising the sale of intoxicating liquor at O'Brien's American Bar & Restaurant Limited premises at 30 Greystone Road.

WESTERN HEALTH & SOCIAL SERVICES BOARD:

Minutes: Minutes of meeting held 25 November 2004 were tabled and noted.

WESTERN HEALTH & SOCIAL SERVICES COUNCIL:

Minutes: Minutes of meeting held 16 December 2004 were tabled and noted.

REPORT FROM WESTERN GROUP ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH COMMITTEE:

Minutes: Minutes of meeting held 16 December 2004 were tabled and noted.

ALTNAGELVIIN HOSPITALS HEALTH & SOCIAL SERVICES TRUST:

Minutes: Minutes of meeting held 6 January 2005 were tabled and noted.

WESTERN HEALTH & SOCIAL SERVICES COUNCIL:

Minutes: Minutes of meeting held 19 January 2005 were tabled and noted.

REPORT FROM BOARD OF HOUSING EXECUTIVE:

Minutes: Minutes of meeting held 26 January 2005 were tabled and noted.

FOYLE HEALTH & SOCIAL SERVICES TRUST:

Minutes: Minutes of meeting held 28 January 2005 were tabled and noted.

DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, SOCIAL SERVICES AND PUBLIC HEALTH CONSULTATION PAPER – A HEALTHIER FUTURE:

The Acting Town Clerk & Chief Executive tabled a Consultation Paper from Department of Health, Social Services and Public Health entitled – A Healthier Future to Council on proposals for a smoking ban in public places in Northern Ireland.

The Acting Town Clerk & Chief Executive outlined the three main options on the way forward in Northern Ireland in respect of the issue of smoking in enclosed public places and workplaces and recommended that Council having considered the three options for consultation in the Regional Strategy, write to the Minister of Health, Angela Smyth, indicating its support for Option 5 (c). Agreed.

NOTICE OF MOTION SUBMITTED BY COUNCILLOR LOWRY:

Councillor Lowry proposed that:

“Limavady Borough Council endorses option 5c of the Department of Health, Social Services and Public Health consultation paper, A Healthier Future. *This option favours ‘a ban on smoking in all enclosed public places and workplaces in Northern Ireland.’*”

In proposing the motion, Councillor Lowry said that Council would be taking a major lead and making a significant contribution by endorsing 5c of the consultation paper. He pointed out that smoking in the workplace posed a health risk and that although over half of those working did so in a smoke free environment, bar workers were six times more at risk from smoking than office

workers and twenty times more likely to get lung cancer. He added that passive smoking led to a range of health complications, including heart disease, stroke, asthmatic attacks, low birth weights and premature births.

Councillor Lowry welcomed the initiative taken on smoking within the Irish Republic and said that currently 96% of bars operated in a smoke free environment. In conclusion Councillor Lowry urged members to join with organisations such as Action for Smoking & Health (ASH), British Medical Association, Cancer Research UK and the Royal College of Nursing who made it clear that the ban on smoking within enclosed public places and workplaces should come into effect. The motion was seconded by Councillor A Brolly.

Councillor Mullan joined the meeting at 8.50 pm.

Councillor Cubitt pointed out that trade within bars and restaurants had been significantly reduced since the smoking ban came into effect in the Irish Republic. He said that there were numerous substances banned from supermarket shelves due to cancer scares and suggested that people should be allowed to choose whether to smoke or not. Councillor Donaghy agreed that freedom of choice was important, especially for non smokers who had the right to choose to breathe in smoke free air.

The motion was put to the meeting and declared carried, with 8 voting for, 1 against and 2 abstentions.

RESOLUTIONS:

It was agreed on the proposal of Alderman Dolan, seconded by Councillor Cubitt that the following resolutions be noted:

Resolution from Derry City Council:

“Recognising that many local Councils – including Derry – have already put in place power-sharing arrangements that allow for the participation of all political parties in the political life of the Council, and that these arrangements reflect the spirit of the Good Friday Agreement in advocating the principle of partnership politics, this Council urges all Councils across the North to adopt such power-sharing arrangements.

This Council registers its disappointment at the decision of Lisburn, Ballymena, Castlereagh and Coleraine Borough Councils, and relevant MPs, to exclude nationalists from the positions of Chairs and Vice-Chairs of Council Committees and Membership of outside bodies.”

Resolution from Derry City Council:

“That Derry City Council calls on central government to allow the Housing Executive to have the lead role in managing Housing Associations in the North and that appropriate financial resources be made available to the Housing Executive to start a programme of social builds to alleviate the housing shortage and homelessness in the North.”

Resolution from Derry City Council:

“That Derry City Council opposes the proposed water reforms and the setting up of the new government company GOCO and does all in its power to lobby to have this overturned.”

Resolution from Derry City Council:

“Derry City Council

- notes the concerns expressed regarding the conditions under which people with learning difficulties are accessing work places in the Derry City Council Area
- recognised that all our citizens have equal worth and value
- commits to the review of current practices regarding such work placements
- calls on the Mayor to convene a meeting of interested parties, including DESTINED, to examine current practices in the Derry City Council Area and to compare this with practice elsewhere throughout Ireland
- send a copy of this motion to all Councils throughout Ireland urging that they endorse this Motion and conduct similar reviews and send details of their findings to the Mayor’s Office.”

COURSES/CONFERENCES:

Local Authority Members 22nd Annual Conference: It was agreed on the proposal of Alderman Dolan, seconded by Alderman Carten that Councillor Lowry would attend the above conference to be held at Rochestown Park Hotel Cork on 31 March and 1 April 2005 at a cost of €250.

CONSULTATION DOCUMENT - WESTERN AREA CHILDREN’S SERVICES PLAN 2005/2008

The Acting Town Clerk & Chief Executive explained that the aim of the Children’s Services Plan for 2005-2008 was to improve the well-being of vulnerable children and young people. He said that members of Council may wish to convey their views on the service plan content; how the information was laid out; what was missing; ideas for future development; relevant criticisms and put forward views on how the 3 year plan could be improved. It was agreed that members would forward individual comment to the Corporate Policy Officer for submission by the 8 April 2005 deadline.

ANY OTHER BUSINESS:

Elections and Committee Meetings: The Acting Town Clerk & Chief Executive reminded members that it had been agreed that there would be no committee meetings in the month preceding the election and that Council had to consider the effect this decision would have on issuing planning application approvals. It was agreed that the last meeting of Council would be the Planning & Development Committee Meeting to take place on 7 April 2005.

League Against Cruel Sports: The Acting Town Clerk & Chief Executive tabled letter dated 27 January 2005 from League Against Cruel Sports who were campaigning to bring an end to suffering of animals in the name of sport. He said that the League was delighted that Minister Smith had decided to renew the

temporary Special Protection Order which prohibits the killing, taking, sale or purchase of Irish hares and hoped that Council would wish to pass a resolution urging Minister Smith to secure a permanent ban against hare coursing in Northern Ireland. Noted.

FORMAL CORRESPONDENCE:

- Commissioner for Public Appointments for Northern Ireland – Ninth Report 2003-2004
- Northern Ireland Housing Market – Review and Perspectives 2005-2008
- Northern Ireland Physical Activity Strategy Implementation Group 6th Annual Report April 2003 to March 2004
- Committee on Standards in Public Life – Summary of Tenth Report
- International Fund for Ireland – Annual Report & Accounts 2004
- Fire Authority for Northern Ireland – Annual Report & Statement of Accounts 2003/04
- The Electoral Commission – The Market Electoral Register – Report & Recommendations

NEXT MEETING:

23 March 2005

THIS CONCLUDED THE BUSINESS

(The meeting ended at 9.45 pm)