

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

MONTHLY COUNCIL MEETING

26 JUNE 2007

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

PRESENT:

In the Chair: Councillor Stevenson.

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

IN ATTENDANCE:

Committee Clerk, Finance Manager and the Chief Executive.

APOLOGIES: - Councillor Douglas

NORTHERN IRELAND HOUSING EXECUTIVE – DISTRICT HOUSING PLAN 2007-08:

The chair welcomed Mr Sean Mackie, Western Area Manager, Mr John Donnell, District Manager, Mr Brendan Adams, Area Programme Planner, Dr John McPeake, Director Design & Property Services and Ms Hazel Faithful, Information Officer, Northern Ireland Housing Executive.

Mr Mackie outlined that in the past two years the Housing Executive had invested £6.4 million in Limavady Borough and intended to spend a further £2 million in the coming year. He referred to the Housing Executive's Corporate objectives and outlined how they translated into strategic themes, programmes of action and measurable targets both at strategic and local level including, achieving decent home standards; promoting independent living; fostering urban and rural regeneration; promoting affordable housing; building a stronger community and delivering a better public service.

Alderman Robinson entered the chamber at 7.30 pm.

In the question and answer session which followed, Mr Mackie and Dr McPeake clarified that:

- the Housing Executive were unconvinced that those on the housing waiting or transfer list would consider moving to the army houses in Ballykelly;
- there was a need to collaborate with private sector stockholders to close the gap between levels of rent requested and housing benefit allowance;
- property developers were beginning to incorporate an increased number of homes for social housing into new developments. The Executive implemented a social housing scheme in Belfast and a similar scheme was planned for Omagh. Although the Executive own land in the Borough

which could be used for social housing, it acknowledges that building on open sites which have been there for 20 years might not be welcomed;

- the needs of every individual on the waiting list could not be met;
- Northern Ireland Housing Council would not be disbanded;
- the Housing Executive adhered to guidance for supply of accommodation to ethnic minorities and would be enforcing guidance on multi occupancy.

Appreciation was expressed to the work of John Donnell and staff in the Housing Executive office in Limavady. The Chair thanked the representatives from the Housing Executive for attending the meeting.

MINUTES:

The minutes of meeting held 22 May 2007 were approved and signed on the proposal of Councillor Butcher, seconded by Councillor Coyle.

MATTERS ARISING:

Page 4 – Courses/Conferences: Members noted that the Confederation of European Councillors Conference to be held in the Killyhevelin Hotel on 29 June 2007 had been cancelled.

Page 4 – Dungiven Priory: It was agreed that Water Service would be requested to cut back bushes and shrubs on a section of land which they owned at Dungiven Priory.

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING:

The minutes of Annual General Meeting held 4 June 2007 were approved on the proposal of Alderman Robinson, seconded by Councillor Butcher subject to it being noted that Councillor Brolly had been nominated to the Town Twinning Committee (Vigneux-sur-Seine) and Councillor Chivers to the Westport Committee.

AUDIT COMMITTEE MEETING:

The minutes of Audit Committee held 17 April 2007 were approved and signed on the proposal of Councillor Coyle, seconded by Councillor Butcher.

UNAUDITED ACCOUNTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2007:

The Finance Manager presented unaudited accounts for the year ending 31 March 2007 which had been approved by the Audit Committee at a meeting held 14 June 2007. He explained that this was the first year that the following accounts had to be passed by a resolution of Council by 31 June 2007.

- (a) Financial Statements
- (b) Income & Expenditure Analysis
- (c) Income & Expenditure Analysis (increases/decreases)
- (d) Actual v Budget Analysis

The accounts as presented were approved on the proposal of Councillor Coyle, seconded by Councillor Butcher.

CHIEF EXECUTIVES REPORT – JUNE 2007:

Internal Audit – Annual Report: The Chief Executive presented the Internal Audit Annual Report and members noted that a substantial level of assurance had been achieved in the audit of 18 areas of Council's activities over the year.

District Policing Partnership Annual Report 2006/07: The Chief Executive tabled the District Policing Partnership Annual Report 2006/07 for members' consideration. It was agreed that the report would be adopted on the proposal of Councillor Cubitt, seconded by Alderman Robinson subject to members' queries being forwarded to Alish McAtamney, District Policing Partnership Manager.

Civic Centre Update: Members noted that loan sanction approval had been received from the DOE for the proposed Civic Centre and that the project would now proceed to tender stage for work to commence on site potentially by end of September 2007.

Ex Officio Status: In response to a query on whether the Mayor had Ex Officio status on all Council Committees, the Chief Executive outlined that the status may be conferred on the Mayor or Deputy Mayor by Council but standing orders would have to be amended to reflect this. It was agreed that it would be at the discretion of individual committees if they wanted to invite the Mayor on Ex Officio basis.

Alderman Rankin entered the chamber at 8.25 pm.

Support for the Start a Business Programme: It was agreed on the proposal of Councillor Cubitt, seconded by Councillor Butcher that Council accept the bid received from Roe Valley Enterprises for 'Start a Business Programme' which aimed at giving further assistance to those start ups who show potentially for accelerated growth and increased job potential during the year 2007-08.

Peace III: The Chief Executive explained that Peace III in Northern Ireland was to be Council led and consideration should be given on how Council wished to take forward bids. He said the LSP had been responsible for implementation of all previous Peace and Reconciliation funding in the Borough and Council may decide to continue to use their expertise and knowledge for Peace III. It was agreed that Council would be responsible for distribution of Peace III Funds and that staff from within the LSP would administer the programme.

The Chief Executive pointed out that draft guidelines issues by the SEUPB with regard to the programme encourages Councils to set up self defined cluster arrangements until the new proposed Council areas are known. He said that the Chief Executive of Coleraine Borough Council had written to enquire if Council would consider forming a Limavady, Coleraine, Ballymoney, Moyle group for the purposes of the first phase of the Peace III programme.

In the discussion that followed, it was suggested that Council should cluster with Strabane, Magherafelt and Derry Councils. However, it was decided that flexibility was needed and that officers would continue to liaise with Councils from both the North West and North Eastern areas.

Disability Action Plan: It was agreed that the amended Disability Action Plan would be submitted to the Equality Commission by 30 June 2007.

EQIA REPORT ON NEUTRAL PUBLIC SPACE POLICY:

The Corporate Policy Officer presented EQIA Report on Councils' proposed policy on Neutral Public Space. She said the Steering Group established to consider the issue of emblems on display within Council facilities had put forward the following policy which was accepted in principle by Council on 24 October 2006:

'That the public areas within the Council Offices buildings and grounds be maintained as a neutral environment with regard to how they reflect religious or political opinion.'

She explained in detail that the steering group had adhered to the requirements of Equality Commission Guidance on conduct of an EQIA and in light of evidence gathered by the EQIA and conclusions reached, it was recommended that Council consider the following:

- that the proposed Neutral Public Space Policy be extended to cover all buildings and grounds owned and managed by the Council;
- a Cross Party Forum be set up to examine implementation issues associated with the policy and that this forum be made up of 3 Nationalist Councillors and 2 Unionist Councillors to reflect the composition of the Council.
- that the Forum should have an independent element, perhaps through being facilitated and chaired by an independent person. It is envisaged that this would help promote an even handed approach to the issue of neutrality of items. The independent member of the Forum would have no voting rights.
- the Cross Party Forum would consider the practical application of the policy, for example, how objects would be judged on their neutrality and who would made these decisions. Issues surrounding definitions should also be addressed by the Cross Party Forum.

Councillor Ó hOisín proposed and Councillor Coyle seconded that the report be adopted by Council. The proposal was put to the meeting and declared carried, with 9 voting for and 5 against.

The 3 Nationalist members nominated to the Forum were Councillor Ó hOisín, Councillor Coyle and Councillor Butcher. The 2 spaces reserved for Unionist members remained unallocated.

It was agreed that nominations for the Independent Chair would be discussed at the August 2007 Monthly Meeting.

NOTICE OF MOTION TO RECIND DECISION MADE AT DEVELOPMENT SERVICES MEETING OF 12 JUNE 2007:

Councillor Ó hOisín, Councillor Chivers, Councillor Brolly, Councillor Butcher and Councillor McElhinney signed and proposed that:

'We the signatures below, constituting a quorum of Comhairle Bhuirg Léim an Mhadaidh, Limavady Borough Council, propose that this Council rescind the decision made at the Development Services Meeting on 12th June 2007 to lease land at Garvagh Road Dungiven to St Canice's GAC at full market rental value of

£6,500 per annum and instead accept a “Peppercorn Rent of 1 penny per annum for a term of 99 years subject to approval from the relevant authorities.”

The motion was proposed by Councillor Ó hOisín and seconded by Councillor Butcher.

Councillor Cubitt proposed and Alderman Robinson seconded the following amendment:

‘That this Council lease to St Canice’s GAA for a period of 35 years those lands at Garvagh Road, Dungiven for the sum of £3,000 per annum, with a rent review every 5 years subject to the approval by the public Auditor and all relevant bodies.’

The amendment was put to the meeting and declared lost, with 4, Councillor Cubitt, Councillor Robinson, Alderman Robinson and Councillor Stevenson voting for and 9, Councillor Carten, Councillor Coyle, Alderman Mullan, Councillor Chivers, Councillor Butcher, Councillor Donaghy, Councillor Brolly, Councillor Ó hOisín and Councillor McElhinney voting against. Alderman Rankin abstained from the vote.

The initial proposal was put to the meeting and declared carried, with 9 voting for, 1 against and 4 abstentions.

EXTERNAL MINUTES NOTED:

- Western Health & Social Care Trust – 5 April 2007
- NILGA Monthly Update – May 2007
- Western Health and Social Services Board – 29 March 2007.

CONSULTATIONS:

It was agreed that the Corporate Policy Officer would respond to the following consultation documents:

- Department of Trade and Industry – ‘The Future of Nuclear Power: The Role of Nuclear Power in a Low Carbon UK Economy’
- Department of the Environment – ‘Draft Local Government Pension Scheme (Amendment No 2) Regulations (NI) 2007’

COURSES/CONFERENCES:

It was agreed that Councillor Ó hOisín would attend the International Museum Alliance Global Conference to take place in Belfast on 20 – 23 September 2007 at a cost of £395.

SEAL LEGAL DOCUMENTS:

It was agreed on the proposal of Councillor Cubitt, seconded by Alderman Robinson that the Deed of Priority between Council and Greysteel Community Enterprises (Debenture number 2) be signed and sealed.

ANY OTHER BUSINESS:

Vesting of Land – Drumaduff Dump: It was agreed that the SMT would discuss vesting of lands at Drumaduff and that a Special Meeting of Council would be held to review the situation when all relevant information on decisions of Council and advice/actions of officers had been compiled in relation to vesting of Drumaduff Dump.

Support for Petition: Councillor McElhinney requested that the Community Forum and Roe Valley Chamber of Trade support his petition for retention of the cancer unit at Altnagelvin. Alderman Robinson gave his full support to the cause.

Toilets at Ballykelly: Councillor Cubitt requested an update on provision of toilets in Ballykelly at the August Environmental Services Committee meeting.

Dogleap Forest Stages Rally: It was agreed on the proposal of Councillor Cubitt, seconded by Alderman Rankin that Council would contribute £4,250 towards staging of the Dogleap Forest Stages Rally on 3 – 4 August 2007.

Naming of Housing Development – Irish Green Street: The Chief Executive reported that Council had received a request from P & C Mullan (Construction) Ltd for the new housing development at Irish Green Street to be named either ‘Boucher Close’ or ‘High School Street’. It was agreed that the housing development would be named ‘Boucher Close’.

Road Signage: Councillor Carten requested that Roads Service provide signage at the end of Carten Road and at end of New Line Road along Drumrane Road.

Carriageway Link – Rossair Road: Members noted that the Vesting Order for the Carriageway Link at Rossair Road had become operative on 19 June 2007.

Drumaduff - Discussion: IN COMMITTEE. The Chief Executive reported that a potential libel case for ‘defamation of character’ by two former employees would be avoided if Council issue a statement of disassociation with comments made by Councillors at the June 2007 Environmental Services meeting which had been reported in the press. He reminded members of Councils Code of Conduct and suggested that members refrain from making such statements.

In the discussion that followed, it was stressed that it was individual Councillors who had made the remarks rather than Council as a corporate body and that no one had been named. There was overall agreement that the topic should not have been discussed under Any Other Business and should have been IN COMMITTEE.

Councillor Coyle proposed that a letter be issued disassociating Council from individuals’ remarks, however this was not seconded. **OUT OF COMMITTEE.**

FORMAL CORRESPONDENCE:

- (a) Lisburn City Council Annual Report 2006/07
- (b) Invest Northern Ireland – A guide to Invest Northern Ireland
- (c) Tesco – Corporate Responsibility Review 2007
- (d) The Dignity of Difference – Holocaust Memorial Day
- (e) Northern Ireland Water – Strategic Business Plan 2007/10

- (f) Poverty in Northern Ireland – A Briefing Paper March 2007
- (g) Temporary Demountable Structures
- (h) Proud to be Best – 50 Years of Best Kept Awards.

NEXT MEETING – Tuesday 28 August 2007.

THIS CONCLUDED THE BUSINESS
(The meeting ended at 10:15 pm)

Signed: _____
Chair of Meeting