

Ballymoney Borough Council

Corporate & Central Services Meeting No: 358 – 24th September 2007

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BALLYMONEY BOROUGH COUNCIL
Corporate & Central Services Committee

Minutes of Corporate & Central Services Committee Meeting No 358 held in the Council Chamber, Riada House, Ballymoney on Monday 24th September 2007 at 7.30pm.

IN THE CHAIR J Simpson

PRESENT

Aldermen
F Campbell
H Connolly
C Cousley

Councillors
J Finlay
M McCamphill
P McGuigan
E Robinson
I Stevenson
M Storey, MLA

APOLOGIES A Cavlan

IN ATTENDANCE Chief Executive
Director of Central & Leisure Services
Head of Corporate & Development Services
Committee Clerk

358.1 MINUTES – MEETING NO 357 – 29TH AUGUST 2007

It was proposed by Councillor Finlay, seconded by Councillor McCamphill and
AGREED:

to recommend that the minutes of Meeting No 357 – 29th August 2007, as circulated, be approved.

CORPORATE SERVICES

358.2 TIMING OF COUNCIL COMMITTEE MEETINGS

The Chief Executive referred to Council's decision at its meeting CM 866 on 3rd September 2007 that a paper be prepared setting out:

- a) options for holding meetings of its major committees during the day; and
- b) proposals for canvassing the views of Councillors and affected staff.

It was made clear in discussions at committee that Council meetings should continue to be held in the evening and that views should also be canvassed on the desirability of having two committee meetings on the same day.

Traditionally, Ballymoney Borough Council has held its council and committee meetings at 1930 on Mondays (Council, Development and Corporate & Central Services(C&CS)) and Tuesdays (Leisure & Amenities (L&A) and Health & Environmental Services (H&ES)). All meetings, except for those of L&A (held in Leisure Centre), are held in the Council Chamber and the times of meetings may be altered when presentations are being made to council or committee. Dates of meetings are altered when necessary due to public holidays.

Business at committee meetings is presented by the relevant Director or by the Chief Executive (CE) and/or the Head of Corporate Services (HCDS). The CE may attend any meeting of a committee. Both Directors, CE and HCDS attend Council meetings.

Many Councils take a break from committee meetings during July and August, to facilitate staff and Councillors taking summer holidays. This has not been the practice in Ballymoney Borough Council, but in 2007 it was decided that committee meetings in July would be held only if essential and all committee meetings in July and August would be held during the day rather than in the evening. Council meetings were held as normal in the evening.

The table in Appendix 1 sets out the committee meetings held during this period and also during a two-month period preceding it (meetings in June were excluded as the AGM is held that month). It shows their starting times and durations and the numbers of Councillors attending each.

Analysis of Duration and Attendance

The highlighted figures in the table (Appendix 1) show those meetings (**red**) where the duration was two and a half hours or more and those meetings (**pink**) where the attendance was 50% or less.

Duration

In the four months considered, three meetings lasted two and a half hours or more – one C&CS and two L&A. The C&CS meeting lasted 3 hours, 10 minutes. However, over the four months, meetings of these two committees lasted, on average, between two and two and a half hours. All other committees were of shorter duration, with Development meetings averaging just 33 minutes (one of those was held purely to elect the Chair and Vice Chair positions and lasted 10 minutes). The other consistently shorter meeting was Consultation, which lasted on average ninety-six minutes.

Attendance

Average attendance at Consultation meetings was the highest, at 12 out of 16 members. Lowest was H&ES, which averaged 50% or 7 out of 14 members, L&A was next at 8 members and Development averaged 9 members. While two months is a short time to evaluate attendance and length of meetings it is the only data available for daytime committee meetings. Comparison of the 2 summer months (daytime meetings) with the two spring months (evening meetings) is set out in the tables in Appendix 2.

Four meetings in the summer period attracted 50% or less attendance – two of L&A and one each of Development and C&CS. It is not clear from the analysis whether this was due to the holiday period or the fact that meetings were in daytime. Overall attendance was lower in the two summer months at all committees, except H&ES, which had a slightly improved attendance (8 rather than 7) by comparison with April/May meetings.

Conclusions

Attendance

As already stated, two months of daytime meetings when two committees met only once and when many Councillors were on holiday, does not give a full picture of the difference between daytime and evening meetings in regard to attendance levels. Levels were slightly lower than in the April/May period, but each committee averaged at least 50% attendance and H&ES committee had a marginally better attendance rate in the summer months.

Timing of meetings

It appears that committees can operate when held in daytime and meetings can generally be contained within the working day if they start at 1400. However, meetings have lasted longer than 3 hours and some provision for that situation is required. One option is to amend standing orders to state that meetings not concluded by 1700 are adjourned to a later date. Alternatively, negotiations could take place with affected staff to seek agreement that meetings could continue later if required. It is likely that staff would want to know that meetings would not run beyond a defined end time (say 1730 or 1800) and would be adjourned if business were not concluded by that time.

As the morning period is longer than the afternoon, this issue is less likely to arise if meetings begin at 0930. Where, exceptionally, a meeting has not ended at 1300 it would be adjourned for lunch and restarted at 1400.

Combining meetings on same day

It is evident that three committees regularly last over two hours and over three hours on occasions (L&A, H&ES and C&CS). There would not appear to be any scope for combining any of these with another committee on the same day, unless it is proposed to have a full day of meetings. However the duration of Development and Consultation committees is such that it is feasible to combine them in one day.

The first meeting could start at 0930 or 1400, with the second following on. The difficulty is in predicting when the first would end so that notice of the start time of the second one can be given. Since Consultation always involves attendance by Planning Service, is open to the press and public and involves all members, it would be best to run it first, at 0930 or 1400. The Development Committee would be notified as starting at 1100 or 1530, with the proviso that it would be delayed if the first overruns. It could not be started before the advertised time. The same issues about meetings running beyond 1300 or 1700 would apply and the same solutions need to be adopted.

Recommendations

Having analysed the duration of committee meetings in April, May, July and August 2007, it is feasible to operate committees during daytime while securing attendance of at least 50% of their membership. A starting time of 0930 for meetings would be preferable as it allows for a period of three and a half hours in which to hold the meeting. Alternatively, a starting time of 1400 will give a three-hour slot.

For the reasons outlined above it is felt that there is no scope for arranging meetings of L&A, H&ES or C&CS committees on the same day as those of any other committee. However, there is scope to do this with the Consultation and Development Committees.

IT IS RECOMMENDED that all councillors be surveyed to establish: -

- 1) if they agree to daytime meetings of committees and whether they prefer a starting time of 0930 or 1400¹.**
- 2) if they agree to holding meetings of Consultation and Development committees on the same day and if they prefer a starting time of 0930 or 1400 for the Consultation meeting**

and that the results be considered by the C&CS committee.

When Council has decided if it wants to move to daytime meetings, options for dealing with meetings not ended by 1700 can be given further consideration.

¹ Meetings held in JDLC would start at 1415 to allow travelling time from Riada House.

During discussion, issues raised by members included lengthy duration of some Committees, presentations by delegations and days of meetings.

It was proposed by Alderman Connolly, seconded by Councillor Finlay and **AGREED:**

to recommend that all councillors be surveyed to establish: -

- 1. Feasibility of daytime meetings and starting times of 0930 or 1400².***
- 2. Meetings of Consultation and Development committees on the same day with a starting time of 0930 or 1400 for the Consultation meeting.***

and that the results be considered by the C&CS committee.

358.3 STAFF MATTERS

Details of New Starts & Leavers from 20/6/06 – 31/3/07 & 1/4/07 – 11/9/07 are attached as Appendix 3.

The Chief Executive advised that the Home Safety Officer post holder is a cousin.

- * **The Director of Central & Leisure Services joined the meeting at 7.55 pm**

358.4 DISTRICT POLICING PARTNERSHIP – POLICY ON ATTENDANCE

Correspondence from the NI Policing Board advises that the Board's Community Engagement Committee considered a paper on the record of DPP Members attendance at public and private meetings during the financial year 2006/07 and noted that in some cases the percentage of meetings attended was low.

Under the policy "if a Member misses two public meetings and two private meetings during any six month rolling period over the lifetime of a DPP, the case should be referred to the Policing Board for consideration under its Policy on the Removal of a DPP Member from Office."

DPP Managers are required to produce attendance records for the Board and inform it when a member's attendance reaches the trigger point. To date there are no instances where member attendance at DPP meetings has reached the trigger point.

² Meetings held in JDLC would start at 1415 to allow travelling time from Riada House.

For members' information a copy of the policy was circulated. Some members expressed the view that the replacement of Council nominees on the District Policing Partnership should be a matter for Council rather than NIPB. It was noted that under the Policy, Council has the ability to make a recommendations regarding individual cases to assist the Board in its consideration of the case.

* **Alderman Connolly left the meeting at 8.05 pm**

358.5 NILGA MEMBERSHIP

The DUP Group, who have 3 places on NILGA through the D'Hondt system, have notified the Chief Executive that they wish to amend their nominees by removing Alderman Campbell, who is unable to attend the meetings due to other commitments, and substituting another member. **IT IS RECOMMENDED** that committee approve this amendment.

It was proposed by Councillor Finlay, seconded by Alderman Campbell and **AGREED:**

to recommend that Council approve the amendment of the DUP nominees.

Councillor Finlay (DUP Group Leader) advised that Councillor Robinson would replace Alderman Campbell as the party's NILGA nominee.

385.6 FRIENDS OF THE SOMME ASSOCIATION

The Chief Executive advised members that correspondence has been received from Friends of the Somme Association, Mid Antrim branch, requesting support from Council to sponsor attendance at a remembrance service at Niederzwehren Cemetery and lay a wreath. Committee **AGREED:**

that the application be noted and the applicant advised of Council's policy and budget constraints in respect of contributions to other bodies.

* **Councillor Storey left the meeting at 8.00 pm**

385.7 BALLYMACALDRICK ASSI

At the request of Councillor McCamphill, the Chief Executive undertook to check on correspondence with Environment Heritage Service on queries raised on this proposed designation.

- * **The Chief Executive, the Head of Corporate and Development Services and Councillor McGuigan left the meeting at 8.10 pm.**

CENTRAL SERVICES

358.8 ACCOUNTS FOR PAYMENT

Treasury advice schedules detailing payments for Period 6, 2007/08 drawn on the Council's Capital and Revenue Bank Accounts was circulated at the meeting.

IT IS RECOMMENDED that payment is made.

In July 2007 accounts paid amounted to:

Revenue Account £885,740.04
Capital Account £204,723.88

In August 2007 accounts paid amounted to:

Revenue Account £693,316.74
Capital Account £118,286.85

The Director of Central and Leisure Services advised that schedules of payments for the above months are available on request.

The Director of Central and Leisure Services responded to a number of questions from members relating to payments made for labour engaged through annual tenders and employment agency services, materials for playing fields and parks, summer scheme programme and capital projects in the current period. At the request of the Mayor, the Director agreed to produce the six months variance report for 07/08 for the November meeting.

It was proposed by Councillor Finlay, seconded by Alderman Campbell and **AGREED:**

to recommend to Council that Accounts to the value of £512,243.25 from the Revenue Account and £271,636.50 from the Capital Account be approved for payment.

358.9 VARIANCE REPORT 2006/07

Attached as Appendix 4 is the variance report for 2006/07. This report details the actual expenditure and income for the year against budget and shows the surplus for the year as recorded in the annual accounts.

A detailed explanation of the variances will be produced for a future meeting.

The Director explained the surplus for the year and the revenue contributions made to capital projects. Councillor Finlay requested details of the projects funded from reserves. The Director agreed to make this available.

In a response to a query from Alderman Simpson, the Director explained that the rates figure included the finalisation amount of the 2005/06 rates income.

Councillor Finlay said that in the light of the surplus made, it is critical that actual figures for 2006/07 are available when Council is considering the 2008/09 estimates.

It was proposed by Councillor Finlay, seconded by Councillor Robinson and **AGREED:**

to recommend that the 2006/07 actual expenditure and income figures are included in the 2008/09 rates book, as well as the nine month actual for 2007/08.

Councillor Robinson reminded the Committee that members had sought £250,000 reduction in the budgets. She advised that waste management costs were going to be a huge problem over the next 3-4 years and hence there was a need for much more accurate and realistic budgets.

Alderman Simpson suggested that the Directors and the Chief Executive are invited to a meeting to explain all the variances. Discussion ensued regarding the establishment of a sub committee or working group.

It was proposed by Councillor Finlay, seconded by Councillor Robinson and **AGREED:**

to recommend that a Resources Working Group is established consisting of the Chair and Vice Chair of Corporate & Central Services Committee, Councillor Finlay, Councillor Robinson, Alderman Campbell, one member from the Sinn Féin Party and one member from the SDLP, and that the Chief Executive and Directors attend as required.

It was agreed to refer the variance report to the Resources Working Group and that full explanations of the variances are provided to the working group.

In response to a query from Alderman Campbell, the Director advised that there was £832,453 in the capital fund and that it can only be used to finance the closure of the landfill site and associated capital works. She advised that the fund was built up with surpluses from Environmental Services and interest. The Director confirmed that apart from interest, no other money has been put into the account for the past four years.

It was proposed by Councillor Robinson, seconded by Councillor McCamphill and **AGREED:**

to recommend that no more money, apart from interest, is put into the Capital Fund until there is an approved closure plan, including costs, in accordance with DoE directions.

358.10 LOAN SANCTION APPROVAL

IT IS RECOMMENDED that loan sanction approval be sought for the upgrade of Changing Rooms at Balnamore at an estimated Cost £154,000.00 with the loan to be repaid over 20 years.

This is a joint project with Dunaghy Changing Rooms and a loan sanction has been granted for £216,000.00

It was proposed by Councillor Finlay, seconded by Alderman Cousley and **AGREED:**

to recommend to Council that loan sanction approval be sought for the upgrade of Changing Rooms at Balnamore – Estimated Cost £154,000.00. Loan to be repaid over 20 years.

358.11 COUNCILLORS' ALLOWANCES – TRAVELLING

The Department has issued revised maximum rates of travelling allowance effective from 1st April 2007, a copy of which was circulated. It is the practice of council to pay the maximum rates.

It was proposed by Councillor Finlay, seconded by Councillor Robinson and **AGREED:**

to recommend that travelling allowances at the maximum rate be paid with effect from 1st April 2007.

358.12 POST ENTRY TRAINING & EDUCATION

The Director of Central & Leisure Services reported that Adam Watson Leisure Attendant had successfully completed his course of studies in Leisure Management and has obtained a Higher National Diploma in Leisure Management (Sport and Recreation).

Mr Watson expresses his thanks to the Council for the financial support and time off work granted to undertake the course.

Members congratulated Mr Watson on his success.

This being all the business, the meeting closed at 10.45 pm.

Appendices attached:

Appendix 1 - Committee meetings, Spring & Summer 2007

Appendix 2 - Committee meetings, Summer 2007

Appendix 3 - New Starts & Leavers from 20.06.06 – 31.03.07 and 01.04.07 – 11.09.07

Appendix 4 - Variance Report

Appendix 1

Committee meetings, Spring & Summer 2007, Ballymoney
Borough Council

Committee	Start time	End time	Duratio n (minute s)	Number of councillors	
				In Committee	In attendance
APRIL					
Consultation	19:30	21:30	120	16	14
Development	19:30	19:45	15	14	9
Leisure & Amenities	19:30	21:30	120	14	9
Corporate & Central Services	18:00	19:35	95	14	13
Health & Environmental Services	19:30	21:10	100	14	7
MAY					
Consultation	19:30	20:00	30	16	11
Development	19:00	19:45	45	14	10
Leisure & Amenities	14:00	15:50	110	14	8
Corporate & Central Services	19:30	22:40	190	14	9
Health & Environmental Services	19:30	21:55	145	14	7
JULY					
Consultation*	12:00	14:50	140	16	10
Development	11:45	11:55	10	14	10
Leisure & Amenities	14:00	16:30	150	14	6
Corporate & Central Services		no meeting		14	
Health & Environmental Services		no meeting		14	
			* meeting adjourned for 30 minutes for lunch		
AUGUST					
Consultation	14:00	15:35	95	16	14
Development	14:00	15:02	62	14	5
Leisure & Amenities	14:00	16:50	170	14	7
Corporate & Central Services	14:00	15:30	90	14	7
Health & Environmental Services	14:00	16:10	130	14	8
4 MONTH averages					
Consultation			96	16	12
Development			33	14	9
Leisure & Amenities			138	14	8

Corporate & Central Services	125	14	10
Health & Environmental Services	125	14	7

Appendix 2**Committee meetings, Summer 2007, Ballymoney Borough Council**

Committee	Start time	End time	Duration	Number of councillors	
				(minutes) in Committee in attendance	
JULY					
Consultation*	12:00	14:50	140	16	10
Development	11:45	11:55	10	14	10
Leisure & Amenities	14:00	16:30	150	14	6
Corporate & Central Services		no meeting		14	n/a
Health & Environmental Services		no meeting		14	n/a
* meeting adjourned for 30 minutes for lunch					

AUGUST

Consultation	14:00	15:35	95	16	14
Development	14:00	15:02	62	14	5
Leisure & Amenities	14:00	16:50	170	14	7
Corporate & Central Services	14:00	15:30	90	14	7
Health & Environmental Services	14:00	16:10	130	14	8

JULY/AUGUST averages

Consultation			118		12
Development			36		8
Leisure & Amenities			160		7
Corporate & Central Services			90		7
Health & Environmental Services			130		8

Committee meetings, Spring 2007, Ballymoney Borough Council

Committee	Start time	End time	Duration	Number of councillors	
				(minutes) in Committee in attendance	
APRIL					
Consultation	19:30	21:30	120	16	14
Development	19:30	19:45	15	14	9
Leisure & Amenities	19:30	21:30	120	14	9
Corporate & Central Services	18:00	19:35	95	14	13
Health & Environmental Services	19:30	21:10	100	14	7
MAY					
Consultation	19:30	20:00	30	16	11
Development	19:00	19:45	45	14	10
Leisure & Amenities	14:00	15:50	110	14	8
Corporate & Central Services	19:30	22:40	190	14	9
Health & Environmental Services	19:30	21:55	145	14	7
APRIL/MAY averages					
Consultation			75		13

Development	30	10
Leisure & Amenities	115	9
Corporate & Central Services	143	11
Health & Environmental Services	123	7

APPENDIX 3**NEW STARTS & LEAVERS FROM 20.06.06 – 31.03.07****NEW STARTS**

Employee	Post	Department	Date of Start
Barbara Allison	Home Safety Officer	Borough Services	03.07.06
Adrian Brolly	Warden – Riverside Park	Borough Services	31.07.06
Philip Michael	General Operative	Borough Services	07.08.06
Jacqueline Frazer	Fuel Poverty Strategy Co-ordinator	Borough Services	01.09.06
Carla Patton	P/T Centre Attendant	Central & Leisure	04.09.06
James Pollock	General Operative	Borough Services	04.09.06
Sinéad Duggan	P/T Committee Clerk	Office of the Chief Executive	02.10.06
Siobhan Stewart	P/T Human Resources Administrator	Central & Leisure	09.10.06
Mark McKane	P/T Centre Attendant	Central & Leisure	09.10.06
Jacqueline O'Kelly	P/T Receptionist – Town Hall	Central & Leisure	09.10.06
Colette McAleese	P/T Receptionist – Joey Dunlop Leisure Centre	Central & Leisure	21.10.06
Gail McGrillis	P/T Intermittent Kennel Helper	Borough Services	06.11.06
Damian Gavin	Environment Health Officer	Borough Services	01.12.06
Catherine Watson	Community Safety Co-ordinator (Job share)	Borough Services	01.12.06
Lorna Montgomery	Receptionist – Borough Services	Borough Services	15.01.07
Carol McClure	P/T Health Suite Attendant	Central & Leisure	28.02.07
Christopher Hamilton	P/T Town Centre Warden	Office of the Chief Executive	05.03.07
Robert Leighton	Groundsperson/General Operative	Borough Services	05.03.07
Tommy McKay	Temporary Attendant – Drumaheglis Marina	Borough Services	12.03.07
Peter Barr	Temporary Warden – Drumaheglis Marina	Borough Services	12.03.07

LEAVERS

Employee	Post	Department	Date of Leave
Steven Brander	P/T Town Centre Warden	Office of the Chief Executive	23.06.06
Colleen MacAuley	Temporary Community Safety Co-ordinator	Borough Services	31.07.06

Elaine Stewart	Environmental Health Officer	Borough Services	31.07.06
David Morrison	Street Cleansing Operative	Borough Services	09.08.06
Tommy McKay	Temporary Attendant – Drumaheglis Marina	Borough Services	31.10.06

LEAVERS CONT'D

Employee	Post	Department	Date of Leave
Peter Barr	Temporary Warden – Drumaheglis Marina	Borough Services	31.10.06
Clare Henry	Community Safety Co-ordinator (Job share)	Borough Services	01.11.06
Julie McGarry	Community Safety Co-ordinator (Job share)	Borough Services	17.01.07

EARLY RETIREMENT ON THE GROUNDS OF ILL-HEALTH

Employee	Post	Department	Date of Leave
Ruth Young	Clerical Officer	Borough Services	23.10.06
Rosemary Hogg	P/T Receptionist – Joey Dunlop Leisure Centre	Central & Leisure	14.01.07

RETIREMENT

Employee	Post	Department	Date of Leave
Alex Shiels	General Operative	Borough Services	11.08.06
Josephine Taylor	P/T Cleaner	Central & Leisure	25.02.07

CAREER BREAKS

Employee	Post	Department	Date of Leave
Nil			

APPENDIX 3**NEW STARTS & LEAVERS FROM 01.04.07 – 11.09.07****NEW STARTS**

Employee	Post	Department	Date of Start
Shirin Johnston	Museum Assistant	Central & Leisure	01.08.07
Ita McErlean	Home Safety Officer (Job share)	Borough Services	06.08.07
Steve Phillips	Receptionist – Riada House (New Deal Programme)	Central & Leisure	20.08.07
Alexander McCreddie	Civic Amenity Site Attendant	Borough Services	03.09.07

LEAVERS

Employee	Post	Department	Date of Leave
Cabrini McGrath	P/T Catering Assistant	Central & Leisure	09.05.07
Lee McCormick	P/T Intermittent Kennel Helper	Borough Services	13.05.07
Gary Dempsey	General Operative	Borough Services	25.05.07
Claire McBride	P/T Clerical Officer	Office of the Chief Executive	30.06.07
Rhonda Lynn	Energy Efficiency Co-ordinator (Fixed Term Contract)	Borough Services	10.07.07
Karen Wilson	Personal Secretary (Job share)	Office of the Chief Executive	30.07.07
Alison Henry	P/T Receptionist/Cashier	Central & Leisure	31.07.07

EARLY RETIREMENT ON THE GROUNDS OF ILL-HEALTH

Employee	Post	Department	Date of Leave
Nil			

RETIREMENT

Employee	Post	Department	Date of Leave
Nil			

CAREER BREAKS

Employee	Post	Department	Date of Leave
Anne Woodrow	Committee	Office of the Chief	10.08.2007

	Clerk/Administrative Assistant – Extension of career break for a further year	Executive	
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APPENDIX 4



Variance report
2006-2007 - C&CS CC