

**MINUTES OF SPECIAL MEETING OF THE CORPORATE SERVICES COMMITTEE OF DUNGANNON AND SOUTH TYRONE BOROUGH COUNCIL HELD ON WEDNESDAY, 9 JANUARY 2008 IN THE COUNCIL OFFICES, CIRCULAR ROAD, DUNGANNON**

- MEMBERS PRESENT:** In the chair, Councillor Gildernew (Chair)
- Councillors Cuddy, Currie, Daly, R Burton, Monteith, Morrow and Mulligan
- OTHERS:** F Burton, Cavanagh, Greenaway and McGuigan
- OFFICERS PRESENT:** Mr Burke, Mrs Canning, Mr Currie, Mr Frazer, Mr McClelland, Mrs McClements, Mr McMinn and Mrs Smith

**1 CONSIDERATION OF BUDGETS AND TO SET RATE FOR 2008/2009**

Acting Director of Finance presented report appendix 1 and revised report appendix 2 which took account of a higher balance applied figure as information had been received from Land and Property Services re finalisations.

It was explained that the increase in estimated penny product was mainly attributed to higher valuation base due to increase in number of properties in the borough.

**1.1 Contingency Fund**

The question was asked in relation to what provision has been made in budgets for opportunities that may arise throughout the year. Members spoke of interest expressed in Eglis Primary School, Granville Primary School, Clogher Court House and Coalisland Police Station.

Director of Development stated that there was no surplus in figures put forward. He also stated that while the Council had expressed an interest in these properties had not yet been told available. In order to acquire such properties the Council would require loan sanction and there are now rigorous procedures in place in relation to loan sanction. Have to make business case and show sustainability.

Members felt that with £1million for capital spend, if an opportunity arises throughout the year could reallocate funding.

## **1.2 Capital Projects**

In response to query the Director of Development stated that Capital projects were as listed on page F8. Three of those listed ie Drumcoo, Playparks and Dog Gallop would be funded out of revenue.

Projects not included within the budget are:

Augher Playing Fields – investigations still ongoing.

Countryside Access

Work in Dungannon Park

Mullaghanagh link, statutory consents etc take time to process

Gardners Hall, statutory consents etc take time to process

Central Sports Field in Coalisland, area identified for that development designated natural habitat and will not consider rezoning until renewal of area plan. No other suitable site identified.

Multi use play area at Clonoe.

Members spoke of changes to regulation by some football leagues which may cause the Council some expense ie changing rooms have to be available at playing grounds. Will affect Benburb and Aughnacloy Playing Fields.

The Director of Development stated that there was still a commercial interest shown in half acre of ground at Aughnacloy.

## **1.3 Funded Posts**

Page F11 listed posts that are funded in the year 2007/08 but have no funding secured for all or part of 2008/09. Costs associated with these posts have not been included in draft budgets presented. A programme omitted from the list is Retail Programme which comes to an end on 30 June. No costings allowed for this in the body of the figures presented. Post is 100 per cent funded and additional funding will be available from 1 July if match new criteria.

In answer to queries the Director of Development stated that staff involved in these programmes are aware of date funding runs out, all of the posts involved with corporate plan issues, opportunity to retain all post subject to external funding and to include all posts, including posts not in current departmental structures, would put just over 5 per cent on figures presented. Would have window of opportunity if provide funding up to end of June. DETI provide for retrospective funding from 1 January 2008.

Provisional budgets not segregated like this before.

SMT wanted to make members aware of where at with funded posts.

Need Council direction on how to proceed.

Concern expressed that if set aside 100 per cent funding could post claim directly or indirectly to be full time employees of Council.

Maybe opportunity to link antiracism/racial equality/cultural diversity. Funders do not like linked projects.

For next meeting need more information on each funded post ie when funding applied for, when is decision due etc.

In relation to funded posts the Director of Development stated that some applications have been lodged and that in relation to some calls have not yet been made for applications. Important when making decision to demonstrate to all staff that the Council tried to secure funding for all posts.

Is fact that RPA announcement expected can we deal with issues in another way. Is there any merit for looking at the whole structure of the Council as a body. Is there a more efficient or effective way of running the Council, something that should be considering.

Maybe take this issue forward at future meetings.

#### **1.4 Union Representative – Human Resources**

In response to query the Head of Human Resources stated that resulting from pay and grading review NIPSA had requested and the Council had agreed to fund for six months a post on a secondment basis for a period of time to assist with job evaluation appeals. No person within NIPSA union had come forward for secondment and secondment opportunity was been taken up by employee from one of the other unions. The post while based in Northland Row, was not a post within Human Resource Unit, and the person in post reports to UCATT and GMB and acts on behalf of employees in those two unions.

Members spoke of the need for this post to be operationally accountability to someone within the Council. Following discussion

Proposed by Councillor Morrow  
Seconded by Councillor McGuigan and

**Resolved** That Acting Chief Executive and Head of Human Resources look at this post, regularise the situation and report back to next meeting.

Councillor R Burton left at 8.15 pm

## **1.5 Posts not in current Departmental Structures and not included in budget figures presented**

Managers explained the relevance/need for the new posts identified:

### **1.5.1 Driver and Operative – Technical Services Division**

Recycling campaign identified in corporate plan. Secured 100 per cent funding for specially design vehicle for collection of cardboard from commercial premises. Have vehicle now need driver and operative to get the project up and running.

### **1.5.2 Carbon Footprint Officer – Environmental Health**

Council has requested that action plan be developed to begin the process of the Council achieving carbon neutrality. The draft plan is based around the six priority areas identified by the sustainability strategy which is a legal requirement and which came into effect in March 2007. Each priority area has been assigned to a department or departments. The first step in initialising the plan would be to employ a corporate sustainability co-ordinator.

In response to queries the Acting Director of Environmental Health stated that looked at funding from landfill tax but does not fulfil criteria.

Members agreed that the Department of the Environment should be approached in relation to funding for such a post to test their commitment to see projects implemented.

Councillor Greenaway arrived at 8.25 pm

### **1.5.3 Clerical Officer - Building Control Division**

Fairly drastic down turn in amount of applications from Christmas and this is reflected across the province. Will not be including this post in budget.

### **1.5.4 PR Assistant – Communications Unit**

Post of Corporate Marketing and Events Officer not to be replaced. Student employed to assist with PR which requires time taken up with year on year training. Proposal now to replace student post with PR Assistant which would require approximately £7,000. Would be a saving but of greater benefit to the organisation.

## **1.6 Revenue Spend**

Managers outlined the over/underspend between current budget and proposed budget as set out in appendix two, particular attention being drawn to the following:

Community Services – contributions – increase to cover plantation celebrations

Tourism – increase in wages and salaries – additional hours /casual staff to man information point at Ranfurly House

Cultural Facilities – decrease in grant income – Arts Council grant reduced – currently making a case in relation to disability arts programme

Rec/Parks/Open Spaces – planting similar to last year - no planting to competition standard.

## **1.7 Miscellaneous**

### **1.7.1 PR Consultants**

In response to query advised that Photolink had only been employed on specific projects and not on day to day PR issues.

### **1.7.2 Vacant Post – Chief Executive**

What does it save us if do not go ahead and appoint new chief executive? £25,000 included for recruitment exercise, first three months as per current with nine months salary included. If keep current situation net saving of £60,000 on salary plus recruitment costs ie total saving of £85,000 or 1 per cent.

### **1.7.3 Regional Rate**

Need to keep in mind that we always contended in the past that we were prudent with increase. Regional rate frozen for 2008/2009.

Councillors Cavanagh, Currie and Monteith left at 9.18 pm.

Given the discussion tonight management team to bring back revised proposal show some savings and options in relation to funded posts. Could live with 6.64 per cent increase.

Members thanked officers for the work put into this and particularly the Acting Director of Finance. The Acting Chief Executive concurred with the comments made and put on record his appreciation of the work put in by the strategic management team.

The Chair wished everyone a happy new year.

**2 DURATION OF MEETING**

The meeting was called for 7.30 pm and ended at 9.30 pm

Mayor

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Chief Executive  
(Acting)

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