

MINUTES OF MEETING OF THE CORPORATE SERVICES COMMITTEE OF DUNGANNON AND SOUTH TYRONE BOROUGH COUNCIL HELD ON WEDNESDAY, 26 AUGUST 2009 IN THE COUNCIL OFFICES, CIRCULAR ROAD, DUNGANNON

- MEMBERS PRESENT:** In the chair, Councillor Cuddy (Vice Chair)
Councillors Brush, Currie, Daly, Gillespie, Molloy and Mulligan
- APOLOGY:** Councillor F Burton
- OTHERS:** Councillors Cavanagh, McGuigan and Morrow
- OFFICERS PRESENT:** Mr Burke, Director of Environmental Health
Mr Currie, Head of Human Resources
Mrs Kerr, Director of Finance
Mr McMinn, Director of Technical Services
Mr Murphy, Development Manager
Mrs Smith, Council Business Manager

The meeting started at 7.30 pm.

1 FINANCIAL MATTERS

The report (appendix 1) of the Director of Finance was presented reference being made to the undernoted:

1.1 Financial Update for Year Ended 31 March 2009 (item 1)

The report detailed the results for the year ended 31 March 2009. The Director of Finance took members through report pointing out reasons for major variances across the various cost centres.

Concern expressed at high favourable variance within Environmental Health Group Costs and it was stated that it would be useful to have quarterly updates from Southern Group. The Director of Environmental Health agreed to organise this and also to have Group Chief involved in meetings when setting future budgets.

It was noted that total underspend £400,000 represented 2.6% variance.

Members expressed concern at 'no response' opposite some cost centres. The Director of Finance stated that process was that Finance Division prepares management report which goes out to directors for comment. Written responses are required for audit trail. At time of reporting to committee responses in some areas had not been received.

To explain large adverse variance in relation to District Rates Director of Finance circulated report 'Forecast in-year APP Analysis 2009/10' as prepared by Land and Property Services which showed effect of vacant properties, irrecoverables etc.

Agreed that this information be Included in report going forward on a quarterly basis.

1.2 Financial Update for Quarter Ended 30 June 2009

Report set out breakdown of figures over the various cost centres. Members spoke of the need for year end projections to be realistic.

1.3 Total Borrowing as at 30 June 2009 (item 2.4)

Total borrowing as at 30 June 2009 was £4,471,296.56.

In response to query the Director of Finance advised that would be attending meeting tomorrow to go through economic/business case for the Castle Hill site following which it will be presented to Council.

Agreed that Acting Chief Executive give update on Castle Hill site at next meeting of the Council.

Members felt that this was an appropriate time to sit down as group of councils and discuss capital spend etc to get understanding of what happening within each area. Director of Finance advised that finance officers from three councils have met on several occasions and budget setting time will create opportunity for three councils to work together.

1.4 Councillors ICT (item 3.1)

Members agreed to proceed as per recommendation in report.

In response to queries the Director of Finance stated that if any Councillors encounters any problems with equipment or feel they require further training this should be discussed with Council officers.

1.5 Procurement Quarterly Reports (items 4.1)

The Director of Finance stated that as part of new procurement procedures additional information is now being collated regarding savings achieved and exceptions and these will be reported on a quarterly basis. The report detailed this information for quarter ended 30 June 2009. In response to query the Director advised that best value comparisons were previously carried out but were not recorded and now that structures in place would be monitored and reported to committee.

Director of Finance agreed to investigate the question of carrying a stock of printer cartridges for members' printers.

1.6 Audit and Risk Update (item 5)

Paper was circulated which outlined a number of options in relation to the timing of this Sub Committee.

Proposed by Councillor Brush
Seconded by Councillor Mulligan and

Resolved That it be recommended to the Council to go with option 4 ie Quarterly, March, June, September and December on same night as Economic Development Sub Committee (Thursday after Council meeting).

1.7 Payments of Accounts

The Director of Finance stated that a number of items were queried at the Council meeting:

Bassetts - £0.83 – plumbing supplies – have looked at system in place and there is a minimum payment level of £15 and in the future anything below this will be automatically withheld.

The Corner Cake Shop - £5.94 - scones for NILGA group meeting – as per meeting refreshment policy.

Deborah Malcomson £10,000 - imaging project Coalisland, public art work.

Northern Bank £239,053.69 - loan repayment – loan repayment is made in six months instalments, includes Tullyvar which is recouped through Tullyvar.

The Director of Finance suggested that maybe this Committee or Audit and Risk Sub Committee may like to nominate member to pick at random each month several payments to be investigated.

Members felt that current situation as exists, ie when lists are circulated if any member has any query they should refer these to Director of Finance who will give explanation.

1.8 Adoption of Report

Proposed by Councillor Gillespie
Seconded by Councillor Brush and

Resolved That it be recommended to the Council that the report of the Director of Finance be adopted and that all recommendations, subject to the foregoing, be approved.

1.9 Banking Services

In response to queries the Director of Finance advised that not aware that Council has every tendered for banking services and with RPA would not be cost effective to do so now. This is currently something that is being looked at for new council. Council's current account is with Northern Bank and investments are not all with one bank, risk is spread. Will shortly be doing exercise in relation to corporate investment funds.

2 ADOPTION OF MINUTES OF MEETING OF AUDIT AND RISK SUB COMMITTEE – WEDNESDAY 24 JUNE 2009

Proposed by Councillor Mulligan
Seconded by Councillor Brush and

Resolved that it be recommended to Council that the minutes of the Meeting of the Audit and Risk Sub Committee held on Wednesday 24 June 2009, having been printed and circulated, be adopted.

Director of Finance left at 9.00 pm.

3 PERSONNEL MATTERS

The report (appendix 2) of the Head of Human Resources was presented reference being made to the undernoted:

3.1 Leavers (item 2)

Members noted the long service of Mr J Nimmons, Cleansing Supervisor, 43 years and 11 months. The Mayor advised that he had held a reception and had presented Mr Nimmons with a certificate to mark his years of service.

3.2 Career Break Extension (item 3)

It was noted that as per the report the Public Relations Officer has now requested a final 6 month extension of the career break until 28 February 2010.

In response to queries the Head of Human Resources stated that employee has to have a minimum period of at least one year's service, Council is not responsible for any payments during the career break ie nic, pension etc, the employee retains the right in relation to certain sickness benefits etc when they return to work and policy allows for 10 days keep in touch.

3.3 Good Relations Officer (item 4)

Head of Human resources advised that OFM/DFM has confirmed approval for an additional Good Relations Officer post up to 31 March 2011 and is committed to providing 75% funding of employment costs. He advised that the Director of Development would recommend that the additional Good Relations Officer post is agreed as outlined in the report.

Lengthy discussion ensued with members expressing concern with regard to; hidden costs over and above the 25 per cent, the duplication of the role of the officer given that Peace III monies allocated to STEP for anti racism work, the earlier decision of the Council that in light of RPA no new posts to be created, lack of consultation with the Council in preparing and submitting the action plan to Community Relations Unit and that anti sectarian and racism rife within the borough and to reject funding for good relations officer could appear negligent following which it was

Proposed by Councillor Currie
Seconded by Councillor Daly

That it be recommended to the Council to accept recommendation as outlined in report.

Amendment

Proposed by Councillor Molloy
Seconded by Councillor Gillespie

That it be recommended to the Council to defer this item to the next meeting of the Committee and deal with along with Development Division restructuring proposals.

The amendment was put to the meeting 5 (five) members voted in favour and 2 (two) against.

The amendment was declared carried.

3.4 Job Evaluation Process (item 5)

The report of the Head of Human Resources outlined the issues which had resulted in nine posts, as previously listed, being recommended for approval for job evaluation based on legal advice. The Head of Human Resources advised that within the last few days he has been made aware of at least three additional posts to be considered because of perceived inconsistencies and that he had previously recommended that the whole area of job evaluations needs a comprehensive review.

Lengthy discussion ensued with concern being expressed with regard to the authority of any Director to agree post for job evaluation, need for equality of treatment within and across divisions, need for spot checks to compare posts that have been evaluated and posts that have not, moratorium put in place to protect jobs and need to see that it is effective, recommendation based on legal advice therefore discretion limited, in relation to additional three posts directors need to report to committee with all the issues.

Councillor Currie asked for his concern to be recorded in relation to applications for evaluation sitting with Head of Department for at least eight months.

In response to queries regarding development restructuring proposals and possible job evaluations on back of that the Director of Environmental Health stated that moratorium agreed in November and that is control point.

Councillor Daly left at 9.50 pm during above discussion.

Proposed by Councillor Molloy
Seconded by Councillor Gillespie

That it be recommended to the Council to approve the nine posts, as previously listed and recommended by legal advice, for job evaluation.

Amendment

Proposed by Councillor Currie

That it be recommended to the Council that all Directors be asked whether request made to them prior to moratorium came in for job evaluations and if that is the case then proceed with the evaluation of twelve posts.

The amendment failed to find a seconder.

The proposal was put to the meeting 4 (four) members voted in favour and 1 (one) against.

The proposal was declared carried.

Councillors Cavanagh and Morrow left at 10.09 pm.

3.5 Bonus Cases – Decision of Fair Employment Tribunal

It was noted that all the cases had been dismissed by the Tribunal and the Head of Human Resources advised that all have applied to the Tribunal for a review of the decision.

3.6 Funded Posts (item 8) Project Officer – Tourism Enterprise (2)

In response to query the Development Manager stated that as far as he was aware this was a continuing of funding.
Acting Chief Executive to provide confirmation for Council Meeting.

The Development Manager left at 10.14 pm.

3.7 Staffing Technical Services (item 9)

The Director of Technical Services presented issues that have arisen within the Technical Services Division in relation to the grading of the two charge hands appointed to assist the Cleansing Supervisor and employees carrying out short term acting up duties as detailed in the report of the Head of Human Resources.

In response to queries in relation to operation of key services in light of flu pandemic the Director stated that Head of Human Resources proactive in having temporary list of HGV drivers and all employees within Division can be prioritised to keeping essential services operational.

Proposed by Councillor Currie
Seconded by Councillor Brush and

Resolved That it be recommended to the Council that:
the two charge hand posts appointed to assist the Cleansing Supervisor be regarded to Scale 4 similar to other charge hand posts within the Division
and
a process be put in place whereby employees are remunerated on a timely basis for any additional duties carried out due to short term acting up periods within the Technical Services Division.

3.8 Sickness Absence (item 10)

Members noted that figures provided indicated a decrease in sickness absence in the period 1 April to 30 June 2009 from the same period as last year.

The Director of Environmental Health stated that if going to have league tables how councils record sickness absence needs to be looked at to make sure comparing like with like and advised that this will be proactively investigated with the Department.

Councillor Cavanagh left at 10.18 pm.
Director of Technical Services left at 10.18 pm.

3.9 Health & Safety (item 12) Events

Member asked that the numbers which attended the Romeo and Juliet outdoor event be confirmed.

No incidents report at the Altitude Rock Event. Alcohol was not allowed on Castle Hill but young drinkers not associated with the event had congregated in Market Square.

3.10 Adoption of Report

Proposed by Councillor Mulligan
Seconded by Councillor Gillespie and

Resolved that it be recommended to the Council that the report of the Head of Human Resources be adopted and that all recommendations, subject to the foregoing, be approved.

4 MISCELLANEOUS

4.1 Public Meeting with Minister for Social Development Omagh Library, 4 September 2009 at 12.00 to 2.00 pm

Member brought details of this event to the attention of the meeting and stated that due to the housing crisis in Dungannon and Coalisland it was important that the Council should be represented at the meeting.

Resolved That it be recommended to the Council that Councillor Currie attend this public meeting.

4.2 Reform of the Planning System in Northern Ireland: Your Chance to Influence Change – Consultation Event, Cookstown, Friday 4 September 2009 - mileage

Resolved That it be recommended to the Council that Councillor McGuigan attend this consultation event.

5 DURATION OF MEETING

The meeting was called for 7.30 pm and ended at 10.20 pm.

MAYOR _____

CHIEF EXECUTIVE _____
(Acting)