

ANTRIM BOROUGH COUNCIL

Minutes of the proceedings of a Meeting of the **Public Services Committee** of Antrim Borough Council held in The Round Tower Chamber, Antrim Civic Centre, Stiles Way, Antrim on **Thursday 24 June 2010 at 2pm.**

In the Chair : Councillor H J Cushinan

Other Members Present : Aldermen -

S Dunlop
R J Loughran
M Rea

Councillors -

T A Burns
T Clarke
B Graham
N Kelly
A A Lawther
P Lewis
A Logue
P Michael
S Nicholl
D Ritchie
J Smyth

In Attendance : Chief Executive
Assistant Director - Building Control
Assistant Director - Finance
Planning Officer
Environment Manager
Planning Service Representative:
Mrs Karen Doyle
NI Housing Executive Representatives:
Mr Stewart Cuddy
Mr Frank O'Connor
Mrs Geraldine Haire
Mrs Mona Conway
Mrs Yvonne Montgomery
Committee Secretary (*K Smyth*)

Apologies

: Councillors -

A K Brady
A D Cochrane-Watson
O C J Keenan
M Lucas

LEGAL MATTERS

TABLED: copies of Council's Financial Statements for the year ending 31 March 2010.

COUNCIL'S FINANCIAL STATEMENTS FOR YEAR ENDING 31 MARCH 2010

The Chief Executive confirmed that -

- the Resources Committee had been afforded the opportunity to question the Financial Statements and the year end position at their Meeting on 17 June 2010;
- due to the robust corporate governance framework in place officers were pleased with the significant operational surplus;
- the deadline for submission to Local Government Division was 30 June 2010.

The Assistant Director (Finance) briefly overviewed the District Fund and Balance Sheet as at 31 March 2010.

Members commented on their detailed review at the Resources Committee and acknowledged the minor modifications made.

The Resources Committee Chairman, Councillor Smyth, paid tribute to the Assistant Director (Finance) and Management Accountant for their endeavours in meeting the challenging timescale.

AGREED: on the proposal of Councillor Smyth, seconded by Councillor Lawther, approval of the revised Financial Statements for the year ending 31 March 2010, as circulated, the relevant copies being authorised and submitted to Local Government Division accordingly.

Councillor Lewis joined the Meeting at this point.

PLANNING SCHEDULES

The Senior Planning Officer updated Members on the Streamlined Consultation process, namely, 34 streamlined applications this month with 20 decisions issued.

STREAMLINED CONSULTATION SCHEME

DEFERRED APPLICATIONS

AGREED: defer one month for a Planning Clinic for the objectors - Councillors Clarke and Nicholl.

**T/2006/0302/F
EASSDA LTD**

AGREED: defer one month for a Planning Clinic for the objectors - Councillor Kelly.

**T/2007/0520/F
DENNISON
COMMERCIAL LTD**

AGREED: accept approval, the objection having been previously noted.

**T/2008/0501/O
SHANES CASTLE
ESTATES**

AGREED: accept approval.

**T/2010/0039/F
MRS M FERGUSON**

NEW APPLICATIONS

AGREED: accept approval, the detail of the objection letters being noted.

**T/2010/0141/F
MR & MRS M
McDOWELL**

AGREED: defer one month for a Planning Clinic, the material planning reasons outlined and accepted - Councillor Burns.

**T/2010/0165/F
K DEAN**

The details of the objection letter were noted.

**T/2010/0176/F
MR P MCGILL
c/o P J CAREY**

AGREED: defer one month for a Planning Clinic, the material planning reasons outlined and accepted - Aldermen Dunlop and Loughran.

AGREED: defer one month for a Planning Clinic, the material planning reasons outlined and accepted - Alderman Rea.

**T/2010/0206/A
BALLYHARVEY PETS
COUNTRY CLUB**

AGREED: defer one month for a Planning Clinic, the material planning reasons outlined and accepted - Councillor Clarke.

**T/2010/0207/O
MR W R J AGNEW**

The details of the objection letter were noted. Councillor Clarke also raised Environmental Health's objection to the removal of condition No. 2 for Planning Application T/2007/0262/F.

**T/2010/0209/F
MR E MADDEN**

AGREED: defer one month for a Planning Clinic, the material planning reasons outlined and accepted - Councillor Clarke.

LATE ITEM

Retention of changes to previously approved Material Recovery and Transfer Facility under T/2006/0566/F including the retention of changes to previously approved workshed and retention of new storage / maintenance work shed, office and mess facilities. Also extension to approved site to include an external fixed crusher and metal storage area (81-83 Belfast Road, Crumlin).

**T/2009/0314/F
McKINSTRY SKIP HIRE
LTD**

Alderman Rea spoke to the application and the Senior Planning Officer confirmed that the Special Studies Unit had considered and approved the application, the file was in order and the Group had signed off the opinion to approve.

NOTED: this was a new 'Full' planning application and there were no objections on file.

AGREED: accept approval.

T/2009/0314/F
McKINSTRY SKIP HIRE LTD
(continued)

NOTED: the Planning Clinic would be held on Wednesday 28 July 2010 commencing 10am in Meeting Room 1, Antrim Civic Centre.

PLANNING CLINIC

OTHER PLANNING MATTERS

LETTER: No. 4 had been circulated.

In response to an enquiry from Councillor Burns, the Senior Planning Officer indicated she was not aware of the above letter, which was categorised as a standard 'Neighbourhood Notification' letter.

NOTED: it was anticipated the applicant intended to submit an amended scheme, hence the Chairman declared there would be an opportunity to consider the proposal at that time.

T/2010/0139/F
TESCO -
REVISIONS TO STORE
AND SITE LAYOUT,
CRUMLIN

The Planning Service representative withdrew from the Meeting at this point.

NOTED: Letter No. 3 from Planning Service, as circulated, outlining the effort Planning Service intended to progress in order to deal with the 2,500 deferred applications under PPS21 within the next 6 months. The flexible approach offered in relation to Criteria 1 and 5 was highlighted.

PPS21 'SUSTAINABLE
DEVELOPMENT IN
THE COUNTRYSIDE'
7/6/3

AGREED: that clarification be sought from Planning Service regarding notification of the above to affected Applicants / Agents.

Councillor Logue joined the Meeting at this point.

LETTER: No. 5 and 'Commercial In Confidence' Report had been circulated.

The Environment Manager confirmed that this consultation was not related to the previous application for an Energy from Waste Facility in the same vicinity and commented on the implications for such facilities for future waste management strategy in the Borough.

It was confirmed that Council's Environmental Health section were satisfied with the scope of the proposed Environmental Impact Assessment requested by the Department.

Alderman Rea briefly summarised discussions from the arc21 Meeting earlier in the day. It was highlighted that this was a pre-application enquiry although several Members remarked on the need to be kept fully informed of what was being proposed.

NOTED: pending the submission of a 'full' Planning Application, Officers to pursue the possibility of a presentation from the applicant and/or arc 21 to the appropriate Committee (T/2010/0240/Q; arc21 Strategic Waste Facility).

**T/2010/0240/Q:
PRE-APPLICATION
DISCUSSION /
SCOPING
CONSULTATION:
ARC21 STRATEGIC
WASTE FACILITY -
REGULATION 6(1)(b)
7/6/5**

ROADS

CONSULTATION REPORT: No. 7 had been circulated, closing date for comments being 24 August 2010.

The Assistant Director (Building Control) spoke to the proposed introduction of a new Bus Operator Licensing System in Northern Ireland and summarised the 3 options contained therein, namely - Option 1 (do nothing), Option 2 (a single licensing regime) and Option 3 (new 3 tier licensing regime) which was the Department's preferred option.

NOTED: the undernoted comments from Members -

- the impounding of illegal buses (paragraph 20; page 17) was welcomed;
- concern regarding the financial implications for small nursery or pre-school groups.

**CONSULTATION:
THE FUTURE OF BUS
OPERATOR
LICENSING IN
NORTHERN IRELAND
6/3/1**

AGREED: to defer the corporate response to the DOE Consultation entitled “The Future of Bus Operator Licensing in Northern Ireland” to the July Monthly Public Services Committee Meeting, to allow officers an opportunity to obtain clarification from Translink on the undernoted policy enquiries -

- The instructions given to the driver where there are more school children than seats on the school bus (*does the driver leave children at the stop; is another bus requested; are the children expected to avail of general bus services*);
- The instructions given to the driver in relation to children who have forgotten their bus pass.

**CONSULTATION:
THE FUTURE OF BUS
OPERATOR
LICENSING IN
NORTHERN IRELAND
(continued)**

OTHER MATTERS

Page 59 of the Minutes of the Annual Meeting held on 10 June 2010 refers

NOTED: this being a new selection process all Elected Members were eligible for nomination.

AGREED: the undernoted further nominations for submission to the North Eastern Education and Library Board (NEELB) for consideration for one appointment to serve on the Board for the transitional period.

- Councillor Trevor Clarke
- Councillor Neil Kelly
- Councillor Stephen Nicholl

**NOMINATION OF
ELECTED MEMBERS
FOR ONE
APPOINTMENT TO
NEELB**

TENDERS

AGREED: that Councillors Clarke and Smyth open Tenders for Installation and Operation of Festive Lighting and Decorations (PM/TEN/O62) immediately following the Committee Meeting.

**OPENING OF TENDER
PM/TEN/062 -
INSTALLATION AND
OPERATION OF
FESTIVE LIGHTING
AND DECORATIONS**

CORRESPONDENCE

Page 44 of the Minutes of the Public Services Committee Meeting held on Thursday 27 May 2010 refers.

NOTED: receipt of letter from Planning Appeals Commission (PAC) regarding Appeal 2006/A1563, Heron Property Ltd - Land South West of Nutt's Corner Roundabout.

Members were extremely disappointed that the Commission reiterated their previous response. In addition they considered current arrangements for recording evidence during appeal hearings satisfactory and had no plans to introduce 'minute takers' as suggested.

The extensive range of points conceded by the Department at the appeal in effect constitute important planning precedents for the future development of Nutt's Corner. The Commission's unwillingness to stipulate these concessions is extremely unhelpful. It was highlighted that the applicant is still in negotiations with the Commission and has not ruled out further legal action.

AGREED: that Council writes two letters as follows:

- write to the Minister, Office of the First Minister and Deputy First Minister, outlining Council's notes from the Appeal Hearing and also the views of Planning Service;
- write to the Minister, Department of the Environment, seeking clarification on a local development plan for the Nutt's Corner area and also query why the disused airfield at Nutts Corner is categorised differently than any other one in the United Kingdom.

NOTED: receipt of letter and publication from Translink entitled "Let's Go Together" - future steps for public transport.

AGREED: the above correspondence to be copied to all Members for their information.

**PAC:
2006/A1563 -
HERON PROPERTY
LTD, LAND SW OF
NUTT'S CORNER
ROUNDAABOUT,
ANTRIM**

**TRANSLINK:
"LET'S GO
TOGETHER"
PUBLICATION -
FUTURE STEPS FOR
PUBLIC TRANSPORT**

INTERVAL

There was an interval at 2.46pm. The Meeting resumed at 3.17pm and with the exception of Councillors Clarke, Graham and Lewis, all those previously present returned to the seats.

PRESENTATION

REPORT: No. 7 had been circulated.

TABLED: News Release 'Northern Ireland Housing Executive to invest £4.90m in Antrim this year'.

The Chairman introduced and welcomed Northern Ireland Housing Executive (NIHE) representatives Mr Stewart Cuddy (Deputy Chief Executive), Mr Frank O'Connor (Area Manager), Mrs Geraldine Haire (Assistant District Manager), Mrs Mona Conway (Area Planner) and Mrs Yvonne Montgomery (Information Officer) who were in attendance to present their 2010/2011 District Housing Plan & Local Housing Strategy for the Antrim Borough.

**NIHE:
ANTRIM DISTRICT
HOUSING PLAN &
LOCAL HOUSING
STRATEGY 2010/2011
2/32/1**

Funding Constraints

It was anticipated the recent 'Budget' would result in significant further reductions and a comprehensive spending review, the extent of which would be known in the autumn. Prospects for the housing market in 2010 were not yet optimistic with very few sales of housing stock and priorities would be accorded to the most vulnerable.

Councillors Clarke and Graham returned to the Meeting at this point.

Private Renting

It was confirmed that the number of tenants moving away from the NIHE had increased by 58% in 2 years, hence more housing stock was available than previously.

Buy Back Schemes

It was revealed that the NIHE have also been acquiring property in the private sector on long term leases (urban and rural).

New Build Projections

The NIHE identified areas of need but the responsibility for provision of schemes rested with the Housing Associations. The 5 year projection of social housing need for the Borough totalled 300, with a higher profile being applied to Antrim Town than previously. Recognition for Crumlin as an area of high demand remained although ongoing problems regarding suitable land and 'Nimbys' were highlighted. The delays affecting progression of particular schemes were clarified.

Councillor Lewis returned to the Meeting at this point.

Single Male Accommodation

Difficulties in securing accommodation for 'single males' was again highlighted. Representatives confirmed that one third of all allocations were directed to 'single' people.

Maintenance / Improvement Programmes

Representatives clarified budgets, including unplanned / emergency maintenance, and highlighted an overall improvement during the last 10 years as a result of changes to contract arrangements. Areas of concern were to be submitted to the NIHE prior to their departure.

Springfarm

Representatives detailed relevant background information regarding the decision of the Minister (DSD) to stop the sale proceeding. It was understood that active proposals for these dwellings from two Housing Associations remained and value-for-money discussions with DSD were ongoing.

Housing Benefits

The impact of Housing Benefit 'savings' and/or other allowances was clarified, particularly an anticipated increase in administration.

Discretionary Grants

The criteria was clarified and some concern was expressed regarding the reduction in funding.

Councillor Logue left the Meeting at this point.

Fuel Poverty / Warmer Homes

Representatives confirmed a review in investment strategy for maintenance of stock and took note of the request for cavity insulation in particular areas of Randalstown. The Wardens within the Borough were also commended for their endeavours to improve fuel poverty.

Councillor Clarke left the Meeting at this point.

**NIHE:
ANTRIM DISTRICT
HOUSING PLAN &
LOCAL HOUSING
STRATEGY 2010/2011
(continued)**

Travelling Community

The background surrounding the potential provision of 6 units for the Travelling Community within the Borough was explained.

During discussion the Representatives were congratulated on completion of several projects within the Borough.

There being no further questions the Chairman thanked the NIHE representatives for addressing Committee and they withdrew from the Meeting at this point.

There being no further business the Meeting concluded at 4.26pm.

**NIHE:
ANTRIM DISTRICT
HOUSING PLAN &
LOCAL HOUSING
STRATEGY 2010/2011**
(continued)

Mayor _____

Chief Executive _____

Date _____