

## **CASTLEREAGH BOROUGH COUNCIL**

Minutes of the proceedings of the meeting of Castlereagh Borough Council held in the Council Chamber, Castlereagh Borough Council, Civic & Administrative Offices, Bradford Court, Upper Galwally, Castlereagh, BT8 6RB, on Thursday, 24 November 2005, at 7.00 p.m.

**PRESENT:** Councillor T Jeffers  
(in the Chair)

**ALDERMEN:** M Copeland  
J Norris  
P D Robinson MP MLA (from 8.25 pm)

**IN ATTENDANCE:** Mrs A M Beattie  
J Beattie  
Ms J Bunting  
Mrs M Chambers  
Mrs J Cochrane  
D Drysdale  
Mrs S Duncan  
C Hall  
M Henderson  
Miss R Hughes MBE (until 9.15 pm)  
M Long  
A Ramsey  
G Robinson  
J Spratt  
C Tosh  
J White

**IN ATTENDANCE:** Chief Executive, Director of Finance & Leisure Services, Director of Technical & Environmental Services, Director of Administration & Community Services, Planning Service Officer, Planning Officer and Assistant Members' Services Officer

**APOLOGIES:** Apologies were received on behalf of Aldermen Mrs I Robinson and Mrs G Rice and Councillor B Harvey

### **2005/638 : OPENING OF MEETING**

Reverend Caldwell opened the meeting with a prayer. He included the Best family and offered the Council's support at this difficult time.

Noted.

## **2005/639 : MINUTES**

RESOLVED : That

- (a) the Minutes of the following meetings be accepted as a true record:

Finance & General Purposes Committee meeting of 16 November 2005

Technical & Environmental Services Committee meeting of 1 November 2005

Leisure Park Board meeting of 19 September 2005

- (b) the Minutes of the following meetings be accepted as a true record, subject to the amendments as follows:

Council meeting of 27 October 2005

Page 5 – Minute 2005/576: to be amended to read:

Roads Service to ensure that School Road is retained in the list of traffic calming schemes

Traffic calming humps at Newton Park not slowing traffic adequately –

Roads Service to look at alternative traffic calming measures

Leisure Services Committee meeting of 3 November 2005

Page 1 – delete Mrs Bunting, insert Ms Bunting

Central Services Committee meeting of 14 November 2005

Page 23 – Minute CS/2005/136: second line of resolution (b)

Add: with the Committee having full executive powers as agreed at the September Committee meeting.

Special Council meeting of 10 November 2005

Page 13 – Minute 2005/630: second paragraph to read as follows:

Councillor Robinson referred to Mr Ferguson's comments regarding new staffing resources and expressed his concern that the Planning Service would attribute any improvements in performance to the streamlining of Council consultation procedures, rather than the 125 additional staff, which the Planning Service has recently recruited.

Special Council meeting of 17 November 2005

To be represented at the December Council meeting

## **MATTERS ARISING FROM MINUTES**

### **2005/640 : HOME SAFETY PROMOTION (Minute T&ESC/2005/381 refers)**

Following a request from Councillor Henderson, it was

RESOLVED: That the above minute be taken back to Committee for further discussion.

**2005/641 : TREE PLANTING CEREMONY IN MEMORY OF MRS GRETTA FALLOON MBE (Minute CS/2005/112 refers)**

Following discussion, it was

RESOLVED: That the tree planting ceremony in memory of Mrs Gretta Falloon be postponed until January 2006.

**PRESENTATION**

**2005/642 : PRESENTATION – SHOWING OF A DVD: UPDATE ON BONFIRES AND THE WORK OF THE INTER-AGENCY BONFIRE WORKING GROUP**

Members were shown a DVD of the Davarr Avenue cultural celebrations and bonfire of July 2005.

During the ensuing discussion, Councillor Drysdale informed Members that the members of the Inter-Agency Bonfire Working Group had worked hard, together with organisers of bonfires in the Borough, to make these events a safe and enjoyable experience for everybody and much progress had been made. Councillor Drysdale felt that the DVD was a good example of this.

Councillor Drysdale continued to say that some funding for cultural events and bonfires had been donated by businesses.

Councillor Chambers agreed with Councillor Drysdale. She was also of the view that the Milltown area would benefit greatly from co-operation between organisers of bonfires in that area and the Inter-Agency Bonfire Working Group. She felt that the elderly were not sufficiently involved in the organisation.

Noted.

**ROADS SERVICES**

**2005/643 : CORRESPONDENCE FROM THE ROADS SERVICEES RE: EXPERIMENTAL TRAFFIC CONTROL SCHEME – MOTORCYCLES IN BUS LANES (copy previously circulated)**

Noted.

**2005/644 : CORRESPONDENCE FROM THE ROADS SERVICE RE TRAFFIC CALMING MEASURES – CASTLEREAGH (copy previously circulated)**

Noted.

**2005/645 : CORRESPONDENCE FROM THE ROADS SERVICE RE TRAVEL SURVEY FOR NORTHERN IRELAND 2002-2004 (copy previously circulated)**

The Chairman thanked the Roads Service for their hospitality during a recent visit to the Roads Service Traffic Control Centre.

In the ensuing discussion, Members congratulated the DUP, and in particular Alderman PD Robinson, for being the first party to propose free fares on public transport for senior citizens (Minute 1997/408 refers). The scheme was proving to be very popular amongst senior citizens.

Noted.

## **EDUCATION**

**2005/646 : MINUTES OF SOUTH EASTERN EDUCATION & LIBRARY BOARD MEETINGS HELD IN OCTOBER 2005**

Noted.

## **HOUSING**

**2005/647 : CORRESPONDENCE FROM THE NORTHERN IRELAND HOUSING EXECUTIVE RE CORPORATE AND BUSINESS PLANS 2006-2009 CONSULTATION (copy previously circulated)**

Noted.

**2005/648 : CORRESPONDENCE FROM THE DEPARTMENT FOR SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT RE DRAFT PRIVATE TENANCIES ORDER 2005 (copy previously circulated)**

Noted.

**2005/649 : CORRESPONDENCE FROM THE NORTHERN IRELAND HOUSING EXECUTIVE RE DECENT HOUSING IS NOT AN END IN ITSELF (copy previously circulated)**

Noted.

**2005/650 : CORRESPONDENCE FROM THE NORTHERN IRELAND HOUSING EXECUTIVE RE NEW ARRANGEMENTS TO PROTECT LOCAL SERVICES AND LOCAL ACCOUNTABILITY (copy previously circulated)**

Noted.

## **FINANCE**

### **2005/651 : ACCOUNTS FOR PAYMENT FOR NOVEMBER 2005**

RESOLVED: That the Council approve the undernoted payments:

Capital Account (General)	£25,823.49
General Account (Salaries)	£435,151.37
General Account (Suppliers)	£807,397.00

### **2005/652 : MAYOR/DEPUTY MAYOR'S BUSINESS FOR NOVEMBER 2005**

Noted.

## **GENERAL**

### **2005/653 : CORRESPONDENCE FROM CASTLEREAGH DISTRICT COMMAND UNIT, PSNI, RE ANTI-SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR – CAIRNSHILL PLAYING FIELDS (copy previously circulated)**

Councillor Chambers outlined for Members' benefit that, while attending a public meeting of the DPP, she had been approached by a constituent who was concerned about young people drinking alcohol on the Cairnshill Playing Fields and creating a nuisance, and the constituent had enquired whether ASBOs could be placed on them. There had also been concerns in respect of how the police dealt with complaints regarding this activity. Councillor Chambers reported that she had raised this point during the meeting, and she had been delighted that Inspector B Dodds had taken note of these concerns.

Councillor Chambers stated that residents from Cairnshill had intended to speak at the Council meeting, but, unfortunately, they had not been able to attend this meeting. However, there had also been complaints from residents in other areas regarding the consumption of alcohol by young people, one example being the Four Winds.

Councillor Spratt informed Members that he, too, had been approached by residents in Cairnshill, who had asked if the Council could fence in the playing fields in order to deter teenagers from gathering there. However, this would not be possible, as disabled people as well as school children required access through the barrier.

Councillor Spratt felt that the police had been reluctant to deal with these incidents until recently, when they had come under pressure from the public. He continued to say that, in his view, the police had tried to place some of the responsibility on the DPP. However, some DPP members had expressed

concerns regarding the behaviour of some young people. Councillor Spratt felt the Council should propose more robust policing, more police officers and more CID presence in the Borough in order to deter young people from drinking alcohol in public places.

Councillor Spratt referred to a substantial rise in burglaries in the Borough. He added that serious offences were dealt with by officers from CID, although they did not appear to be in evidence in the Borough, and only ten police officers were available to patrol the area.

Councillor Long informed Members that similar problems had been encountered in the Roddens Park area, and he had requested that additional signs be placed in prominent places, prohibiting the use of alcohol. He referred to the Council's initiative earlier in 2005 to tackle anti-social behaviour and enquired whether anything else could be done. He felt, however, that police officers were doing all they could to prevent anti-social behaviour.

Councillor White stated that pressure had been put on the police to increase their efforts to stop anti-social behaviour. He added that 13 persons had been prosecuted and parents had been informed of their children's actions.

Councillor Henderson seconded Councillor Spratt's proposal that the Council ask for increased policing in the Borough, as there had also been reports that cannabis was being used. He referred to a recent DPP report, which showed that only one area in the Borough had been successful in tackling anti-social behaviour. Councillor Henderson further stated that six years ago the Council had put forward areas which prohibited the use of alcohol, and these were listed in libraries.

Alderman PD Robinson arrived at this point.

Councillor G Robinson stated that the police considered that the absence of signs prohibiting the use of alcohol prevented them from taking action. Many of these signs appeared to have been removed or broken, therefore Councillor Robinson suggested that Officers meet with representatives from the PSNI to seek their views as to the positioning of signs throughout the Borough.

Councillor Robinson reported that, since December 2003, there had been seven prosecutions in respect of offences against drinking bye-laws and three were pending. During 2005 six formal cautions had been issued, with a further 12 pending. Councillor Robinson stated that he wished to be present during a meeting with police representatives when these anti-social behaviour issues were being discussed.

The Director of Technical & Environmental Services thanked Councillor G Robinson for bringing these items to the Council's attention. He suggested that these issues be referred to the Technical & Environmental Services Committee for consideration.

RESOLVED: That

- (a) Officers establish the location of signs prohibiting the consumption of alcohol.
- (b) The Chief Executive write to the PSNI requesting increased policing of the Borough in respect of anti-social behaviour.

**2005/654 : CORRESPONDENCE FROM THE DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE & RURAL DEVELOPMENT RE CONSULTATION ON FUTURE SUPPORT TO THE NORTHERN IRELAND POTATO SECTOR (copy previously circulated)**

Noted.

**2005/655 : CORRESPONDENCE FROM CASTLEREAGH ENTERPRISES LTD RE INVITATION TO 10<sup>TH</sup> ANNIVERSARY LUNCHEON (copy previously circulated)**

RESOLVED: That the Chief Executive write to Castlereagh Enterprises Ltd, thanking them for the invitation to their 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary luncheon.

**2005/656 : CORRESPONDENCE FROM GREEN PARK HEALTHCARE TRUST RE JOINT POLICY ON HIGH DEFINITION SILICONE COSMESIS (copy previously circulated)**

Noted.

**2005/657 : CORRESPONDENCE FROM THE OFFICE OF THE FIRST MINISTER AND THE DEPUTY FIRST MINISTER RE CONSULTATION ON A DRAFT DISABILITY DISCRIMINATION ORDER IN COUNCIL (copy previously circulated)**

Noted.

**2005/658 : CORRESPONDENCE FROM THE DEPARTMENT OF THE ENVIRONMENT RE PROPOSED PUBLIC SERVICE VEHICLES (CONDITIONS OF FITNESS, EQUIPMENT AND USE) (AMENDMENT) REGULATIONS (NORTHERN IRELAND) 2005 (copy previously circulated)**

Noted.

**2005/659/ : CORRESPONDENCE FROM THE DEPARTMENT FOR TRANSPORT RE BEST PRACTICE SECURITY GUIDANCE FOR BUSES AND COACHES (copy previously circulated)**

Noted.

**2005/660 : CORRESPONDENCE FROM THE DEPARTMENT OF THE ENVIRONMENT RE CONSULTATION ON COMPULSORY SEAT BELT**

**AND CHILD RESTRAINT WEARING REQUIREMENTS IN CARS AND GOODS VEHICLES (copy previously circulated)**

Noted.

**2005/661 : CORRESPONDENCE FROM THE DEPARTMENT OF FINANCE & PERSONNEL RE DRAFT PRIORITIES AND BUDGETS 2006-08 (copy previously circulated)**

Councillor Bunting raised concerns regarding funding for libraries. She felt that the Council should make every effort to ensure that libraries were adequately protected.

RESOLVED: That the matter be referred to the Finance & General Purposes Committee for consideration.

**2005/662 : CORRESPONDENCE FROM THE SOCIAL SECURITY AGENCY RE MODERNISATION OF SOCIAL SECURITY SERVICES (copy previously circulated)**

Noted.

**2005/663 : CORRESPONDENCE FROM CLARE TOURISM CONFERENCE RE REMINDER, CLARE TOURISM CONFERENCE (copy previously circulated)**

Noted.

**2005/664 : CORRESPONDENCE FROM DR MALCOLM BRODIE MBE RE CIVIC RECEPTION (copy previously circulated)**

Alderman PD Robinson and Councillor Henderson expressed their thanks and appreciation to all staff, in particular the Administration Manager, involved in the preparations for the event.

Noted.

**2005/665 : CORRESPONDENCE FROM QUARRY PRODUCTS ASSOCIATION RE ROAD CONSTRUCTION AND MAINTENANCE IN NORTHERN IRELAND**

Noted.

**2005/666 : CORRESPONDENCE FROM THE DEPARTMENT FOR SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT RE GOVERNMENT PROPOSALS TO REFORM LIQUOR LICENSING LAW IN NORTHERN IRELAND (copy previously circulated)**

Noted.

**2005/667 : CORRESPONDENCE FROM THE DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, SOCIAL SERVICES AND PUBLIC SAFETY RE DOMESTIC VIOLENCE STRATEGY AND ACTION PLAN (copy previously circulated)**

Noted.

**2005/668 : CORRESPONDENCE FROM THE EASTERN HEALTH & SOCIAL SERVICES BOARD RE SCHEDULE OF EHSSB MEETINGS FOR THE PERIOD JANUARY TO DECEMBER 2006 (copy previously circulated)**

Noted.

**2005/669/ : CORRESPONDENCE FROM NORTHERN IRELAND MUSEUMS COUNCIL RE OUR PEOPLE, OUR TIMES: A HISTORY OF NORTHERN IRELAND'S CULTURAL DIVERSITY (copy previously circulated)**

Noted.

**2005/670 : CORRESPONDENCE FROM THE DEPARTMENT FOR WORK AND PENSIONS RE WINTER FUEL PAYMENT (copy previously circulated)**

Noted.

#### **REPORTS AND ANNUAL REPORTS**

**2005/671 : ROADS SERVICE ANNUAL REPORT AND ACCOUNTS 2004-05**

Noted.

**2005/ : OFFICE OF THE FIRST MINISTER AND DEPUTY FIRST MINISTER, NINTH ANNUAL REPORT ON PUBLIC APPOINTMENTS PUBLISHED**

Noted.

**2005/672 : CITIZENS ADVICE BUREAU ANNUAL REPORT 2004-2005**

Noted.

**2005/673 : ANNUAL REPORT AND MAGAZINE OF THE EASTERN HEALTH & SOCIAL SERVICES BOARD – PEOPLE MATTER, WE CARE**

Noted.

**2005/674 : HM CHIEF INSPECTOR OF PRISONS AND THE CHIEF INSPECTOR OF CRIMINAL JUSTICE IN NORTHERN IRELAND – HYDEBANK WOOD PRISON AND YOUNG OFFENDER CENTRE**

Noted.

**2005/675 : RIVERS AGENCY – RECOUPMENT OF DRAINAGE INFRASTRUCTURE COSTS**

Noted.

**2005/676 : EASTERN HEALTH & SOCIAL SERVICES BOARD – SERVICE AGREEMENT MONITORING REPORT, QUARTER ENDING 30 SEPTEMBER 2005 AND PLANNED OUTCOMES 2005-06, POSITION AT 30 SEPTEMBER 2005**

Noted.

**ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

**2005/677 : DATES OF DECEMBER MEETINGS**

RESOLVED: That

- (a) The December Council meeting be held on Thursday, 15 December 2005, at 5.00 pm, prior to the Christmas dinner.
- (b) The Finance & General Purposes Committee meeting be held on Thursday, 8 December 2005.

**PLANNING**

**2005/678 : MINUTES OF THE SPECIAL PLANNING MEETINGS OF 18 NOVEMBER 2005 AND 21 NOVEMBER 2005**

RESOLVED: That the Minutes of the following meetings be accepted as a true record, subject to the amendments as follows:

Special Planning meeting of 18 November 2005:  
Page 1: Include an apology for Councillors Chambers and Hughes

Special Planning meeting of 21 November 2005:  
Page 1: Include an apology for Councillors White and Robinson

**SCHEDULE OF PLANNING APPLICATIONS  
(copy previously circulated)**

**2005/679 : PLANNING APPLICATION Y/2004/0634/F – 1 WILLOWBANK CRESCENT, BALLYMACONAGHY, BELFAST: DEMOLITION OF EXISTING DWELLING AND ERECTION OF 10 NO APARTMENTS**

**(AMENDED – GRASS VERGE TO FRONT OF SITE TO BE RETAINED AS EXISTING)**

The Chairman reminded Members that there had been strenuous objection to this application.

Councillor Hall informed Members that a petition had been received with 75 signatures from residents in the area, and there had been many more objections, including from Members. Councillor Hall felt that this development would not be suitable for the area and should therefore be reconsidered.

The Planning Service Officer pointed out that an amendment had been made to the application in respect of the green area at the front of the development, which would remain as it is. He continued to say that, if the application was refused now, there would be a possibility that at some point in the future there would be another proposal for development.

Councillor Chambers referred to a similar application in Armagh, which had been refused on the grounds that it was out of character in the area, therefore Councillor Chambers enquired whether the criteria used in Armagh were different to those applied in this area. The Planning Service Officer replied that the Roads Service had had no objection to the development at 1 Willowbank Crescent, and the overall judgement had been that it was an acceptable application.

Alderman PD Robinson felt that there had been no justification for approval of the application in that it went against the guidelines set out by the Planning Department. He stated that there was over-intensive use of the site and that it was not in keeping with the appearance of the area, which contained predominantly detached houses.

Councillor Long agreed that the proposed development would be out of character. He also informed Members that residents had raised concerns about a balcony which would overlook neighbouring houses, therefore depriving residents of privacy, and he asked if this had been amended. Councillor Long then requested that this application be referred to the Management Board. This proposal was seconded by the Chairman.

The Planning Service Officer responded that the balcony had been removed from the application.

Councillor Henderson suggested that the Planning Service should give the application more consideration and present it at the December Council meeting. If, at that point, opposition to the development was still very strong, the application should be referred to the Management Board.

**RESOLVED:** That Planning Application Y/2004/0634/F – 1 Willowbank Crescent, Ballymaconaghy, Belfast: Demolition of existing dwelling and erection of 10 No apartments be referred for consideration by the Management Board.

**2005/680 : PLANNING APPLICATION Y/2005/0407/O – LANDS TO THE REAR OF MONEYREAGH PRIMARY SCHOOL, CHURCH ROAD, MONEYREAGH: SITE FOR ERECTION OF COMMUNITY CENTRE, FORMATION OF FORMAL RECREATION SPACE AND ASSOCIATED CAR PARKING AND ACCESS**

Councillor J Beattie congratulated the Planning Service for their expeditious approval of this application, as the school had been awarded a grant, which depended on speedy planning approval.

Noted.

**2005/681 : DEFERRED CASES STILL PENDING**

Noted.

**2005/682 : WEEKLY LIST OF PLANNING APPLICATIONS FOR THE PERIOD 18 OCTOBER 2005 TO 14 NOVEMBER 2005 (copy previously circulated)**

Noted.

**2005/683 : THE PLANNING SERVICE OFFICER'S MOTHER**

Alderman Copeland brought to Members' attention that Mrs McCallum, the Planning Service Officer's mother, had been hospitalised, and he suggested that the Chairman send a get well card.

RESOLVED: That the Chairman of the Planning Committee send a get well card to Mrs McCallum.

**2005/684 : CORRESPONDENCE RECEIVED FROM THE PLANNING SERVICE RE: THE PLANNING (NORTHERN IRELAND) ORDER 1991 (AS AMENDED BY THE PLANNING (AMENDMENT) (NORTHERN IRELAND) ORDER 2003); THE PLANNING (TREES) REGULATIONS (NORTHERN IRELAND) 2003; TREE PRESERVATION ORDER ON LAND AT AND ADJACENT TO HANWOOD HOUSE, 125 OLD DUNDONALD ROAD, CASTLEREAGH (copy previously circulated)**

Noted.

**2005/685 : CORRESPONDENCE RECEIVED FROM THE PLANNING APPEALS COMMISSION RE: PLANNING (NORTHERN IRELAND) ORDER 1991, ENFORCEMENT APPEAL AND DEEMED PLANNING APPLICATION (copy previously circulated)**

Councillor J Bunting thanked the Planning Officer for her submission made to the Planning Appeals Commission in support of the Enforcement Notice as served by the Planning Service.

Noted.

**2005/686 : CORRESPONDENCE RECEIVED FROM THE PLANNING SERVICE RE: CONSULTATION ON THE DRAFT PLANNING REFORM (NORTHERN IRELAND) ORDER (copy previously circulated)**

The Planning Officer advised that she would read the above, and, if required, prepare a report, to be presented to the December Council meeting.

RESOLVED: That the Planning Officer prepare a report, if required, to be presented at the December Council meeting.

**2005/687 : CORRESPONDENCE RECEIVED FROM THE DEPARTMENT FOR REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT RE: SHAPING OUR FUTURE HOUSING REVIEW – PUBLIC EXAMINATION (copy previously circulated)**

Noted.

**ANY OTHER PLANNING BUSINESS**

**2005688 : TELECOMMUNICATION MASTS**

The Planning Officer advised that the submission of a letter of objection regarding telecommunication masts would probably carry more weight if it were submitted within 14 days of the application, appearing on the weekly list. This had been discussed with the Chairman and Vice Chairman, and the Planning Officer was asking for Members' approval.

Following some discussion, it was

RESOLVED: That the Planning Officer submit a letter of objection to an application for telecommunication masts where they are not an existing infrastructure or facilitate a mast share.

**2005/689 : CASTLEREAGH HILLS GOLF CLUB**

Alderman PD Robinson stated that there was growing concern regarding the legal character of the agreement between the Council and the Golfing Union of Ireland, which could mean that the union might not accept the constitution. The consequences of this could prove disastrous, therefore Alderman Robinson asked that any issues still outstanding after the December Council meeting be referred to the appropriate committee in order to be examined by the Council's solicitor.

The Chief Executive replied that the Irish Ladies had accepted the constitution, although the Golfing Union had not. As the Council was required to abide by equality legislation, the Chief Executive had met with the solicitor in order to

find a resolution that would be agreeable to the union. The Council was providing a golf course of high standard, and acceptance of the constitution was imperative. It was essential that the Council retain full control of what was essentially a proprietors' club, and this was the main 'strategy point' with the GUS, who was attempting to give control to the club members.

A meeting had been arranged with representatives from the union, to take place on 6 December 2005, and the Chief Executive was hopeful that any differences could be resolved. The union's view was that club members should have a majority on the club's committee, although, for obvious fiscal reasons, the majority representation should be from the Council.

Alderman Robinson stated that the Council could override decisions made by the committee, although there appeared to be some disagreement from the club in respect of this. He continued to say that all outstanding issues should be resolved as soon as possible to avoid penalisation.

The Chief Executive informed Members that, although the Council had the right to make final decisions, it had no wish to interfere in the running of the golf club except in exceptional situations. The Chief Executive agreed to prepare a report in respect of any outstanding issues that still existed after the meeting with the Golfing Union. He added that the Council's officers and its legal representatives were very much protecting the Council's interests in this matter.

RESOLVED: That the Chief Executive meet with representatives from the Golfing Union of Ireland and report back to Council in respect of any outstanding issues.

#### **2005/690 : SUSPENSION OF STANDING ORDERS**

RESOLVED : That the Council agree to the suspension of the relevant Standing Order to enable the presentation of a Notice in Motion, proposed by Councillor J Beattie and seconded by Councillor Spratt.

#### **2005/691 : NOTICE IN MOTION**

Proposed by Councillor J Beattie, as follows:

"This Council is unalterably opposed to the hideous and immoral Northern Ireland (Offences) Bill. Note, it has no democratic or community validation and believes that it insults the memory of those who have been murdered and causes anguish to those whose lives have been destroyed by evil men."

Councillor J Beattie referred to the very moving dedication ceremony of memorial to the UDR and R IRISH Regiment, unveiled at the Council's offices the previous week, which was a fitting tribute to those soldiers who made the ultimate sacrifice. He asked if the 3,000 people and more than 300 policemen

who had been killed and their families as well as those injured during the past 35 years had been forgotten, only to allow the IRA the final word.

The Secretary of State had recently met with a delegation representing those murdered, and he and Tony Blair had been moved. The Reverend McCrea, too, in a recent speech, had been very affected by what has happened in Northern Ireland during the past 35 years.

Councillor Beattie stated that to declare an amnesty for all paramilitaries who were on the run would be bad, because in the past the IRA had declared the destruction of the Northern Irish economy, the institutions of state and the spirit of the people. To add insult to injury, a statement made in America declared that the economies of Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland should be joined. This would be a move towards the introduction of the Euro into Northern Ireland and the reduction of business tax to 12.5%.

Councillor Beattie then made reference to his two uncles, who had been shot in the face by terrorists, one of them by mistake.

Amnesty for all paramilitaries has been condemned by most newspapers. The feeling among the citizens of Northern Ireland is that Tony Blair says one thing and does another, and Councillor Beattie felt that no one would be able to believe assertions from the Prime Minister or the Secretary of State regarding Northern Ireland anymore, except the IRA, who were receiving everything they asked for.

Councillor Spratt seconded the motion. He stated that he had been at the scene of many atrocities during his 30 years service in the RUC, and there had been occasions when he had had to lift up pieces of colleagues who had been the victims of a bomb. In the recent past, the RUC, the UDR and, most recently, the R IRISH had all been destroyed, while some of the people who had perpetuated the most heinous crimes were to be given amnesty to return to Northern Ireland. To this day, Sinn Fein continued with their propaganda about collusion.

Councillor Spratt was pleased that some Members of Parliament from his party had been able to meet, in the House of Commons, the widows of some of those killed during the troubles, and he added that the Bill was offensive to them as well as mothers and fathers of every right-thinking person in Northern Ireland and the UK. He found it offensive, too, that members of the security forces had been included in the amnesty, as they were dealt with by the law of the land if they committed a crime.

Over the years the security forces had saved many lives, including those who had tried to sully their names, and their work could never be quantified.

Alderman Copeland found the term 'on the run' offensive. For Members' benefit, he outlined that this was also the name of a painting showing a fugitive IRA murder gang in the middle of a field of barley, looking debonair

with caps and rifles while avoiding justice. Alderman Copeland felt that these people should not be glorified.

Security forces, ambulance personnel and firemen had gone out to deal with the carnage left by bombs, yet the families of victims often had to stand back while sacrifices made by their loved ones were being ignored in the interest of political expediency. Alderman Copeland was of the view that Tony Blair, in his attempt at solving the Irish question, had now become part of the problem in himself.

Alderman Copeland was of the view that the revision of public administration would cause more division in the Province, with Belfast reaching a nationalist majority in the not too distant future.

Councillor Long outlined his opposition to the proposed Bill on behalf of the Alliance party. It had been difficult to accept those parts of the Good Friday Agreement that dealt with paramilitary prisoners, but an amnesty for on-the-run paramilitaries would be unacceptable. Councillor Long continued to say that the community was horrified about the proposed new legislation, and he pointed out the contrasting treatment of loyalist and nationalist paramilitary groups, for example, the McCartneys, who had been pressurised into leaving their homes, which, Councillor Long felt, was unfair. If on-the-runs were allowed back into Northern Ireland, it had to be linked to a removal of threats of violence, which would not be the case.

Councillor Chambers added her support for the comments made by the previous speakers. She reported that she had listened to a House of Commons debate, and there had been opposition to the proposed Bill from all sections. One Member of Parliament had made the comment that a promise made by the Government should not be broken.

Councillor Chambers referred to a visit to Coleraine by the Prime Minister before the referendum on the Good Friday Agreement in 1998, when he had made pledges to the people of Northern Ireland, including the non-release of prisoners. However, since then every pledge made had been broken. Councillor Chambers was of the view that the UUP was partly to blame for the proposal of the Northern Ireland (Offences) Bill, as they had given their consent to Sinn Fein being permitted to take their place in the Assembly.

Councillor Bunting also supported the motion. She stated that people were prosecuted for all other crimes, yet, the atrocities committed by paramilitaries over the years would go unpunished. She cited the La Mon House Hotel bombing as an example of the atrocities that had been committed.

Councillor Bunting added that the release of prisoners had been bad enough, but the proposed Bill was a slap in the face for the people of Northern Ireland. In Councillor Bunting's view, the Government was determined to keep Sinn Fein included at all cost. She added that the Secretary of State used the term 'political prisoners'. However, Councillor Bunting felt that paramilitaries who

had committed murder were criminals rather than political prisoners, and they deserved to feel the full force of the law.

Councillor Bunting was appalled at Gerry Adams' statement that all people exiled by the IRA would be allowed to return to Northern Ireland if this had been cleared by the community. She felt that he was not in a position to make that decision. She reminded Members of an incident some time ago, when Martin McGuinness had made similar promises to one family whose son had been exiled. After his return, the son had been murdered.

Councillor Bunting stated that she had been pleased at the high level of opposition to the Bill in the House of Commons, which was echoed by the Council.

Alderman PD Robinson thanked Councillor J Beattie for bringing this motion forward, the purpose of which was to let the Secretary of State and the Government realise the extent of outrage felt by the people in the Province. He requested that a copy of Members' statements be sent to the Secretary of State.

Alderman Robinson was pleased that the draft Bill had been opposed by members from every party in the House of Commons. He felt that, on the strength of that level of opposition, the Bill would be doomed to failure. However, even if there were changes to the Bill, the offence it had caused could not be removed.

There has been opposition from every quarter, including former RUC members, the PSNI Confederation, the Mainland Federation and Eurocops, yet, when this draft Bill was proposed, Tony Blair did not follow his own advice that senior police officers must be listened to. Two weeks ago, when introducing a draft Bill proposing 90-day detention of suspects, he had said that the Government should not be soft on terrorism, yet, the Northern Ireland (Offences) Bill proposed allowing murderers to go free, and any offences committed since 1998 would go unpunished. According to newspaper articles, this would involve 150 people, but in reality, this number could be much higher.

Alderman Robinson stated that he had opposed the Good Friday Agreement, particularly the regulations regarding prisoner releases contained in it. However, the Good Friday Agreement had stated that prisoners had to serve one third or two years of their sentence before they could be released, but this draft Bill went further, in that all offences committed after 10 April 1998 would not be punished. Alderman Robinson disagreed with the statement from the Secretary of State that there must be closure, because there could be no closure for the families of those killed by paramilitaries.

Alderman Robinson outlined that the UK Government was a signatory to the European Human Rights Convention as well as the UK Convention on Torture, which states that persons committing such offences should be

punished. The proposed Bill was, however, inconsistent with the UN or the EU legislation.

Alderman Robinson then referred to those people who had been exiled by the IRA, as raised by Councillor Long. He felt it was absurd that on the one hand, paramilitaries would go unpunished, yet, exiled people could not return home. He reiterated the case mentioned by Councillor Bunting, where an exile's family had received assurances from Martin McGuinness that it was safe for their son to return home, only to be murdered. Alderman Robinson was of the view that exiles should be cautious when they received reassurances from Gerry Adams or the IRA that it was safe to come back to Northern Ireland.

Under the draft Bill, no time limits had been set regarding amnesty for crimes committed by paramilitaries, unlike South Africa, where the Reconciliation Commission had been given a time limit. Alderman Robinson felt that the circumstances as set out in the proposed Bill were outrageous. Suspects could not be questioned, therefore the only possible verdict in court would have to be 'not guilty'.

Alderman Robinson referred to two windows in the Civic & Administrative Offices - one of them was dedicated to those murdered in the La Mon House Hotel bomb, the other to all innocent victims of the troubles. Many would remember their loved ones and their lives with them, which had been brutally ended as a result of these murderers who would never be punished if this Bill became law. This could never be moral or just.

Alderman Norris referred to the recent destruction of arms by the IRA, which also meant that evidence had been destroyed, as these guns had been used to murder many Irishmen.

There was suspicion that the Prime Minister did not care how many people were killed in Northern Ireland. However, there was also a possibility that the Prime Minister was concerned that there would be further attacks by paramilitaries such as those in London, Birmingham or Manchester, therefore he had given a promise to Gerry Adams that a way would be found to achieve a united Ireland.

Councillor Drysdale also supported the motion. He was appalled that this draft Bill had been brought forward. Councillor Drysdale praised members of the UDR and the RUC, many of whom had been killed by paramilitaries. It was a disgrace that their murderers would not be punished for their crimes.

Councillor Duncan added her support for the motion. She stated that she had met survivors and relatives of those killed in the Omagh and La Mon bombings, some of whom she knew personally.

Councillor Duncan then referred to three paintings by her husband, which showed Omagh before and just after the explosion. These paintings had been displayed in the Omagh Victims Centre, and Councillor Duncan had observed people looking at these paintings to try and see if they could recognise their

loved ones. She went on to say that she supported the motion, as these people would not get justice if the Northern Ireland (Offences) Bill became law.

Councillor AM Beattie stated that this Bill would allow terrorists to walk away unpunished from the crimes they had committed. She continued to say that she had worked in Musgrave Military Hospital for 14 years, and she had seen many horrific incidents resulting from paramilitary activity, therefore she was against the Bill becoming law.

Councillor Tosh reported that he had received a telephone call from a woman from Coleraine who had lost her daughter and son-in-law in the La Mon bombing. Her husband had died afterwards as an indirect result of that tragedy. For this reason, the woman had written a letter, which she intended to copy to ex-President Clinton, President Bush, the Prime Minister, the Secretary of State, the BBC, Downtown Radio, UTV and her good friend and supporter, Alderman I Robinson. Councillor Tosh added that this woman's agony had increased because of the proposed Bill.

Councillor Tosh also stated that Gerry Adams had been arrested and questioned following the La Mon House Hotel bombing for his alleged involvement.

Councillor Jeffers referred to the UDR memorial event, which had taken place on Tuesday, 22 November, in the Civic & Administrative Offices. He felt that, if the Prime Minister and the Secretary of State had been present, they could have seen for themselves the anguish felt by those who had lost loved ones. He added that those present had been grateful and had expressed their gratitude to everybody involved in the organisation of the event.

Councillor J Beattie was pleased that Members had been unanimous in their condemnation of the Northern Ireland (Offences) Bill. In summing up, he referred to Councillor Spratt speaking from the heart about the victims of the troubles. Alderman Copeland had reminded Members that on-the-runs were murderers. Councillor Long had been forceful when he condemned the draft Bill and remembered those who had been murdered and whose bodies might never be found. Councillor Chambers had reminded Members that the Prime Minister had made pledges to the people of Coleraine, all of which had been broken. Councillor Bunting had spoken of those people who had been exiled by the IRA and that promises for their safe return could not be trusted. Alderman PD Robinson had pointed out that an estimated 1,500 people would be covered by the amnesty if the draft Bill became law. Alderman Norris had condemned the draft Bill and stated that all decent people were appalled that it had been proposed.

Councillor Beattie added that, in the height of the troubles, Amnesty International had checked in hospital wards to ensure that terrorists also received medical care. He continued to say that in the Irish Republic, too, many people could not understand why the Northern Ireland (Offences) Bill had been drafted.

Councillor White asked that the Prime Minister and the Secretary of State be sent a copy of this Minute to inform them of the depth of feeling in the Council against the draft Bill.

Councillor Jeffers asked Members to vote on the Notice of Motion, and it was

RESOLVED (unanimously) that

- (a) This Council is unalterably opposed to the hideous and immoral Northern Ireland (Offences) Bill. Note, it has no democratic or community validation and believes that it insults the memory of those who have been murdered and causes anguish to those whose lives have been destroyed by evil men.
- (b) A copy of this minute be sent to the Prime Minister and the Secretary of State.

### **ITEMS TABLED AT THE MEETING**

#### **2005/692 : REVIEW OF PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION**

Alderman PD Robinson enquired whether there would be a special meeting in order for Members to respond to the announcement in respect of the final outcome of the review of public administration exercise. The Chief Executive replied that the consultation period was closed, but he agreed that there should be further discussions in the December Council meeting.

RESOLVED: That the review of public administration exercise be tabled at the December Council meeting.

### **IN COMMITTEE**

#### **2005/693 : ULSTER SCOTS COMMUNITY EVENT**

Councillor Bunting raised concerns in respect of a forthcoming Ulster Scots community event on Saturday, 26 November 2005. Richard Mills of Belvoir Players contacted the Mayor to inform him that the event would not be suitable for under 18s. Councillor Bunting felt that any Ulster Scots event should be suitable for families, therefore she asked that an agreement be sought that the event would be made suitable for everyone. Councillor Bunting suggested that future performances should receive Council approval.

RESOLVED: That assurance be sought that the Ulster Scots community event scheduled to take place on Saturday, 26 November 2005, be made suitable for everybody.

#### **2005/694 : FREE TRANSPORT FOR SENIOR CITIZENS**

Alderman Copeland informed Members that he had received 26 bus tickets from an elderly gentleman who alleged that the tickets had been charged approximately 50-60 pence more than the fare amounted to. The gentleman was concerned that this practice, which appeared to be quite common, would result in free transport for elderly citizens being withdrawn if it was not stopped.

Alderman PD Robinson stated that similar cases had already been brought to the attention of Mr Keith Moffat, Chief Executive of Translink.

Noted.

There being no further business, the meeting ended at 11.10 p.m.

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**CHIEF EXECUTIVE**

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**MAYOR**