

CASTLEREAGH BOROUGH COUNCIL

Minutes of the proceedings of the Special Council meeting held in the Council Chamber, Civic & Administrative Offices, Bradford Court, Upper Galwally, Castlereagh, BT8 6RB on Thursday 14th June 2007 at 4.00 p.m.

PRESENT: Councillor Spratt MLA
(in the Chair)

ALDERMEN: J Norris MBE
Mrs G Rice MBE
Rt Hon P D Robinson MP MLA

COUNCILLORS: Mrs A M Beattie
J Beattie
Ms J Bunting
Mrs M Chambers
Mrs S Duncan
D Drysdale
C Hall
B Hanvey
M Henderson
Miss R Hughes MBE
T Jeffers
M Long
G Robinson
C Tosh
J White

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

APOLOGIES: Apologies were received on behalf of Aldermen Mrs Robinson, M Copeland, Councillors Cochrane and Stevenson

2007/252 : NOTICE OF MOTION – PROPOSED BY COUNCILLOR M HENDERSON, SECONDED BY THE RT HON ALDERMAN P D ROBINSON MP MLA

Councillor Henderson read out the Notice of Motion as follows:

" That Castlereagh Borough Council do grant unto the Northern Ireland Housing Executive, the Honorary Freedom of the Borough of Castlereagh, in recognition of the outstanding dedication and commitment shown to the people of Castlereagh over the years of the ' troubles', and in particular its major contribution and effort in supporting the many householders who suffered serious damage to their properties and had to be evacuated, following the IRA bombing of the Northern Ireland Forensic Science Laboratory".

Alderman Peter Robinson stated that he could recall, when he first entered Council in 1977, it was a time when most of Members' workload was in respect of constituents' complaints regarding the Housing Executive. He added that at that

time the NIHE had an appalling record, and he could confess that he would have been one of those who had been critical of the Housing Executive. He outlined that nobody could have predicted that 30 years later he would be seconding a Notice of Motion to bestow the Freedom of the Borough on the NIHE.

He continued by stating that there had, however, been a significant improvement over the years in the operations of the NIHE, and it was now a key element within the local community. He added that this was particularly pertinent in the case of Castlereagh, and he would like to commend the District Manager, Mr Paul Carland, not only for his work within the Housing Executive but also the significant amount of work he was involved in at community level. He outlined that, as a result of this and the massive change in the way the Northern Ireland Housing Executive operated, no more than 10% of constituents' enquiries now related to Housing Executive issues.

Alderman Peter Robinson stated that a proposal to bestow the Freedom of the Borough on an agency such as the NIHE might be more closely scrutinised than would usually be the case. He referred to the bombing of the Forensic Laboratory in 1992, which had caused major damage to properties in Belvoir and surrounding area. He outlined that, as with Castlereagh Borough Council, the Housing Executive had demonstrated how it could respond to a crisis and had a significant role to play in helping the residents through this very difficult time.

He continued by stating that, since it had been agreed to put forward a proposal to bestow the Freedom of the Borough on the NIHE, there had been a flooding incident in the Borough. He added that some Members had visited the areas affected, one of which was the two high rise flats at Cregagh and, as was usually the case, Mr Carland could be seen on site ensuring that the residents were receiving all help possible. He paid tribute to the Salvation Army and Council staff for all they did to make sure the residents of the flats received meals during the period that the electricity had been turned off. He added that he would also like to pass on the Council's appreciation to those local stores who had donated food.

Alderman Peter Robinson stated that he was happy to support the proposal put forward by Councillor Henderson. He added that he felt this was well deserved and, although there may always be those who would still criticise the Housing Executive, not everyone who had the Freedom of the Borough bestowed on them was without fault.

Councillor Spratt commended the Housing Executive, particularly for the way they had dealt with residents who had been affected by the recent floods. He added that he would also like to take this opportunity to thank the Salvation Army and Council staff for all their hard work.

Alderman Rice concurred with previous comments. She outlined that she had been a Member of Council when the Forensic Laboratory had been bombed, and the Housing Executive had put a tremendous amount of work into helping those people whose homes had been damaged. She added that she particularly wished to pay tribute to Mr Carland, not only for his work within the Housing Executive, but his commitment at community level. She outlined that she would also like to pass on her appreciation to Council staff for their support to residents who had been affected by the recent flooding.

Councillor Hanvey stood on behalf of his Party to concur with previous comments and to express approval for the Notice of Motion.

At this point, Councillor Spratt asked Members to vote on the Notice of Motion and, with all Members voting in favour, it was carried unanimously.

Councillor Henderson thanked Members for supporting the Motion and in particular to Alderman P Robinson for seconding it.

RESOLVED : That the Council approves the following Notice of Motion as proposed by Councillor Michael Henderson and seconded by Alderman Peter Robinson:

" That Castlereagh Borough Council do grant unto the Northern Ireland Housing Executive, the Honorary Freedom of the Borough of Castlereagh, in recognition of the outstanding dedication and commitment shown to the people of Castlereagh over the years of the ' troubles', and in particular its major contribution and effort in supporting the many householders who suffered serious damage to their properties and had to be evacuated, following the IRA bombing of the Northern Ireland Forensic Science Laboratory".

There being no further business, the meeting ended at 4.20 pm

MAYOR

CHIEF EXECUTIVE