

CASTLEREAGH BOROUGH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Special Finance & General Purposes Committee meeting held, in committee, in the Council Chamber, Civic & Administrative Offices, Bradford Court, Upper Galwally, Castlereagh BT8 6RB on Wednesday 28th March 2007 at 6.00 p.m.

PRESENT: Councillor J Beattie
(in the chair)

ALDERMEN: J Norris MBE

COUNCILLORS: Mrs A M Beattie
Ms J Bunting
Mrs J Cochrane
Mrs S Duncan
C Hall
G Robinson
C Tosh

IN ATTENDANCE: Director of Finance and Assistant Members'
Services Officer

APOLOGIES: An apology was received on behalf of Councillors
Mrs Chambers, Jeffers, Spratt and White

F&GP/2007/109 : OUTSTANDING IT MATTERS

The Director of Finance updated the Committee on progress with regard to IT matters. He tabled several reports including one from the IT officer from Belfast City Council who confirmed that the workstations infected by a virus were running a version of Windows that was no longer supported by Microsoft and were not realistically capable of being upgraded. The Director advised that the Council was now in receipt of new computers and tabled a brief report from the IT Manager. The Director also presented options for the disposal of the old computers.

With regard to the procurement of consultancy advice, the Director reported that he had received correspondence from CPD (formerly GPA) advising that they were no longer carrying out work on behalf of Councils. The Director stated that he felt that the Council could seek tenders using CPD's tender documentation and list of companies. The Director reported that he would be asking consultants to prepare two strategies, a short term one to stabilise the network and a longer term strategy for maintaining the IT service in conjunction with the RPA.

Members felt that the consideration of disposal options should be deferred until after the appointment of consultants.

The Director reminded Members that the budget for the consultation exercise was £12,000 to £15,000 and sought views as to whether this should be included in the tender information documents in order to avoid companies returning with proposals that were far beyond the available budget

After discussion, it was proposed by Councillor Mrs AM Beattie, seconded by Councillor Tosh and

RESOLVED:

- (a) that the Council defer consideration of disposal of old computers until after the appointment of Consultants.
- (b) that the Council proceed with the issue of tender documents to the list of companies provided by the CPD and that, in the meantime, officers liaise with the CPD to identify someone capable of carrying out an evaluation of the received tenders.
- (c) that the budget should not be disclosed.

F&GP/2007/110 : SUPPORTING ETHNIC-MINORITY CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE WHO HAVE ENGLISH AS AN ADDITIONAL LANGUAGE

Correspondence from the Department of Education was tabled together with a consultation document entitled Supporting Ethnic-Minority Children and Young People who have English as an Additional Language (copy previously circulated).

Members noted that that in 2006/2007 £2.5 million had been provided to schools for the education of pupils with English as an additional language (Page 33, Item 10 of the consultation document).

After discussion it was

RESOLVED: that this Council recognises the need for one single body to support children and young people who have English as an additional language but considers that funding for this service should be provided from additional monies and should not be taken from the current educational budget. The Council considered that this service was less of a priority to residents in the Borough than other services such as special needs education and raising literacy standards.

F&GP/2007/111 : SCHOOLS FOR THE FUTURE – A POLICY FOR SUSTAINABLE SCHOOLS

Members considered correspondence from the Department of Education dated 5th February 2007 and a consultation document entitled “A Consultation on Schools for the Future: A Policy for Sustainable Schools” (copies previously circulated). Members discussed the closure of schools due to

falling numbers and expressed concern that funding continued to be provided for new integrated schools while existing state schools were being closed.

(Councillor G Robinson left the meeting at 7.15 pm)

Councillor Bunting referred to the fact that, due to time constraints, Members had not had an opportunity to consider the consultation document in depth. It was noted that the deadline for responses was 16th April 2007. After further discussion, it was proposed by Councillor Bunting, seconded by Alderman Norris and

RESOLVED:

- (a) that the matter be referred to the next meeting of the Finance & General Purposes Committee for consideration.
- (b) that the next meeting of the Committee commence half an hour early in order to facilitate discussion of this matter.
- (c) that Members forward individual responses to officers prior to the next meeting of the Committee

(Councillor Cochrane left the meeting at 7.20 pm)

ANY OTHER BUSINESS

F&GP/2007/112 : MSC IN EXECUTIVE LEADERSHIP

The Director of Finance reported that a request had been received from the DPP Manager for financial assistance to undertake an MSc in Executive Leadership. He explained that the cost of the two year course was £6,950 per annum and that a contribution of £750 was being provided by the DPP and the contribution requested from the Council was £250 per annum for the two year course.

(Councillor Bunting left the meeting at 7.25 pm)

After discussion it was proposed by Councillor Mrs Duncan, seconded by Councillor Mrs AM Beattie and

RESOLVED that the Council contribute a maximum amount of £250 per annum for two years to facilitate the DPP Manager to undertake an MSc in Executive Leadership, the cost to be allocated to the training budget.

Members noted that the Council would be paying a total amount of £1,000 per annum with £750 being reimbursed by the DPP.

There being no further business, the meeting ended at 7.30 p.m.

CHAIRMAN

CHIEF EXECUTIVE

Adopted by the Council this _____ day of
_____ 2007 with the exception of
Minute Nos. _____

MAYOR

CHIEF EXECUTIVE