

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 13 March 2008 at 7.00 p.m.

PRESENT: Councillor Mrs M Chambers
(in the Chair)

ALDERMEN: M Copeland
J Norris MBE
J White

COUNCILLORS: Mrs A M Beattie (from 8.50 p.m.)
J Beattie
Mrs J Cochrane
Mrs S Duncan
C Hall
B Hanvey
T Jeffers
G Robinson
J Spratt MLA
C Tosh
L Walker

IN ATTENDANCE: Chief Executive and Assistant Members' Services Officer

APOLOGIES: Apologies were received on behalf of Alderman Mrs Rice, Mrs Robinson, Councillors Drysdale, Henderson, Long, Mrs Hughes and Mrs McCoy

2008/130 : SUSPENSION OF STANDING ORDERS

At the request of Councillor Spratt, it was

RESOLVED : The Council agree to the suspension of the relevant standing order to enable Councillor Spratt to raise an issue not previously on the Agenda.

2008/131 : MINISTER'S ANNOUNCEMENT ON THE REDUCTION FROM 26 TO 11 COUNCILS

Councillor Spratt referred to the Executive's announcement in respect of an eleven Council model and that Castlereagh and Lisburn would form a new Council District. He added that it was a good day for Castlereagh and other Councils that the previous 7 model proposal had been overturned, and the Province could now move forward. He outlined that it had been a bombshell that in the last proposal parts of Castlereagh were to be incorporated into Belfast City Council, and he hoped for those residents that they would be sorted out with any boundary changes that may take place this time.

Councillor Chambers concurred with Councillor Spratt and outlined that the statement made about Castlereagh by Councillor Cobain was deplorable. She added that she did not believe that Castlereagh residents would want to be a part of Belfast City Council.

Noted.

**REPORT FROM THE OPERATIONAL SERVICES MANAGER
(tabled at the meeting)**

**2008/132 : UPDATE ON PUBLIC RIGHT OF WAY : BETWEEN GILNAHIRK ROAD
AND GILNAHIRK AVENUE**

The Chief Executive referred Members to the Inspector's report which had been received on 4 March 2008 in respect of the above, together with copy correspondence from the Environment & Heritage Service advising that the Department would not be making a Public Path Extinguishment Order in respect of the above. He also referred Members to correspondence from the Council's solicitor confirming that, if the Right of Way was not extinguished, the Council would have a duty under Article 3 to assert the Public Right of Way.

He outlined that approval was therefore being sought to instruct the Council's solicitor to write to the developer informing him of the legal opinion and advising that, in accordance with the legislation, the Council would instigate legal proceedings if the Right of Way was not re-opened as soon as possible.

Councillor Robinson proposed that the Council adhere to the legal advice obtained and, if necessary, proceed with legal action. He advised that he had been in contact with the objectors inviting them to put forward their views to the Council on how the Right of Way should be reinstated, and he was of the view that the objectors should be consulted in this respect.

Councillor White seconded the proposal and stated that it would be remiss of the Council not to follow the legal advice obtained.

The Chief Executive suggested that, once the solicitor had written to the developer, Officers would convene a public meeting.

Councillor Robinson outlined that together with the Council's legal team, the Countryside Officer and the former Planning Officer had attended the Public Inquiry. He expressed the view that, without their hard work and support during the Inquiry, the outcome could have been different, and he proposed that a letter of thanks be forwarded to them. He also passed on his appreciation to

Councillor Naomi Long from the Alliance Party for her efforts in support of the residents of the area, and for the words she had spoken at the Inquiry.

Following further discussion, it was

RESOLVED : That the Council agree that

- (a) the Council's solicitor be instructed to write to the developer advising him that, if the Public Right of Way between Gilnahirk Road and Gilnahirk Avenue were not re-instated as soon as possible, legal proceedings would be instigated
- (b) a public meeting be convened to enable the residents to put forward to the developer their views on how the Right of Way should be reinstated
- (c) a letter of thanks for their support during the Inquiry be forwarded to the legal team, the Countryside Officer and the former Planning Officer

2008/133 : PRESENTATION BY THE NORTHERN FEDERATION OF HOUSING ASSOCIATIONS (NIFHA)

Councillor Chambers welcomed Mr Donall Henderson, Project Manager, NIFHA, Mrs Emma McCloughlan, Abode Housing Association and Mr Ian Graham, BIH.

Mr Henderson began by outlining that 30,000 units of accommodation had been provided throughout the Province, 10,000 of which were sheltered houses. He added that the housing associations build virtually all new social homes and employed over 2,500 staff. He outlined that funding was made up as follows:

Capital Funding

Housing Association Grant

Disposal Proceeds Fund (from the sale of properties)

Private Finance

Revenue Funding

Rents

Support People Grant

He then took Members through the remainder of his presentation, in terms of the organisation's aims, details on co-ownership, challenges, the impact of local government reform. He concluded by seeking support from Councils through support with planning (Article 40), and by advising of any surplus Council land in order to work together to achieve social housing targets.

Councillor Chambers advised that the Council had previously offered surplus land for social housing in a part of the Borough deemed to be an area of deprivation. She added that the relative authority had advised the Council that the land was not required as there was adequate housing in the area.

Councillor White asked for Mr Henderson's views on NILGA's response to the RPA document in respect of the transfer of housing to the new local authorities. He advised that, as a member of the Board of Housing Associations and the Housing Council, he had not been entirely satisfied with NILGA's stance in relation to the housing issue, and that the document did not reflect the extent to which housing associations provided accommodation throughout the Province.

Mr Henderson outlined that the document was currently with the NIFHA Chief Executive and he would need to liaise with him in this respect. He added that the Federation was tasked to promote the work of housing associations and, if NILGA's document did not reflect the relevance of their work, then he would encourage the Chief Executive to take this matter up with NILGA.

Mr Henderson then addressed Members' queries in relation to the following:

- lack of social housing
- co-ownership scheme
- banking of land by private developers
- financial reserves
- potential to achieve savings through a similar exercise as RPA

Mr Henderson outlined that he would pass Members' comments in respect of the above to the Housing Federation.

Councillor Chambers thanked Mr Henderson and his colleagues for attending.

Noted.

2008/134 : PRESENTATION BY NORTHERN IRELAND WATER

Councillor Chambers welcomed to the meeting Mr William Duddy, Mr Bill Gowdy and Mr Tony Budde from Northern Ireland Water.

Mr Duddy began by referring Members to the Capital Works Programme for April 2007 to March 2008 which had been included in the Agenda. He took Members through the detail of his presentation, in relation to the following:

Strategic Business Plan
SBP Investment
Wastewater compliance
Water Quality Outputs
SBP Efficiencies
Water Charging and uncertainties

The representatives from Northern Ireland Water then addressed Members' queries in relation to the following:

- works carried out on pipes in the Newton Park/Glendale Park areas
- replacement of lead pipes
- implications of significant additional housing on the Foul Water System in the Carryduff area
- request to improve the appearance of the Moneyreagh Wastewater Treatment Works through landscaping the area
- the need for developers to contribute towards the cost of adequate infrastructure for new housing developments
- concerns in terms of the quality of reinstatement work
- proposed reduction in workforce to achieve efficiencies

- financial shortfall
- difficulties experienced in contacting the special help line
- metered reading

Councillor Mrs Beattie arrived during the above discussion at 8.50 p.m.

Mr Duddy outlined that he would arrange to contact those Members whose queries could not be addressed at the meeting.

Councillor Spratt outlined that the Rt Honourable Peter Robinson MP MLA had asked him to pass on his thanks for the upgrading of the Burren Way Trunk Sewer. He added that the Rt Honourable Peter Robinson MP MLA had also wished to know if there had been a review of NI Water's current stance in paying out claims in respect of the last flooding in the area, as a number of people had still not received payment.

Mr Duddy stated that all claims were processed as quickly as possible and, if he could be provided with the details, he would investigate the matter.

Councillor Spratt advised that he would ask the Minister to contact Mr Duddy.

Councillor Chambers thanked the representatives from NI Water for attending the meeting.

Noted.

There being no further business, the meeting ended at 9.15 p.m.

MAYOR

CHIEF EXECUTIVE