

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 27 November 2008 at 7.00 p.m.

PRESENT: Councillor Mrs A M Beattie
(in the Chair)

ALDERMEN: M Copeland
J Norris MBE
Mrs G Rice (until 8.45 p.m.)
J White

IN ATTENDANCE: J Beattie
Mrs M Chambers
S Duncan
D Drysdale (from 8.25 p.m.)
C Hall
M Henderson
Miss R Hughes MBE
T Jeffers
M Long
G Robinson
J Spratt MLA
C Tosh
L Walker

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

APOLOGIES: Apologies were received on behalf of Alderman Robinson, Councillors Bunting, Cochrane, Hanvey and McCoy

2008/710 : OPENING OF MEETING

Reverend Smyth opened the meeting with a prayer.

Noted.

2008/711 : MINUTES

Alderman Rice outlined that the reason she and a number of other Members had not attended the Special Council meeting on 10 November 2008 was due to the fact that, although the meeting was supposed to start at 8.30 p.m. they

had waited until 8.50 p.m. but the meeting had still not commenced. She added that as no-one had the courtesy to come and give an indication as to when the meeting would be starting, they left the Chamber.

RESOLVED : That

- (a) the Minutes of the following meetings be adopted as a true and accurate record of the proceedings:
- Council meeting held on 23 October 2008
 - Special Council meeting held on 10 November 2008
 - Special Council meeting held on 13 November 2008
 - Leisure Services Committee meeting held on 6 November 2008
 - Finance & General Purposes Committee meeting held on 12 November 2008
- (b) The Minutes of the Technical & Environmental Services Committee meeting held on 4 November 2008 be adopted a true and accurate record, subject to Minute No.T&ESC/2008/440 being referred back to the Committee for further consideration.
- (c) The Minutes of the Central Services Committee meeting held on 10 November 2008 be adopted a true and accurate record, subject to an apology being recorded on behalf of Councillor Spratt.
- (d) The following Minutes were noted:
- Leisure Park Board meeting held on 15 September 2008
 - Leisure Park Board meeting held on 20 October 2008
 - Castlereagh Hills Golf Club Board meeting held on 19 September 2008
 - Castlereagh Hills Golf Club Board meeting held on 17 October 2008

2008/712 : SUSPENSION OF STANDING ORDERS

Councillor Spratt proposed the suspension of the relevant Standing Order to enable Members to express their sympathy on the tragic loss of four PSNI Officers as a result of a road traffic accident.

Councillor J Beattie seconded the proposal.

RESOLVED : That the Council agrees to the suspension of the relevant Standing Order to enable Members to express their sympathy on the tragic loss of four PSNI Officers as a result of a road traffic accident.

2008/713 : EXPRESSION OF SYMPATHY

Councillor Spratt stood on behalf of his Democratic Unionist Party colleagues to express his deepest sympathy to the families of the four PSNI Officers who tragically lost their lives in a road traffic accident. He added that he had attended three of the funerals and it had been so sad to see the affect on the families.

He continued by stating that the Officers had been answering a call for assistance from their colleagues, and the whole Mourne community was mourning the loss of these young men. He added that one of the PSNI Officers who died was a cousin of Edel Patterson's husband, Clive. He stated that he would like to express his deepest sympathy to Edel, Clive and the family circle.

He outlined that he was aware that the Mayor had forwarded messages of sympathy to the families of all four PSNI Officers.

Councillor Spratt proposed that a letter be forwarded to the Chief Constable expressing the Council's heartfelt sympathy.

On behalf of the Ulster Unionist Party, Alderman Copeland outlined that it was tragic that the Officers had lost their lives whilst responding to a call for assistance. He added that he echoed the sentiments expressed by Councillor Spratt, and on behalf of the UUP, he would like to pass on his sincere sympathy to all the families.

On behalf of the Alliance Party, Alderman Rice offered her deepest sympathy to the families of the four young Officers. She added that she also agreed wholeheartedly with the sentiments expressed by Councillor Spratt.

Councillor Hughes stood on behalf of the Social Democratic & Labour Party and stated that she had always worked closely with the PSNI, and she had been deeply shocked on hearing of the tragic death of the four Officers. She added that she would like to pass on her sincerest sympathy to all the families.

Councillor Tosh outlined that he had many friends who had served as an Officer within the former RUC and now in the PSNI, and it had been heartbreaking to hear of the tragedy. He stated that he would like to add his condolences, as previously expressed by other Members.

RESOLVED : That a letter be forwarded to the Chief Constable expressing the Council's deepest sympathy to the families of the four PSNI Officers who lost their lives in a tragic road traffic accident.

2008/714 : PRESENTATION BY THE WATER SERVICE RE: CAPITAL WORKS PROGRAMME (copy circulated at the meeting)

Councillor Beattie welcomed William Duddy (Director of Customer Services), Gary Curran (Engineering Procurement) and David Dangerfield (Head of Network Sewerage)

Following Mr Duddy's presentation, the representatives from the Water Service addressed Members' queries, as follows:

Councillor Spratt acknowledged that although there had been vast improvements made with regard to Water Service's targets, it still had a long way to go. He added that improvements needed to be made, in terms of better communication with the public and the Elected Representatives, and better liaison with the Rivers Agency and Roads Service. He referred to the flooding which had occurred on 16 August 2008 and expressed his concern that there appeared to be no personnel from the Water Service and Roads Service on the ground. He added that it had been the Fire & Rescue Service who had been on site quickly and worked tirelessly in an effort to minimise the disruption to residents.

He continued by stating that the contractors had been sent out on 17 August, and he had to commend them for the excellent job they did. He added that the Elected Representatives could not get through to the Water Service on the telephone and it had been disgraceful that no response had been made until the contractors had appeared the day after the flooding.

He then raised the following queries:

- the need to spend £0.5 million on studies when this money could be better allocated.
- water billing system
- failure to communicate with people living in flood plains
- Gransha Road water mains
- severance packages

Councillor J Beattie referred to the flooding in Carryduff and asked if the Water Service liaised with the other relevant agencies.

Mr Duddy referred to page 16 of the presentation which detailed that during 16 and 17 and 18 August, 3,500 customer and 76 Elected Representative calls had been dealt with. He added that the dedicated telephone line had handled thousands of calls over the three-day period. He outlined that the Water Service had been fully committed on the ground and had communicated well with all agencies. He indicated that the Water Service was continuing to develop a joined up approach through the Flood Strategy Steering Group, Flood Liaison Group, NI Direct Project, etc.

With regard to the contractor, Mr Duddy stated that the Water Service had been present at the March Council meeting where Members had expressed the view that a new contractor should be appointed. He indicated that the new contract had been awarded in July of this year and he was pleased to

hear that the Council was satisfied with the work they carried out on behalf of the NI Water Service.

Mr Duddy agreed that the billing system had not been perfected yet but that the matter was now before the Regional Development Committee and the Consumer Council. He added that he was not in a position to discuss the severance packages.

Mr Curran outlined that when carrying out major works, the Water Service forwarded letters to residents advising of the work being carried out and notification boards were erected in the particular area.

Councillor Spratt referred to the flooding at Gransha Road and advised that during that period the temporary traffic lights had not been working and the staff had to carry out points duty. He added that the staff within the hotel had not received notification from the Water Service, and he lived nearby and had also not received notification.

Mr Duddy stated that he had taken note of the incident at Gransha Road and would be looking into the matter.

Mr Curran outlined that, although the Water Service had handled 3,500 calls over the period in question, he accepted that improvements could be made.

Councillor Robinson commended the work of two Officers within the Water Service, namely, David Dangerfield and Noel Hamilton who had worked extremely well with the local MP. He referred to the installation of the new sewage system in Cregagh and outlined that there were still some slight problems. He asked if the Water Service would investigate the matter.

Following a query from Councillor Robinson in relation to the work carried out at Alanbrooke Road (Thales), Mr Curran stated that this was part of the accelerated work identified through the Drainage Area Study. He added that at the Council meeting in March 2008, the Water Service had given a commitment to accelerate the work at the Thales site.

Councillor Long expressed his concern that the Drainage Area Study was still in draft form and he asked when it would be completed.

Mr Curran outlined that it was hoped to have the study completed by the end of December 2008. He added that the Water Service had recognised Castlereagh and East Belfast as being a priority and it would do all it could to progress the various schemes.

Alderman Copeland indicated that he had hoped that improvements would have been made by the Water Service following the first major flooding incident. He added that there was a real fear amongst those residents living in flood plains. He stated that he also shared Councillor Spratt's views on the significant amount of money being spent on consultations.

Alderman Rice referred to the new major housing developments currently being built in the Carryduff area, and expressed her concern that the existing sewage system was not adequate to cope with these new development, resulting in flooding at the Saintfield/Purdysburn Road area. She sought clarification as to whether the Water Service would recommend to refuse a planning application if the existing sewers were not capable of sustaining new developments.

Mr Duddy advised that the Water Service did liaise with the Planning Services but that the waste and water systems were upgraded in accordance with design standards. He referred to climate change and indicated that over the past number of years there had been a significant change in the volume and pattern of rainfall, and design standards could change.

Following a further query from Alderman Rice, Mr Duddy confirmed that it was not the Water Service's responsibility meet the costs of new water and waste infrastructure in respect of new housing development.

Councillor Walker thanked the Water Service for their help and assistance with the recent floods at Merok Crescent and Merok Gardens.

Following a query from Councillor Walker in relation to targets, Mr Duddy detailed for Members' information the Water Service targets achieved and those not achieved.

Councillor Duncan referred to page 17 of the presentation which detailed the areas within Castlereagh which were prone to flooding during heavy rainfall, and outlined that despite the fact that there had been flooding along Cedarhurst Road, this area had not been included.

Mr Curran indicated that the list was not exhaustive but included areas that had been brought to their attention. He added that all of Castlereagh was being studied but that the Water Service would check to make sure that the sewers were working properly in that area.

Prior to leaving the meeting, Councillor Spratt asked that the representatives from the Water Service forward a written response to Members' queries to the Council's Chief Executive.

Noted.

2008/715 : TREES AT CIVIC OFFICES

Councillor J Beattie outlined that he had noticed that the trees planted around the Civic Centre were reaching maturity. He congratulated the staff within the Technical & Environmental Services Department for their excellent work

Councillor Spratt agreed and stated that the trees and floral displays around the Civic Centre looked impressive.

Noted.

2008/716 : CHAIRMAN OF THE CASTLEREAGH DISTRICT POLICING PARTNERSHIP FOR THE 2008/2009 YEAR

Councillor Spratt congratulated Alderman Rice for the excellent way in which she had carried out the role of Chairman of the DPP in the 2007/2008 year. He added that he had great pleasure in proposing Councillor Jeffers as Chairman in the 2008/2009 year, commencing 9 December 2008.

Alderman Rice seconded the proposal and congratulated Councillor Jeffers on his appointment.

RESOLVED : That Councillor Jeffers be appointed Chairman of the Castlereagh District Policing Partnership for the 2008/2009 year, commencing 9 December 2008.

2008/717 : TRANSITION COMMITTEE

Councillor Spratt outlined that, with 8 Members required to sit on the Transition Committee, the party political representation under d'hondt would be 5 DUP, 1 UUP, 1 Alliance and 1 SDLP.

It was agreed that the following representatives would serve on the Committee:

DUP

Alderman J White
Councillor Spratt
Councillor J Beattie
Councillor G Robinson
Councillor L Walker

Ulster Unionist

Councillor M Henderson

SDLP

Councillor B Hanvey

Alliance

Alderman G Rice

Councillor Spratt outlined that, given the significant amount of work to be carried, that it was important for the Chief Executive to contact Lisburn City Council to organise a meeting of the Transition Committee as soon as possible.

RESOLVED : That

- (a) the Castlereagh Borough Council Elected Representatives appointed to sit on the Transition Committee would be Aldermen Rice, White, Councillors Spratt, J Beattie, Robinson, Walker, Henderson and Hanvey.
- (b) the Chief Executive to contact his counterpart in Lisburn City Council, with a view to convening a meeting of the Transition Committee as soon as possible

PLANNING

SCHEDULE OF PLANNING APPLICATIONS DATED 27 NOVEMBER 2008 (copy previously circulated)

2008/718 : PLANNING APPLICATION Y/2008/0161/F – 90 KNOCKBRACKEN MANOR, BELFAST : ERECTION OF SINGLE STOREY REAR EXTENSION (ALTERATIONS TO PREVIOUSLY APPROVED PLANNING APPLICATION Y/2007/0107 TO REMOVE EX-CONSERVATORY AND REPLACE WITH SINGLE STOREY REAR EXTENSION)

The Planning Service Officer outlined that the description in relation to the above had been amended and should read “erection of single storey rear extension (alterations to previously approved planning application Y/2007/0107 to remove ex-conservatory and replace with single storey rear extension) (amended plans to include re-grading and boundary works)”.

Noted.

Councillor Drysdale arrived at 8.25 p.m.

2008/719 : ADVERTISING SIGNS

Alderman Rice referred to Items 21 and 22 within the Planning Schedule in respect of the erection of shop signs at the Carryduff Shopping Centre, which had been refused by the Planning Service. She continued by stating that rather than being detrimental to the visual amenity of the locality, these signs were attractive and provided an improved visual appearance.

Councillor Henderson outlined that the Council had previously raised its concern in respect of the significant number of signs that had been erected within the Borough

without planning permission being sought. He asked whether the Planning Service was dealing with this matter through its Enforcement Section.

The Planning Service Officer confirmed that the Enforcement Section was currently investigating this matter.

Following further discussion, Alderman Rice stated that the signage being refused at Carryduff Shopping Centre was neither visually large nor posed a distraction.

Councillor Spratt pointed out that the Planning Service had determined a refusal in respect of the two signs at the Carryduff Shopping Centre and it would appear that no other Members had an objection to this decision.

Noted.

2008/720 : WEEKLY PLANNING APPLICATIONS FOR THE PERIOD 7 OCTOBER 2008 TO 17 NOVEMBER 2008 – PLANNING APPLICATION Y/2008/0461/F (copy previously circulated)

Councillor Duncan referred to the above application in respect of a proposal for residential development of 9 apartments and 1 townhouse (to include demolition of numbers 31-32 Newtownbreda Road. She outlined that, given that Newtownbreda had been designated as an area of townscape character, she was concerned at the significant number of large houses that the Planning Service was approving for demolition.

She continued by stating that, although the application had not yet appeared on the planning schedule, she felt that it was important for the Council to register its objection as soon as possible.

Councillor Chambers agreed and referred to a substantial property within Newtownbreda which had been demolished, despite the Council being advised that dwellings such as these in the Newtownbreda area would be protected.

Councillor Spratt outlined that the Council had previously objected to this application, and that a further letter of objection along similar lines should be forwarded to the Planning Service.

RESOLVED : That the Council writes a letter of objection to the Planning Service in respect of Planning Application Y/2008/0461/F(residential development of 9 apartments and 1 townhouse) which involved the demolition numbers 31-32 Newtownbreda Road.

2008/721 : REPORT FROM THE PLANNING OFFICER RE: INTRODUCTION OF NEW PROCESSES TO STREAMLINE THE HANDLING OF MINOR PLANNING APPLICATIONS (copy previously circulated)

Councillor Spratt thanked the Planning Officer for summarising the detail of the proposed new processes. He proposed that, at this stage, the Council notes the Officer's report and that the recommendation contained therein be deleted. He added that the Officer could brief the Members further on the matter at the January 2009 Council meeting.

The Planning Service Officer outlined that it was hoped that the new scheme would be introduced early in the New Year.

Councillor J Beattie stated that, under this proposed new scheme, that the Planning Service needed to ensure that neighbourhood notification was still carried out and that the Elected Representatives continued to receive copies of objections.

Councillor Long outlined that he had a number of concerns in relation to the scheme and he asked Officers to ensure that the matter was brought back to Council.

Councillor Robinson indicated that when giving further consideration of this matter at the January Council meeting, Members would be reminding the Planning Service of the importance of site visits and office meetings.

RESOLVED : That the Council agrees to delete the recommendation within the Planning Officer's report in relation to the Introduction of New Processes to Streamline the Handling of Planning Applications, and that she report further on the matter at the January 2009 Council meeting

2008/722 : CORRESPONDENCE DATED 3 NOVEMBER 2008 FROM THE PLANNING SERVICE RE: GALWALLY PARK, CHURCH QUARTER, DUNDONALD, BT16 2AN – ERECTION OF TWO STOREY EXTENSION TO REAR OF EXISTING DWELLING (RETROSPECTIVE) (copy previously circulated)

Noted.

2008/723 : CORRESPONDENCE FROM J & R KEOWN AND CORRESPONDENCE 22 JUNE 2006 FROM K & L STEPHENS RE: PLANNING APPLICATION Y/2006/0291/F – GRANSHA ROAD DUNDONALD (ITEM 3 ON THE SCHEDULE) (copy previously circulated)

Noted.

2008/724 : CORRESPONDENCE FROM THE PLANNING SERVICE RE: NEW NI DIRECT TELEPHONE CALL HANDLING ARRANGEMENTS (COPY PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED)

Noted.

ANY OTHER PLANNING BUSINESS

2008/725 : DEPARTMENT OF THE ENVIRONMENT – PLANNING & ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY GROUP RE: PUBLIC CONSULTATION ON DRAFT PLANNING POLICY STATEMENT 21 (copy circulated at the meeting)

Following discussion, it was

RESOLVED : That consideration of the Public Consultation document on Draft Planning Policy Statement 21 be deferred until the January 2009 Council meeting.

2008/726 : CORRESPONDENCE FROM GEORGE BEST BELFAST CITY AIRPORT RE: EXTENSION OF RUNWAY (copy circulated at the meeting)

Noted.

2008/727 : OPENING OF NEW FUNERAL PARLOUR IN CARRYDUFF

Alderman Rice outlined that a new funeral parlour had opened in Carryduff without planning permission being obtained. She added that this establishment was located in an area that already had parking problems and the opening of these premises would exacerbate the difficulties.

The Planning Service Officer advised that the matter was being investigated by the Planning Service, through its Enforcement Section.

Noted.

2008/728 : UPDATE ON LAND SALE AT LADAS DRIVE

The Planning Officer reported that the potential purchaser had not been able to obtain planning permission. She added that the Council's solicitor had advised that the deposit should be returned to him.

Noted.

2008/729 : CONFERENCE – MAKING THE PLANNING SYSTEM WORK FOR YOUR APPLICATIONS

Following discussion, it was

RESOLVED : That the Council authorises the Planning Officer to attend a conference entitled "Making the Planning System Work for you Applications" being held in Hilton Hotel, Belfast on 29 January 2009 at a cost of £250.00.

Alderman Rice left the meeting at 8.45 p.m.

HOUSING

2008/730 : CORRESPONDENCE FROM THE NORTHERN IRELAND HOUSING EXECUTIVE RE: CONSULTATION ARRANGEMENTS IN RESPECT OF CORPORATE AND BUSINESS PLANS FOR 2008/2009-2010/2011 (copy correspondence previously circulated)

Alderman White expressed the view that the Council should write in support of the proposals that the Housing Executive intended to cover in its plan.

Councillor Robinson outlined that the Chief Executive of the Housing Executive had previously promised that he would provide the Council with an update before implementing any changes, but he had failed to do so. He added that he was concerned at the removal of the facility for people to pay at the counter. He added that this had particular implications for the elderly who had benefitted socially from calling into the office and chatting with Housing Executive staff. He outlined that this only served to widen the gap between the Housing Executive and its tenants.

He indicated that the situation would further be compounded by RPA, in that, a significant number of Castlereagh tenants would come under the Ards Area Office, further distancing tenants. He added that he had also received complaints from tenants experiencing difficulties getting through to the Housing Executive by telephone.

Following further discussion, it was

RESOLVED : That the Council agrees to write to the Northern Ireland Housing Executive in support of the areas it planned to cover in its Corporate and Business Plans for 2008/2009-2010/2011, but highlighting the concerns raised by Councillor Robinson, in terms of the removal of the facility to pay at the counter and the problems being experienced by tenants attempting to contact the Housing Executive by telephone.

2008/731 : CORRESPONDENCE FROM THE CHARTERED INSTITUTE OF HOUSING IN NORTHERN IRELAND (CIH) RE: DEVELOPER CONTRIBUTIONS IN SOCIAL AND AFFORDABLE HOUSING: KEY PRINCIPLES (copy correspondence previously circulated)

Noted.

2008/732 : CORRESPONDENCE FROM THE NORTHERN IRELAND HOUSING COUNCIL RE: MEMBERS' REPORT TO LOCAL COUNCILS (copy previously circulated)

Noted.

2008/733 : CORRESPONDENCE FROM THE NORTHERN IRELAND HOUSING EXECUTIVE RE: THE NORTHERN IRELAND HOUSING CONDITION SURVEY 2006 (copy correspondence previously circulated)

Noted.

FINANCE

2008/734 : ACCOUNTS FOR PAYMENT

RESOLVED : That the Council approve the undernoted payments:

Capital Account (General)	Nil
General Account (Salaries)	£ 577,104.08
General Account (Suppliers)	£1,156,329.32

LEGAL

2008/735 : APPROVAL TO SIGN THE DEED OF VARIATION OF COVENANT RE: LANDS AT MONEYREAGH

It was proposed by Councillor J Beattie, seconded by Councillor Henderson, and

RESOLVED : That approval be granted to sign the Deed of Variation of Covenant in respect of lands at Moneyreagh between Ruth Patrick and Maurice Crawford (one part) and Castlereagh Borough Council (second part).

2008/736 : APPROVAL TO SIGN THE RELEASE OF EASEMENT RE: LANDS AT MONEYREAGH

It was proposed by Councillor J Beattie, seconded by Councillor Henderson, and

RESOLVED : That approval be granted to sign the Release of Easement in respect of lands at Moneyreagh between Ruth Patrick and Maurice Crawford (one part) and Castlereagh Borough Council (second part)

MAYOR/DEPUTY MAYOR'S BUSINESS

2008/737 : MAYOR/DEPUTY MAYOR'S BUSINESS FOR NOVEMBER 2008 (copy previously circulated)

Noted.

REPORTS FROM OFFICERS

2008/738 : REPORT FROM THE ACTING DIRECTOR OF LEISURE SERVICES RE: ACTIVE COMMUNITIES UPDATE (copy previously circulated)

Noted.

2008/739 : REPORT FROM THE GENERAL MANAGER – LEISURE & MARKETING RE: UPDATE ON LEISURE PROJECTS (copy previously circulated)

It was proposed by Councillor Robinson, seconded by Alderman White, and

RESOLVED : That the Council agrees that the report from the General Manager – Leisure & Marketing be referred to the Leisure Services Committee for consideration.

2008/740 : REPORT FROM THE ACTING DIRECTOR OF LEISURE SERVICES RE: BASKETBALL & VOLLEYBALL CENTRE OF EXCELLENCE AND NORTHERN IRELAND ELITE FACILITIES (copy previously circulated)

It was proposed by Councillor Robinson, seconded by Alderman White, and

RESOLVED : That the Council agrees that the report from the Acting Director of Leisure Services be referred to the Leisure Services Committee for consideration.

GENERAL

2008/741 : CORRESPONDENCE FROM THE DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT RE: CONSULTATION ON CHANGES TO BSE TESTING (copy previously circulated)

Noted.

2008/742 : CORRESPONDENCE FROM THE RIVERS AGENCY RE: PUBLICATION OF STRATEGIC FLOOD MAP (NI) – RIVERS & SEA (correspondence previously circulated)

Councillor Robinson expressed concern for those living in areas of the Borough prone to flooding. He outlined the importance of the Rivers Agency consulting with residents, not just in terms of the disruption but the implications on house prices. He proposed that the Council writes to the Rivers Agency in this respect.

Alderman Copeland seconded the proposal and indicated that the problem of flooding had been exacerbated by the Rivers Agency's failure to keep grills clear.

RESOLVED : That the Council agrees to write to the Rivers Agency highlighting the importance of consulting with residents living in areas of the Borough prone to flooding and expressing concern in relation to the adverse impact flooding had on house prices.

2008/743 : CORRESPONDENCE FROM MAGHERAFELT DISTRICT COUNCIL RE: AUTISM SPECTRUM DISORDER (ASD) STRATEGIC PLAN 2008/2009 – 2010/2011 (copy previously circulated)

Councillor Robinson outlined that there was an Autism Group which met in the Borough and he expressed the view that the Council should write to Magherafelt District Council in support of the sentiments expressed within its correspondence.

Following discussion, it was

RESOLVED : That the Council agrees to write to Magherafelt District Council in support of the sentiments expressed in its correspondence in relation to

Autism Spectrum Disorder.

2008/744 : CORRESPONDENCE FROM HELP THE AGED RE: SENIORLINE BENCHMARK SURVEY 2008 (copy correspondence previously circulated)

Noted.

2008/745 : CORRESPONDENCE FROM ASSOCIATION OF MUNICIPAL AUTHORITIES OF IRELAND RE: SPRING SEMINARY, 13-14 FEBRUARY 2009 (copy previously circulated)

Noted.

2008/746 : CORRESPONDENCE FROM NILGA RE: STRENGTHENING MEMBER COUNCIL ENGAGEMENT AND PROTECTIONS FOR NILGA (copy previously circulated)

Noted.

2008/747 : CORRESPONDENCE FROM CONSUMER FOCUS POST (copy previously circulated)

Noted.

2008/748 : CORRESPONDENCE FROM THE DEPARTMENT OF FINANCE & PERSONNEL RE: CONSULTATION PAPER: PLEURAL PLAQUES (copy correspondence previously circulated)

Noted.

2008/749 : CORRESPONDENCE FROM THE BUDDY BEAR TRUST REQUESTING TO ADDRESS THE COUNCIL, WITH A VIEW TO SEEKING FINANCIAL SUPPORT FOR THE TRUST (copy previously circulated)

Following discussion, it was

RESOLVED : That the Council agrees that the correspondence from the Buddy Bear Trust be referred to the Leisure Park Board for consideration.

2008/750 : CORRESPONDENCE FROM ANTRIM BOROUGH COUNCIL RE: PROPOSED RUNWAY EXTENSION AT GEORGE BEST BELFAST CITY AIRPORT (copy previously circulated)

Noted.

ANY OTHER BUSINESS

2008/751 : PHOENIX GAS : ENERGY FOR CHILDREN CHARITY

Councillor Robinson advised of a funding opportunity from Phoenix Gas for community groups. He outlined that the money was raised by Phoenix Gas and its sub-contractors, and if Members wished to obtain further information on criteria, etc., they should contact Community Services.

Noted.

2008/752 : CORRESPONDENCE FROM APSE RE: LEISURE TRUSTS – A WAY FORWARD (copy circulated at the meeting)

The Acting Director of Leisure Service sought permission for an Officer within Leisure Services to attend the above conference.

Following a query from Councillor Chambers, the Acting Director of Leisure Services outlined that the Cloa delegate fee of £40 plus VAT would apply.

RESOLVED : That the Council agrees that an Officer within the Leisure Services Department be authorised to attend the APSE Leisure Trusts – A Way Forward Conference being held at Antrim Civic Centre on 2 December 2008, at a cost of £40.00 plus VAT.

2008/753 : NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF COUNCILLORS – TACKLING VIOLENT CRIME & DISORDER CONFERENCE : 16 – 18 JANUARY 2009 IN YORK (circulated at the meeting)

Following discussion, it was

RESOLVED : That the Council's representatives on the National Association of Councillors be authorised to attend the conference in York on 16 – 18 January 2009 in York.

2008/754 : CORRESPONDENCE FROM THE NORTHERN IRELAND FIRE & RESCUE SERVICE RE: ROAD SAFETY STRATEGY (copy correspondence circulated at the meeting)

Noted.

2008/755 : LAUNCH OF THE BEREAVEMENT THROUGH SUICIDE BOOKLET

Councillor Drysdale expressed his concern at the increased level of suicides, particularly amongst young people. He outlined that over the past six months, there had been 20 people who had taken their own lives within Castlereagh and East Belfast. He advised that the event would be held in Parliament Buildings on Friday 5 December 2008 at 11.00 a.m.

Noted.

2008/756 : CONSIDERATION OF DATE AND TIME FOR THE COUNCIL MEETING IN DECEMBER

It was proposed by Councillor J Beattie, seconded by Councillor Henderson, and

RESOLVED : That the December Council meeting would be held on Wednesday 17 December 2008 at 4.30 p.m., with a meal being provided for Members after the meeting in the Function Suite.

IN COMMITTEE

REPORT FROM THE DIRECTOR OF FINANCE (copy circulated at the meeting)

2008/757 : TEMPORARY REDUCTION IN THE STANDARD RATE OF VAT FROM 17.5% TO 15%

The Director of Finance reported that the reduction was applicable from 1 December 2008 to 1 January 2010 when it will revert back to 17½% (dependent on the economic circumstances at that time).

He then detailed for Members two options for dealing with this reduction, as follows:

- (a) reduce the standard rate of VAT from 17½% to 15% with the admissions/charges coming down to reflect this change
- (b) reduce the standard rate of VAT from 17½% to 15% but leave the price of admissions/charges unchanged

The Director of Finance pointed out that option (a) did have an administration cost, in terms of amendments to pricing leaflets and the operational impact from a cash change point of view.

Following a detailed discussion, Members were of the view that the ratepayers of Castlereagh should benefit from this reduction. In realising the administrative complexities in applying the reduction to some admissions/charges, Members advised Officers that the reduction should apply where practical.

It was further agreed that the Council should issue a press release advising ratepayers of this decision.

RESOLVED : That, where practical, the Council agrees to reduce the standard rate of VAT from 17½% to 15%, with the admissions/charges coming down to reflect this change, and that a press release be issued advising ratepayers of this decision.

2008/758 : BBC

The Director of Finance advised Members that the BBC would shortly be running a story regarding Elected Representatives' allowances for 2007/2008.

Noted.

**REPORT FROM THE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT MANAGER
(copy circulated at the meeting)**

2008/759 : HANWOOD PROJECT – PHASE II

As members of the Hanwood Trust Company Limited, Aldermen Norris, White, Councillors Drysdale and Robinson declared an interest.

The Director of Finance reminded Members that at the Council meeting held on 26 June 2008, it had been agreed that the DSD be granted a third charge on the sub lease for the business units. He added that Members may recall that the sub lease had been granted by the Council to the Hanwood Trust. He advised that the first charge on the sub lease was to be awarded to IFI and the second to Castlereaugh Borough Council. He added that it had also been reported that the solicitor acting on behalf of the NI Housing Executive may request a charge.

He continued by stating that the solicitor acting on behalf of the NI Housing Executive had not requested a charge but the DSD had requested a charge of equal priority to the IFI. He advised that the charge over the Phase II sub lease would only be affected if the Hanwood Trust went into liquidation. He added that due to the recent request from the departmental solicitor, Officers had liaised with the Council's solicitor and it was being recommended that an equal charge *pari passu* be put in place. He advised that this arrangement had been accepted in principle by IFI and DSD. He outlined that this agreement would mean that each funder would have equal priority in the event of liquidation of the Hanwood Trust towards getting back their investment in the project.

Following discussion, it was proposed by Councillor J Beattie, seconded by Councillor Spratt, and

RESOLVED : That the Council agrees that an equal charge *pari passu* be approved for the Hanwood Project - Phase II, and that the *pari passu* agreement between Castlereaugh Borough Council, Department of Social Development, and International Fund for Ireland be signed by Council, subject to the Council's solicitor being satisfied with the wording of the agreement.

STAFF IN COMMITTEE

There being no further business, the meeting ended at 9.50 p.m.

CHIEF EXECUTIVE

MAYOR