

COUNCIL MEETING THURSDAY 8 FEBRUARY 2018

Table of Adoptions

No	Item	<i>Summary of Key Adoptions</i>
3	Strike the Domestic and Non-Domestic Rate 2018/19	<i>That the budgets for 2018/19 are approved resulting in a 0% increase in the district rate on the proviso that there would be no impact on frontline services</i>

**MINUTES OF THE PROCEEDINGS OF THE MEETING OF THE COUNCIL
HELD IN CIVIC HEADQUARTERS, COLERAINE ON
THURSDAY 8 FEBRUARY 2018 AT 7:00 PM**

In the Chair : Mayor - Councillor Baird

Members Present : Alderman Campbell, Cole, Finlay, King, McKeown, and Robinson

Councillors Beattie, Blair, Callan, Chivers, Clarke, Deighan, Duddy, Harding, Holmes, Hunter, Loftus, Mulholland A, Mulholland K, McKillop M A, Knight-McQuillan, McCorkell, McLaughlin, McLean, McShane P, McShane C, Nicholl, Quigley, Stevenson, Watton and Wilson

Officers Present : D Jackson, Chief Executive
M Quinn, Director of Performance
D Wright, Chief Finance Officer
E McCaul, Committee & Member Services Officer

In Attendance : R Baker, Director of Leisure & Development
A McPeake, Director of Environmental Services

Press (1 no)

1. APOLOGIES

Apologies were recorded for Aldermen Hillis and McKillop S, Councillors Douglas, Fielding, Fitzpatrick, McCandless, McCaul and McGlinchey.

2. DECLARATIONS OF MEMBERS' INTERESTS

There were no declarations on interest.

3. STRIKE THE DOMESTIC AND NON-DOMESTIC RATE 2018/19

Prior to discussion on the Rates for 2018/19, Elected Members received the following documentation:

- Strike the rate report
- Report by the Chief Financial Officer on Reserves
- Report by the Chief Financial Officer on 2018/19 Estimates
- Full detailed report on Causeway Coast and Glens Rates for 2018/19
- Summary Report by Heads of Service
- Summary Report based on Location for 2018/19
- Summary Report by Senior Management
- Summary of Annual Estimates and
- Prudential Indicators 2017/18 to 2020/21

The Strike the Rate Report outlined that it was reported to Council in the autumn that the opening position for the 2018/19 rates estimates was a cost pressure of just under 6% in terms of a rate increase. To arrive at this figure the following aspects of Council's budgets were considered: wages and salaries; waste; insurance; gas and electricity and County Hall.

Further work refined the figures to include items such as updated penny product figures for rates income and the de-rating and transferring functions grants as well as detailed costing of staff costs in conjunction with the provision pay award resulted in it being reported to Council in January that the rates pressure was in excess of 4%. In January Members indicated that they expected to see a budget where the district rate would be held at current levels.

In order to produce a budget enabling Council to strike a rate with no increase, Council Officers had to identify savings/additional income totalling just under £1.8 million as detailed in the report.

The savings had been identified with a view to causing the minimum adverse effect on council services, however, in some cases, particularly where income levels are concerned, assumptions have been made regarding future service delivery. It was emphasised, that it was vital to understand and be aware of this so that when relevant decisions are subsequently being considered, these could have an impact upon these assumptions and consequently the budgetary position of Council as a whole.

The Senior Officers are confident they can successfully continue to deliver services satisfactorily within these budgets and limits but have indicated that any additional reductions will have the consequences of starting to knock out staffing and/service delivery.

The report outlined future pressures in terms of pay award for 2019/20, pension's contributions and impact of inflation.

It is recommended - on the assumption that the Council decides on a district rates freeze (0% increase) that the budgets for 2018/19 are approved together with the associated papers regarding the level of reserves, robustness of the estimates and the prudential.

Councillor Holmes opened the rates discussion by thanking Officers for work carried out leading up to the meeting. Looking at the budgets from a business perspective, he made comment on cost of electricity at Roe Valley Arts and Culture Centre, leisure centre running costs over income and printing costs for PCSP.

Proposed by Councillor Holmes
Seconded by Alderman Finlay

- That Council agree to a 0% increase in the rates, on the proviso that there would be no impact on frontline services.

Councillor Mulholland stated that he found the rates workshop to be useful, especially the document circulated on savings over revenue opportunities. He said Sinn Féin Members had reviewed the document and could not achieve savings to below 3% without impacting on frontline services.

* Councillor Knight McQuillan joined the meeting at 7:13 pm.

Councillor Mulholland stressed that Council was not a private business but a service provider. He called for those who supported a 0% rate increase to publish in detail where they were going to make cuts, instead of investing to improve services.

Proposed by Councillor Mulholland K
Seconded by Councillor Nicholl

Amendment - that Council agree to a 3% increase in the rates.

Councillor Loftus pointed out that the SDLP had looked at the budgets carefully and there was a need to be realistic given that the rates support grant was to be cut. She said that the SDLP would be proposing that the rates be increased by 1%.

In the discussion that ensued Members raised points on capital expenditure, debt, future capital investment, level of reserves and impact a 0% increase in the rates would have in rural communities.

Councillor Duddy voiced his opposition to the recommendation in the Strike the Rate Report **to approve the associated papers tabled.**

It was confirmed that the purpose of the meeting was to agree the headline rate and documentation circulated was to provide options for cost savings.

Councillor Mulholland K requested a recorded vote.

The Mayor put the amendment that Council agree to a 3% increase in the rates to vote, 6 Members voted for, 26 voted against.

The Mayor declared the amendment lost.

For : Councillors Chivers, McLaughlin, McShane C, McShane P,
(6) Mulholland K and Nicholl

Against : Aldermen Campbell, Cole, Finlay, King, McKeown and Robinson
(26) Councillors Baird, Beattie, Blair, Callan, Clarke, Deighan, Duddy, Harding, Mulholland A, Holmes, Hunter, Knight-McQuillan, Loftus, McCorkell, McKillop MA, McLean, Quigley, Stevenson, Watton and Wilson

The Mayor queried if Councillor Loftus wanted to continue with her amendment for a 1% increase in the rates, which required a seconder.

Proposed by Councillor Loftus
Seconded by Councillor Watton

Amendment - that Council agreed to a 1% increase in the domestic and non-domestic rate and to write to Central Government (Department for Communities) on the Rates Support Grant being reduced.

Councillor Mulholland K requested a recorded vote.

The Mayor put the amendment that Council agree to a 1% increase in the rates and to write to Central Government (Department for Communities) on the Rates Support Grant being reduced to vote, 8 Members voted for, 24 voted against.

The Mayor declared the amendment lost.

For : Councillors Beattie, Deighan, Mulholland A, Loftus, McKillop MA, (8) McShane P, Quigley and Watton

Against : Aldermen Campbell, Cole, Finlay, King, McKeown and Robinson. (24) Councillors Baird, Blair, Callan, Chivers, Clarke, Duddy, Harding, Holmes, Hunter, Knight-McQuillan, McCorkell, McLaughlin, McLean, McShane C, Mulholland K, Nicholl, Stevenson and Wilson

The Mayor put the substantive motion to the meeting that Council agree to a 0% increase in the rates, on the proviso that there would be no impact on frontline services.

A recorded vote was requested by Councillor Holmes.

The Mayor declared the substantive motion carried, with 19 Members voting for and 13 Members voting against.

For : Aldermen Campbell, Cole, Finlay, King, McKeown and (19) Robinson. Councillors Baird, Blair, Callan, Clarke, Duddy, Harding, Holmes, Hunter, Knight-McQuillan, McCorkell, McLean, Stevenson and Wilson

Against : Councillors Beattie, Chivers, Deighan, Mulholland A, Loftus, (13) McLaughlin, McKillop MA, McShane C, McShane P, Mulholland K, Nicholl, Quigley and Watton

There being no further business the Mayor thanked everyone for their attendance and the meeting concluded at 8:10 pm.

Mayor