

**Ballymoney Borough Council  
Development Committee Meeting No 174 – 9<sup>th</sup> October 2006**

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**BALLYMONEY BOROUGH COUNCIL**

Minutes of Development Committee Meeting No 174 held in the McKinley Room, Riada House on Monday 9<sup>th</sup> October 2006 at 7:00 pm

**IN THE CHAIR:** Councillor I Stevenson

**PRESENT:** **Aldermen**  
F Campbell  
H Connolly  
C Cousley, Deputy Mayor  
J Simpson

**Councillors**  
J Finlay, Mayor  
M McCamphill  
P McGuigan, MLA  
E Robinson  
R Wilson

**IN ATTENDANCE:** Chief Executive  
Head of Corporate & Development Services  
Committee Clerk  
Mr Andrew McAllister – North Antrim Leader (Item 174.2)

**174.1 MINUTES OF MEETING NO. 173 – 14<sup>th</sup> AUGUST 2006**

It was proposed by Alderman Connolly, seconded by Alderman Campbell and **AGREED:**

*that the minutes of Committee meeting No 173 on 14<sup>th</sup> August 2006, as circulated, be confirmed as a correct record.*

**174.2 RURAL DEVELOPMENT DELIVERY STRUCTURES POST 2006-09**

North Antrim Leader+, following a consultation exercise with Chairs/Managers, has produced an Options Paper for Rural Development Structures Post 2006-09, North Antrim and Coleraine, taking into account the implications of the RPA. This has been approved in principle by NAL+ and was circulated for Council's consideration. (Appendix A)

The Chairman welcomed Mr McAlister, Manager, North Antrim Leader to make a presentation on the above structure. Following his presentation Mr McAlister responded to questions from members. He then asked members to consider supporting North Antrim Leader proposals in principle. A copy of the presentation is attached as Appendix B.

A copy of the Rural Development Council's response to the NI Draft Rural Development Programme was circulated for members' information.

The Chairman then thanked Mr McAlister for his presentation at which point he retired from the meeting.

It was proposed by Councillor McCamphill, seconded by Alderman Connolly and **AGREED:**

***to recommend that Council support in principle North Antrim Leader proposals for rural development structures post 2006 - 09***

Councillor McGuigan joined the meeting during this presentation at 7 10 pm

Councillor Finlay joined the meeting during this presentation at 7 18 pm

### **174.3 BALLYMONEY MUSIC CENTRE**

The Head of Corporate and Development Services **recommended** that a special meeting of committee be arranged to consider a report on this matter, with a view to making a recommendation to Council at its meeting on 6<sup>th</sup> November. She advised that to protect council's interests a bid had been submitted to LSP for funding towards renovation works.

It was agreed that a special meeting be held in the Council Chamber on 30<sup>th</sup> October 2006 at 5 30 pm.

### **174.4 NORTHERN CORRIDER RAILWAYS GROUP**

At a recent meeting of the Group on 13<sup>th</sup> September it was decided that it would be essential to prepare and launch an updated case for the necessary investment on the line in time for the mid term review of the Regional Transportation Strategy and the associated bids for the 2008 spending review.

To this end the Group decided to instigate a number of actions:

- a) Commence a programme of work to update the investment case, incorporating cross-border and EU aspects particularly – BDP Planning to carry out this work;
- b) Organise a major seminar/conference in early 2007 to launch the subsequent report;
- c) Use the report in a sustained political lobbying exercise during 2007.

It is estimated that a budget of £30,000 will be required for the campaign, with the cost being met by each Council based on rateable valuations. The cost to Council would be £1,797.20.

At the budget setting process Council's attention was drawn to the fact that no budget was included for "lobbying for railways" and if expenditure is required it be taken from revenue reserve.

The Head of Corporate and Development Services recommended that Council commit £1,797.20 from revenue reserve to this continuing effort to secure this vital infrastructure for the region

A discussion ensued in which members agreed on the importance of the railway infrastructure to the area. It was proposed by Councillor Finlay, seconded by Councillor Wilson and **AGREED:**

***to recommend that Council commit £1,797.20 from revenue reserve to this continuing effort to secure this vital infrastructure for the region.***

#### **174.5 NORTHERN PERIPHERY TRANSNATIONAL CO-OPERATION PROGRAMME 2007-13 (INTERREG IV)**

The EU currently supports transnational cooperation between member states and regions under INTERREG IIIB. Cooperation has focused on policy areas such as maritime safety, environmental protection and transport. Support for such activities will continue in 2007-13 under the transnational strand of the Territorial Cooperation Objective.

Northern Ireland will be eligible for funding under three transnational programmes in 2007-13 - Atlantic Area, Northern Periphery and North West Europe. The draft Operational Programme for the Northern Periphery Programme was released for comment on 20<sup>th</sup> September by The Department of Finance & Personnel. It sets out the rationale and strategy of the programme as well as detailing the programme management, administration and implementation arrangements. The full document can be accessed on the link below:

<http://www.northernperiphery.net/consultation-process-g.asp>

The Northern Periphery Programme has a specific rural focus, particularly on areas of sparse population. The Programme covers regions of Finland, Greenland, Iceland, Sweden, Ireland, Norway, Scotland and the Faroe Islands and projects from Northern Ireland will require partners from within these areas. The eligible area in Northern Ireland is defined as all of Northern Ireland outside Greater Belfast. However, regulations allow 20% of the programme to be spent outside the eligible area, so there may still be scope for projects involving organizations in the Greater Belfast area.

As the closing date for comments is 15<sup>th</sup> October Council has authorised the committee to respond to this document (CM 2/10/06)

The Head of Corporate and Development Services recommended that the draft response to the consultation questions, attached as appendix c, be endorsed and submitted.

A summary of responses and conclusions from this consultation will be presented to the Programme Monitoring Committee Plus (PMC+) for the Northern Periphery Programme 2007-2013 shortly after the closing date for replies. The PMC+ will carefully consider the responses and do what is necessary to ensure that relevant comments are taken into account in the Operational Programme.

It was proposed by Councillor Finlay, seconded by Alderman Campbell and **AGREED:**

***to recommend that the draft response to the consultation questions be endorsed and submitted.***

#### **174.6 INTERNATIONAL LINKS – DOUGLAS BOROUGH**

Council has agreed to proceed with the formal twinning link with Douglas Borough Council.

Douglas Borough Council have invited Council to sign the agreement on 24<sup>th</sup> November 2006. It is **recommended** that committee nominate a delegation of four from Council/Twinning Association to attend the signing ceremony.

It was proposed by Alderman Connolly, seconded by Councillor Wilson and **AGREED:**

***to recommend that Council nominate the Mayor, the Chief Executive, the Chair of the Development Committee and the Chair of the Twinning Committee to attend the signing ceremony.***

#### **174.7 NORTH EAST PARTNERSHIP – STRATEGIC PLAN**

The Partnership has produced its draft Strategic Plan 2006-2013 aimed at facilitating the development of the North East Sub-Region through cooperation and collaboration.

It is **recommended** that the Manager be invited to present the plan to committee.

It was proposed by Councillor Wilson, seconded by Alderman Connolly and **AGREED:**

***to recommend to Council that the Manager be invited to present the plan to Committee.***

#### **174.8 DRAFT PLANNING POLICY STATEMENT 5 (PPS5) RETAILING, TOWN CENTRES AND COMMERCIAL LEISURE DEVELOPMENTS.**

Arrangements are being made to consult with relevant stakeholders on this proposal.

It is **recommended** that committee meet to settle Council's response, which would be submitted for Council's endorsement on 6<sup>th</sup> November.

### **REPORTS**

#### **174.9 FUTURE OF PUBLIC TRANSPORT IN NI**

A meeting of stakeholders is being arranged to consult on our case for the provision of an integrated transport facility an associated provision in Ballymoney.

A paper entitled "The Future of Public Transport Services in NI" prepared by the Ports and Public Transport Division of DRD has been circulated this provides some useful background reading.

#### **174.10 START A BUSINESS PROGRAMME (SABp)**

Following the consultation process on the evaluation of the programme Invest NI addressing the key recommendations arising from the evaluation which concludes that the benefits from the programme to both participants and the wider local economy will be enhanced by addressing a number of weaknesses in its existing format and delivery.

It is anticipated that the programme will launch in April 2007 and will transfer to Councils in April 2009.

#### **174.11 VILLAGE REGENERATION**

Rural Development Council new call focusing on improving the economic, environmental and social conditions in rural settlements through the practical implementation of actions as identified in existing village development plans. Expressions of interest by 31<sup>st</sup> August 2006.

#### **174.12 LEADER BUSINESS AWARDS**

A copy of a DVD on the Leader+ Business Awards Ceremony to be screened this prior to a future meeting.

#### **174.13 PROGRESS REPORT**

Head of Corporate and Development Services updated the meeting on projects. It was agreed that the meeting on 30<sup>th</sup> to deal with the Music centre also receive reports on reserve projects and Town Planning Policy Statement.

*The meeting closed at 8:00 pm*

*Appendix A – NAL Options Paper – RD Structures 0609*

*B – NAL Presentation – RD Structures 0609*

*C – Interreg IV Consultation Questionnaire*

## **RURAL DEVELOPMENT DELIVERY STRUCTURES POST 2006 IN NORTH ANTRIM AND COLERAINE**

### **Introduction**

COLLAGE and North Antrim Leader met on 31<sup>st</sup> July in Ballymena Council Offices (Chairs and Managers) and 14<sup>th</sup> August in Ballymoney Council Offices (Managers), to discuss future delivery of the Rural Development Programme. This meeting was intended to look at the possibility of looking at how the new rural development structures and programmes would be implemented in their respective areas.

### **Background**

The main features in the area of the new programme are likely to be:

- A new super-Council covering current Coleraine, Moyle, Ballymoney, Ballymena and Larne Districts
- That Council having enhanced powers, including in the areas of rural development and regeneration
- The Rural Development Programme across NI structured in terms of four Axes, ie: Competitiveness; Environment; Quality of Life; and “LEADER”/locally-based approaches
- Rural development policy being retained by DARD, along with delivery of most of Axes 1 and 2 (ie Competitiveness and Environment)
- Axis 3, Quality of Life (and parts of Axes 1 and 2) being delivered by one organisation (ie Axis 4, the locally-based approach) in each of the seven new “super Councils”.

DARD is likely to seek bids in Autumn ‘06 and co-terminosity with the new council areas is almost certain to be a specific requirement.

The new programme will require a more strategic approach within our rural areas and there needs to be more integration, less organisations and more accessible systems for the rural community.

There is an issue re the respective size of the two Leader Groups, with North Antrim having a rural area and population 3 to 4 times larger than Coleraine. This has meant a slightly different approach to delivery in each area. This can be seen as an advantage as NAL+ has experience of delivery over a multi-Council area and COLLAGE has experience of delivery of Council funds in one area.

The two groups have also a considerable deal of expertise and experience in delivering a range of programmes outside Leader+, especially with both being involved in cross-border companies, North West Rural Development and Imeall Teo which are involved in a range of Peace, Interreg and other funding lines and which deliver a range of programmes. There is also considerable experience in delivery inter-regional and international projects with NAL+ having the largest co-operation budget (Action II) and COLLAGE having the only full-time Action II Officer.

There is a need to have a genuine partnership approach involving Council, Statutory, private and social partners. There is a need for “Buy in” from all these partners, especially the public sector which previously was not fully integrated into these partnerships. There are also many other bodies involved in Rural development in the area eg Sub regional community networks, Causeway Trust, RDC etc and these will have to be involved in these structures.

The Leader approach has been recognised as the best delivery model by the EU and by DARD and as existing Leader Groups we need to maximise our experience and knowledge of how to use the Leader model. We should aim to deliver the whole of Axis 3 as well as other elements of the R.D. Programme, i.e. parts of Axis 1 & 2 as well as other Programmes relevant to rural areas.

### **Principles**

#### **There was agreement in principle that:**

- The two Leader Companies should develop a joint strategy and put together a joint bid.
- That a collaborative approach focusing on the delivery of **all** of Axis 3 (and parts of Axes 1 and 2) across the new North Antrim and Coleraine Council area
- “LEADER/new LEADER” concentrating specifically on what it’s good at/what it has a track record in, ie delivery to the customer/user at the local level
- Being open to seizing other opportunities that may emerge, e.g. “Peace 3” and the follow-ups to BSP and Interreg
- Building the major spending agencies/departments (eg, DENI, DETI, DEL, INI etc) much more closely into the rural development agenda
- Stressing the need for an appropriate admin/animation/development budget for the process: this is fundamental to the success of the entire RDP.
- Development of a model which would support the change process associated with RPA. At present the favoured option is the 7 Council Model, but this strategic approach could be adapted if a different RPA council structure is put forward.

### **NEC Partnership**

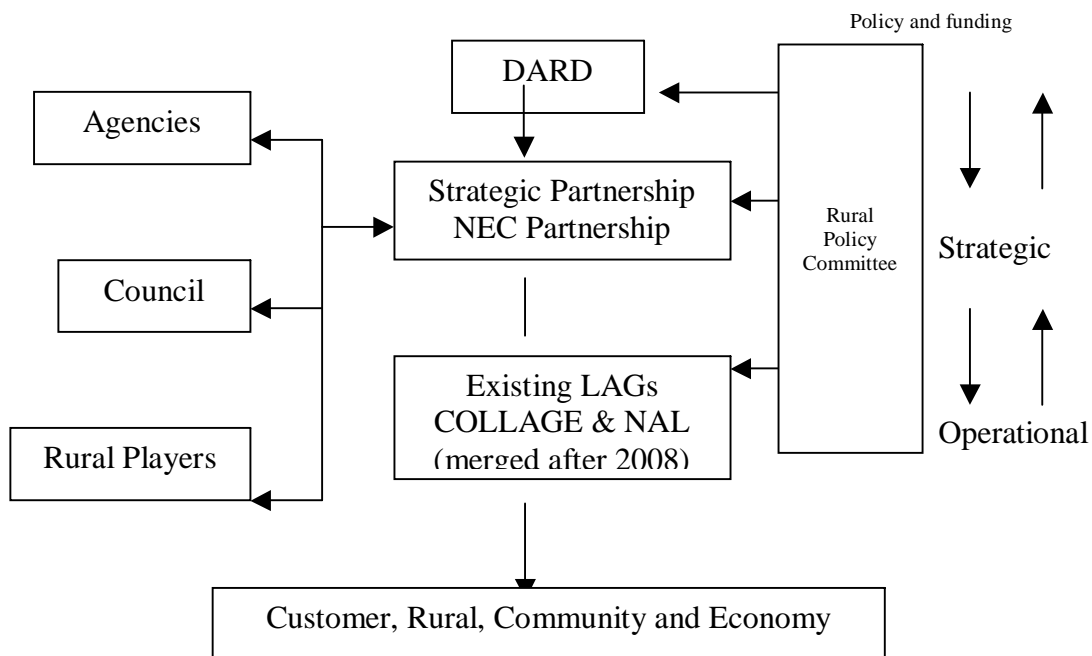
The NEC partnership would act as the strategic body which would bid for programmes and funds liaise with Council and Government and ensure delivery. It would act as the financial, administrative and monitoring hub and employ a strategic



director and core staff. There would be a Strategic Board set up with four representatives from each Council area (2 local Government and 2 x social partners) from each area. In addition 4/5 Statutory Advisors would also be included on the Board.

It would be set up as present as a company limited by guarantee and would have strong links with existing Councils. It would allow councils to continue in the interim to provide the co-finance required to the existing LAGs as well as having a smooth transition to the new programmes and structures.

The suggested model can be represented as follows:



### Partnership Tasks

- Draw up the Strategic plan for the region (and monitor its targets and implementation)
- Scope and submit the 'Rural Development' bid to DARD
- Arrange for the delivery of the Rural Development measures with the existing LAG's ... and be accountable to DARD/others for this.
- Oversee the development of 'shared service-type' arrangements across the LAG's (e.g. single, shared Monitoring Officer etc.)
- Oversee publicity and application calls for Rural Development measures
- Agree; set; and monitor overall budgets
- Authorise Letters of Offer and Claims
- Ratify all projects following local assessment panel scoring

### Existing LAG's

The existing LAG's would act as rural; development information points/one-stop-shops on the ground.

**Tasks:**

- Deliver Rural Development measures at the local level in locally-sensitive and appropriate ways
- Assess applications and process claims
- Develop rural development information points/one-stop-shops at the local level
- Animate and develop rural development programmes at a local level.

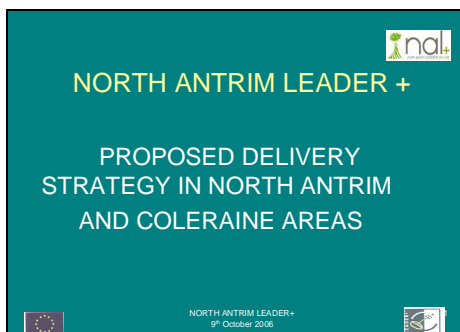
The key benefits of this model are seen to be:

- The two-tier approach energises both the overall strategic and the local operational aspects ... and respects both the integrity and variety of the new present and post RPA local authority
- Life is brought to subsidiarity principles
- Strategic co-terminosity with the new council through the RPA is achieved and fragmentation of the rural development agenda avoided
- Customers and DARD have to deal with one body only
- Existing structures/places/faces known to rural people; businesses; and communities are retained
- Existing LAGs' proven ability to deliver is retained
- An interim arrangement prior to the 2009 implementation of the new RPA Procedures can be accommodated
- A smooth roll out of the NI RDP is ensured ... with an accompanying capacity to oversee the wind-down of LEADER +
- The key features and principles of LEADER are retained.

**Next Steps**

**This paper has now been discussed by the two Boards and an “in principle” agreement made to have a joint, strategic approach. There is also a need to agree, with LAG’s and other partners what the basis of any bid for rural development funds should be and the shape of any delivery structure. The key bodies will be the existing councils and any proposals must have their active support.**

Slide 1



**NORTH ANTRIM LEADER +**

PROPOSED DELIVERY STRATEGY IN NORTH ANTRIM AND COLERAINE AREAS

NORTH ANTRIM LEADER+  
9<sup>th</sup> October 2006

The slide features a teal background with a white 'nal+' logo in the top right corner. At the bottom, there are three small logos: the European Union flag, the 'nal+' logo, and a circular logo with a leaf.

Slide 2



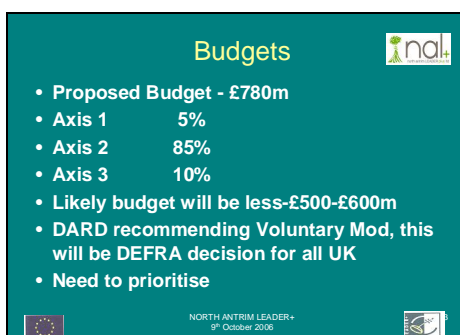
**EU Context**

- Axis 1 – improving competitiveness of agri/forestry sector
- Axis 2- Improving environment by supporting land management
- Axis 3 – Rural Development
- Leader role

NORTH ANTRIM LEADER+  
9<sup>th</sup> October 2006

The slide features a teal background with a white 'nal+' logo in the top right corner. At the bottom, there are three small logos: the European Union flag, the 'nal+' logo, and a circular logo with a leaf.

Slide 3



**Budgets**


- Proposed Budget - £780m
- Axis 1        5%
- Axis 2        85%
- Axis 3        10%
- Likely budget will be less-£500-£600m
- DARD recommending Voluntary Mod, this will be DEFRA decision for all UK
- Need to prioritise

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## Slide 4



**Rural Development Measures (proposed)**



- Farm Diversification
- Rural Business
- Encouraging Tourism      All Axis 3
- Village Renewal
- Rural Services
- Rural Heritage


  

- Competitiveness-Axis 1
- Agri Environment-Axis 2

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## Slide 5



**LEADER**



Key method of implementing Rural Strategy

- Local partnerships
- Innovative
- Area Based
- Multi-sectoral
- Co-operation

At least 5% of Budget must be delivered by Leader method-can be more.

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## Slide 6

**Rural Development Partnerships**



DARD proposing 6/7 Rural Partnerships  
Co-terminus with "super Council" areas.

These could deliver a range of programmes

Leader	Community Development
Nrtti	Rural Cross Border
RDC	Interreg/Peace
BSP	Other Rural programmes

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## Slide 7

## Local Impact

Councils will assume responsibility for Rural Development after RPA

New Partnership based in NAL+ area  
Ballymoney, Ballymena, Larne, Moyle areas  
and Collage area (Coleraine).


This body would have Council, Community  
Private and Statutory partners.

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## Slide 8

## Principles



- 1 Rural Partnership per super council area
- Deliver Axis 3 – Rural Development, but capable of delivering other rural/agri.
- Leader Approach
- Responsible for all aspects of delivery-from Strategy formulation to payments
- Strong links and involvement with existing and proposed Councils

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## Slide 9

## Principles

- Partnership of Council, Private, Statutory  
And Community interests.
- Use existing expertise and experience
- Recognise local needs and diversity
- Focus on customer not method or process
- Champion for rural region

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## Slide 10

### Background to Leader Groups : NAL+ and Collage



- Both long established Groups
- Both successful record of delivering Leader Measures
- Both have expertise in delivering range of programmes- Peace, BSP, Interreg etc
- Extensive inter-regional and transnational experience

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## Slide 11

### Possible Issues



- 2 Groups different scale in population and area
- One group 4 councils, other single council
- Need to involve range of partners eg NRRTI, Councils, Community Network, etc
- Large Geographical and population versus local delivery

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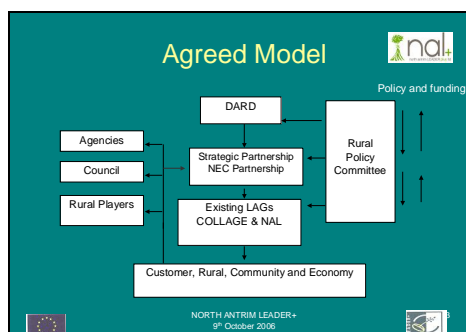
## Slide 12

### Agreed Principles

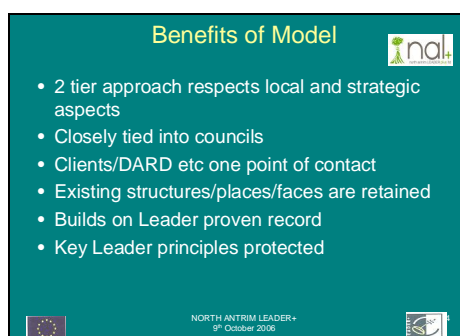
- **2 Leader Companies submit joint bid**
- **Focus on all Axis 3 (parts of 1+2)**
- **Use existing strengths-delivery**
- **Incorporate other programme/funding opportunities-Peace/Interreg etc**
- **Build other Agencies/Departments into rural agenda**
- **Adequate resources for admin/animation**

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## Slide 13



## Slide 14



## Slide 15



Slide 16

**Simpler Approach** 

Need for 'SIMPLER' approach

- S - Strategic
- I - Integrated, Innovative
- M – Multi-sectoral
- P - Partnership
- L – Leader/Local Councils
- E – Evidence based, easier to access
- R – Resourced, Realistic

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**Draft Operational Programme  
Public Consultation Questions  
(Draft) Report by Ballymoney Borough Council**

**Questions**

1. Do you agree with the analysis of the present situation and the assessment of the strengths and weaknesses of the Northern Periphery, as described in the Operational Programme?

The analysis is thorough and all encompassing, including detailed reference to the impact of geography, climate, demography, environment and socio-economic aspects peculiar to the regions identified. However one area perhaps worthy of further consideration is that of the impact upon these peripheral regions of the rapid movement of the EU eastwards and the increasing peripherality of the regions at a time of the development of the so-called global village.

2. Are there specific features missing or aspects not of relevance in the analysis? Please give details of other relevant material in relation to the socio-economic, environmental and territorial state of the area?

Although reference is made to the dependency upon maritime and air connections perhaps more consideration could be made to the analysis of accessibility and the internal transport infrastructure that currently exists in each of the regions and how this might manifest itself in increasing isolation, marginalisation and costs within that region and between the other regions as well as possibly restricting the delivery of the programme. For regions to be able to work with other regions there has to be an appropriate internal infrastructure within the respective regions.

3. Is the focus of the joint transnational strategy (vision, objectives and priorities) proposed in the programme document appropriate and understandable?

Whilst the vision and the objectives which flow from them is clear and understandable and would desire to have an outward looking focus, based upon technology transfer, the enhancement of social capital and ultimately a positive contribution to a more dynamic EU, the programme appears to be also quite inward looking and internal. The appropriateness of this focus should therefore be re-considered.

Furthermore no reference is made to realising increased GDP, and thereby closing the GDP gap, which has been identified, and there is no reference as to how the objectives could be manifest in a greater involvement of these peripheral regions, either singularly or collectively within the EU.

4. Are the links between the analysis, justification and priorities clear or is further information or clarification required?

Yes the links are clear, however as referred to above as the gap still appears to exist in relation to absence of the promotion of enhanced trade links within the Northern Periphery regions and also externally with the remainder of the EU and other large markets as a means to improve GDP in the areas.

5. Do you consider the description provided in the priority axes sufficient to develop project ideas?

Yes – the non-exclusive and non-exhaustive nature of the descriptions provided in the priority axis should permit the development of appropriate project ideas within the framework of the strategy.

6. Considering the policy framework provided by the EU, are there any themes or aspects missing which may be relevant for transnational cooperation in the Northern Periphery Programme?

The policy framework makes reference to building social capacity and whilst networking appears to be a primary focus of the identified objectives there is no mention of developing the people, either in terms of up-skilling, re-skilling or in the building of capacity, in an attempt to reduce the dependence upon the public service sector, improve unemployment figures or increase the GDP of the regions.

Likewise the promotion of innovation and competitiveness seems focused on the development and increased use of ICT and there is no reference to the need for the encouragement of entrepreneurial activity to assist in delivering these objectives.

7. Do you already have any project ideas which are suitable for the programme and its priorities?

Yes, we are currently considering a range of projects which would involve aspects of environmental improvement practices including waste management and renewable energy systems; cultural heritage and cultural tourism and social capital development in terms of re-skilling and up-skilling.

8. The Northern Periphery Programme name is now well established, but do you have any suggestions for a name for the Operational Programme?

Suggestions might include:

‘Looking North’

‘The Northwest Co-operation Programme’

‘Northwest Together’ or ‘NoW Together’

‘Northern Europe Together’

‘Northern Europe Co-operation Programme’

‘Northern Europe Unite’

‘From Ireland to Iceland’

9. Please detail any other relevant comments concerning the draft Operational Programme?

The document is very conceptual and strategic in its approach and content and as such provides little detail of a time frame for implementation, potential eligible projects or desired tangible outcomes. Due to the geographic spread of the different regions identified in the programme the establishment of some form of consultation/planning structure could well prove of value. Of course an appropriate budget line to facilitate this would be a necessity.