

**BALLYMONEY BOROUGH COUNCIL
DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE MEETING NO 175 – 30TH OCTOBER 2006**

Table of Contents:

175.1	Ballymoney Music Centre/Community Hub – <i>Council to write to Minister</i>
175.2	Draft Planning Policy Statement 5 (PPS5) – <i>Comments to be submitted</i>
175.3	Reserve Projects – <i>Approved</i>
175.4	Hotel Study – <i>Presented</i>
175.5	DETI – <i>Consultation announced</i>
175.6	LOTS – <i>Application successful.</i>
175.7	Seaplane Proposal

**BALLYMONEY BOROUGH COUNCIL
DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE**

Minutes of Meeting No 175 held in the Council Chamber, Riada House on Monday 30th October 2006 at 5.30 pm.

In the Chair: Councillor I Stevenson

Present:

Aldermen
F Campbell
H Connolly
C Cousley
J Simpson

Councillors
J Finlay
T McKeown
E Robinson
A Patterson
M Storey

Apologies:

B Kennedy
M McCamphill
P McGuigan
R Wilson

In Attendance:

Chief Executive
Corporate Services Officer
Committee Clerk

175.1 BALLYMONEY MUSIC CENTRE/COMMUNITY HUB PROJECT

The Head of Corporate & Development Services updated members on progress with regard to the application for transfer of this property to Council, likely costs of bringing the building into use as a community hub, based on a preliminary building survey and the funding bid to LSP towards the renovation costs.

* **Councillor Storey arrived at 5.35 pm.**

It was noted that the application could not progress further until a property valuation had been settled with the Valuation & Lands Office. This was expected in the near future, which notwithstanding the restrictions, would be market value. In addition, the cost of the necessary works to bring the building into use, coupled with those identified by the community sector, are expected to be well in excess of the grant available from LSP.

The meeting also discussed the proposal to develop the premises as a Community Hub, providing office accommodation and meeting space for a number of community and voluntary groups currently located and operating in the borough. Various matters relating to the project which engaged members attention, included the building requirements, as identified by the community sector, management arrangements, caretaking/cleaning options, viability of the project, limited time-span in which funds available to LSP can be allocated to eligible projects, requirements for additional funding, operating costs, expressions of interest from prospective tenants, financial feasibility/sustainability.

The Head of Corporate and Development Services suggested the benefits of requesting Council's architect to provide a comprehensive estimate of renovation costs.

Alderman Simpson spoke in favour of preserving the building due to its historic importance and agreed to prepare a résumé on its historical background.

It was proposed by Councillor Storey, seconded by Councillor Finlay and

AGREED:

- (a) *to recommend that Council seek a meeting with the Minister to discuss issues relating to the transfer of the property for community use.*
- (b) *instruct the architect to prepare a schedule of works and an estimate of cost of repair and renovation work.*

175.2 PLANNING POLICY STATEMENT 5 (PPS5) – RETAILING, TOWN CENTRES AND COMMERCIAL LEISURE DEVELOPMENTS.

The Regional Planning and Transportation Division of the Department of Regional Development has published Draft Planning Policy Statement 5 – Retailing, Town Centres and Commercial Leisure Developments, along with its accompanying draft EQIA and Environmental Report, for public consultation. The consultation period ends on 3rd November 2006.

The draft Policy Statement 5 has been prepared to assist in the implementation of the Regional Development Strategy to guide the future pattern on retailing and commercial by managing future growth and distribution, support urban renaissance and achieve balanced communities.

The draft PPS5 sets out the main planning policies for retailing and commercial leisure developments in cities, towns, other centres and settlements throughout Northern Ireland. It will influence the future pattern of retailing by redressing the balance between out of town and town centre shopping.

The key objective of PPS5 is:

- to sustain and enhance the vitality and viability of town centres in a manner consistent with achieving the strategic objective of the Regional Development Strategy for NI 2025.

Other objectives which will be taken into consideration include:

- to promote more sustainable development ensuring that new developments are located where there are good public transport services and better access for those walking and cycling and less dependence on access by car;
- to promote quality of design of both buildings and spaces around buildings which contributes positively to townscape and is sensitive to surrounding areas;
- to encourage an efficient, competitive and innovative retail and commercial leisure sector offering commercial choice consistent with commitment to town centres.

Commercial Leisure uses relate to amusement arcades and centres, restaurants, cafes, hot food bars etc.

Planning policy for other town centre uses are dealt with in other PPSs such as offices (PPS4), residential development (PPS12), access, movement and parking (PPS3) and transportation (PPS13).

To assist the Department in preparing this draft, PPS consultants carried out research of retailing patterns within Northern Ireland. This research identified a number of weaknesses within the existing PPS5 and put forward recommendations to address these. A summary is included as an appendix to the PPS.

Sustaining and enhancing the vitality and viability of town centres is a key objective of the Regional Development Strategy. DSD uses statutory powers, where appropriate, and other regeneration measures to support town centre reinvigoration. DOE Planning Service, through the preparation of development plans, formulates a town centre strategy and retail and commercial leisure strategy for the plan area and identifies the zonings and designations.

Development Control policies set out the main planning considerations for the control of development in town centres. The provisions of these policies will prevail unless there are other overriding policy and material considerations that outweigh them and justify a contrary decision. These relate to eg, core town centre uses, edge of town locations, factory shops, petrol filling stations, garden centres, retailing in the countryside (farm shops, craft shops and shops serving tourist facilities), commercial leisure development.

The Town Planning Institute held a consultation workshop to discuss this proposal. The main issue debated was whether Sprucefield should be included or not in this policy and how Belfast city centre would be affected.

Consultation also took place with BTCM Board.

The general principles of the Policy are welcomed.

Planning policy should protect and maintain the unique character of Ballymoney's commercial core, the town centre being a designated conservation area, eg traditional shop fronts and appropriate signage.

From a Ballymoney perspective, derelict prime pitch is viewed as a big Issue. It would be important that the final version of this policy statement recognises the need to support businesses in practical ways to locate into the town centre through appropriate property development grants to counteract dereliction, instead of encouraging further edge of town or out of town developments at the cost of prolonged or increased dereliction.

Policy RRP 3 Retail Development should mention something about dereliction of prime pitch, e.g. if ***it is demonstrated that no suitable sites exit within the primary retail core*** due to the existence of dereliction, (and consideration is hence being given to edge of town or out of town locations), this dereliction should be addressed where possible, and with practical assistance, so that dereliction is not a stumbling block for positive town centre retail and leisure development.

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

to recommend that Council submit the above views to the Regional Planning and Transportation Division of the Department of Regional Development

175.3 RESERVE PROJECTS (BSP PROGRAMMES)

Committee, at its meeting on 8th May, approved the following projects in principle. Following submission to DETI for consideration for funding under the BSP Programme and taking account of their comments the revised proposals, as detailed in Appendix A, were submitted for committee approval. All funding would be met from within existing budgets.

*** Councillor Storey left the meeting at 6.42 pm.**

Following discussion it was proposed by Alderman Campbell, seconded by Alderman Connolly and **AGREED:**

to recommend that the revised proposals in the reserved projects schedule, as set out in appendix A, with the recommended variants with regard to project and programme funding be approved.

175.4 HOTEL STUDY

The Head of Corporate & Development Services advised that the Consultants, Colin Buchanan, had presented the interim report to members last Thursday. The report in full will be tabled at the next meeting. The Study fulfils the terms of reference of the study and is wholly positive. Consultants are at discussion stage with potential interested parties. A Hotel in Ballymoney will contribute to the capacity of the region and retain visitors. It was now planned that a public announcement on the outcome of the study will be made.

Alderman Campbell welcomed the report and Councillor Robinson recorded thanks for the detailed work that had been undertaken in providing this, also welcoming the positive outcome.

175.5 FUTURE FUNDING 2007-2013

The Head of Corporate & Development Services reported that information had been received within the last few days of availability of funding through DETI under the ERDF Competitiveness Programme. While some work has been done to identify areas of action, further work is required to prepare an action plan for the next funding round. A discussion paper setting out possible delivery structures for the Peace III programme had also been issued. A report would be brought to the next meeting on these issues.

175.6 NIHE – LOTS INITIATIVE

It was reported that Council's application under the NI Housing Executive Town Centre Living Initiative had been successful and Ballymoney had been awarded TALIA status from 1 January 2007 for a period of five years. Arrangements were in hand to meet with NIHE to discuss the issues involved in the initial implementation of the project and a further report would be made to the next meeting.

175.7 SEAPLANE PROPOSAL

It was reported that a request had been received from the Ulster Seaplane Association for support for their proposed new operation at Causeway Airfield (Rhee Lane) Aghadowey. The site was in Coleraine Borough Council area, in the vicinity of Drumaheglis Marina. Their application to purchase a seaplane and associated equipment was in the final stages of being assessed for a potential grant award. If successful it was their intention to offer trial lessons to the public from their new base.

Committee noted that the Borough Integrated Strategy identified six strategic themes including Tourism and so far as Ballymoney was concerned there is great potential for increased tourism, which remains untapped. For a district of our size and population the borough do not do proportionately as well from tourism as might be expected.

It was agreed that the Seaplane proposal would contribute to the development of tourism in the region, thus assisting with long-term economic growth and providing employment opportunities.

It was agreed:

to recommend that the proposal be supported, in principle, and that further consideration be given to the project when the detailed proposal was available.

This being all the business, the meeting closed at 6.55 pm.

APPENDIX A

**RESERVE PROJECTS SCHEDULE
(DETI – Building Sustainable Prosperity Programme)**

1.- Tourism Activity Development

Ref.	Proposals	Comments	Cost
1.1 SEB	Production of Fishing Product Brochure	Agreed* amalgamated with project 1.2 below	-
1.2 CSI	Development of Activity Packages to address lack of in borough product	Development of Cycling / Walking Routes \ Heritage Trails Agreed.*	£10,000
1.2.1 CSI	Ditto.	Ancestry Product Phase II	£4,500
1.3 STC	Development of town walking guide/map	Abandoned as included in heritage guide developed by leisure services. * Information Map Signs at key access points Agreed	£10,000
1.4 STC	Promotional campaign to coincide with launch of covered amenity area and highlighting tourism attractions and activities	Agreed, also to include TV campaign, refresh of brand and development of DVD with web clips	£13,000

* all products will be included on visitballymoney website

Recommend:

That the above projects be approved, and funded as follows:

Project 1.1 and 1.2 funded from balance of monies from abandoned fishing product project in Creating and Supporting Infrastructure programme

Project 1.3 and 1.4 funded from the Marketing project in the Strengthening Town Competitiveness programme.

2.– Business Development

Ref.	Proposals	Comments	Cost
2.1 SE B	Programme in consultation with INI & DEL to address low level of earnings and job losses in manufacturing	Not eligible. Alternatives at 2.2 & 2.3	-
2.2 SEB		Post New Business Start-Up Support: Training and mentoring to new local micro-businesses during their first two years post completion of the SABp	£20,000
2.3 SEB		Ballymoney Business Club	£3,000

* all products will be included on visitballymoney website

Recommend:

That the above projects be approved, and funded as follows:

Project 2.2 and 2.3 funded from balance of monies from abandoned business awards project in the Strengthening Enterprise Base Programme and transfer of £5,000 from Merchandising and town audit project in Strengthening Town Competitiveness programme.

3.- Town Development

Ref.	Proposals	Comments	Cost
3.1 STC	Town Audit to identify gaps, production of investment brochure and targeted sales pitch	Audit not eligible Development of investment prospectus for Agreed **. Targeted sales pitch within existing resource costs	£2,000
3.2 STC	Awareness raising of town product amongst attraction & accommodation providers	Not approved.	-
3.3 STC	Marketing Plan for new covered amenity	Agreed	£5,000
3.4 STC	Resurvey of customer service levels to evaluate success of development and marketing initiatives	Not agreed Being conducted via Ballymoney Bulletin. Analysis within existing budget	

* included in economic section on Council Corporate Website.

Recommend:

That the above projects be approved with the cost being met from within existing marketing budgets in the Strengthening Town Competitiveness Programme.