

BALLYMONEY BOROUGH COUNCIL**Development Committee Meeting No 179 – 12th February 2007****Table of Contents**

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BALLYMONEY BOROUGH COUNCIL

Minutes of Development Committee Meeting No 179 held in the Council Chamber, Riada House on Monday 12th February 2007 at 7.30 pm.

IN THE CHAIR: Councillor I Stevenson

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

Councillors
B Kennedy
M McCamphill
T McKeown
A Patterson
E Robinson
M Storey

APOLOGIES: **Councillors**
R Wilson
P McGuigan, MLA
T McKeown

IN ATTENDANCE: Head of Corporate & Development Services
Committee Clerk

179.1 MINUTES OF MEETINGS NO. 178 – 8th JANUARY 2007

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

that the minutes of Meeting No 178 – 8th January 2007, as circulated, be confirmed as a correct record.

179.2 DEVELOPMENT BUDGET 2007/08

The budget provision of £131,550, an inflationary increase on the current year, has been reduced to £100,000.

The Head of Corporate & Development Services circulated rate estimate information relating to the economic development budget and explained the projects included for the 2007/08 year. Committee considered the issues relating to the following programmes in respect of which no provision has been made in the incoming year.

- ❑ New EU competitiveness and employment programme 2007-2013, the successor to the EU Building Sustainable Prosperity Programme which came to an end in December 2006, with spend closing in June 2007..
- ❑ Interreg Projects which Council has expressed an interest in.
- ❑ Start A Business Programme
- ❑ Programme launch/publicity events

Outlining the new EU programme the Head of Corporate & Development Services advised that the consultation process on the new draft EU competitiveness and employment programme was now underway and Councils were invited to make preparations for the new round of local economic development funding against the backdrop of RPA in 2009. The development of a local economic development action plan would be required for any new LED activity 2007-2013. All eligible expenditure on the new programme would have to be closely aligned to the Lisbon Agenda of promoting growth and jobs. In addition the current policy on programme management costs was being reassessed with such costs only being eligible where it is demonstrably clear that they are directly related to a specific admissible activity. It was noted Council was currently receiving grant towards salary costs. She advised that Northern Ireland with its improved relative economic performance will receive significantly reduced levels of EU structural funding post 2006 compared to previous programming periods.

It was agreed that these various matters be considered further at the committee's next meeting.

179.3 NILGA SEMINARS – PEACE III AND NEW EU PROGRAMME

The Head of Corporate and Development Services reported that NILGA was hosting seminars for members/officers on Peace III programme and the new EU Competitiveness & Employment Programme.

It was proposed by Councillor Kennedy seconded by Councillor Robinson and **AGREED:**

to recommend that the following appointments be made:

EU Competitiveness & Employment Programme Seminar to be held on 22nd February in Antrim Civic Centre. – Councillor Stevenson and

Alderman Simpson, together with the Head of Corporate & Development Services or her nominee.

Peace III Seminar to be held on 12th March at the Lough Neagh Discovery Centre. – Councillor McCamphill, Alderman Simpson and Councillor Stevenson, together with the Head of Corporate & Development Services or her nominee.

Councillor McCamphill left the meeting at 7.55 pm

Councillor Patterson left the meeting at 8.05 pm

179.4 JOB LOSSES IN HM REVENUE & CUSTOMS - COLERAINE

Arising from representations by The Public and Commercial Service Union about job losses in Revenue and Customs, Coleraine (CM.852 refers) Council made representations to HM Revenue & Customs and also responded to the equality impact assessment on their proposed approach to relocation and restructuring.

The Head of Corporate and Development Services reported on response, 6/2/07, from H M Revenue & Customs. It was noted that they had not yet announced any specific office closures. Their initial proposals will be open to change in the course of detailed feasibility studies and planned consultation with staff, unions, and a range of stakeholders. The part of the review programme which includes Coleraine offices, is not planned to start before April 2008. Whatever its outcome H M Revenue and Customs assured Council that there was no question of face to face services to the public disappearing. They were committed to providing a fact to face service in, or as close as possible to, all locations where such service exists, as it does in Coleraine. They would ensure that their proposals reflect the needs of the different communities and a detailed impact assessment is being undertaken before a final decision is made as to the future of any office. This assessment will examine in detail the socio-economic impacts of closure and will take into account any specific factors affecting each local office.

179.5 THE ENERGY EFFICIENCY AND RENEWABLE ENERGY SHOW

Following Council's decision to collaborate with COLD Ltd (Collective Objectors to Lignite Development Ltd) in the staging of the above event in Ballymoney Town Hall on Saturday 24th March a meeting has taken place with COLD to settle arrangements for the event.

The event will provide the public with the opportunity to meet representatives from a range of energy related bodies who will provide information about the availability of grants and energy saving measures for home and business. The Office of the Chief Executive was providing event management support for the event.

179.6 PROJECT PROGRESS REPORT

A progress report at end of December 2006 together with employment statistics was circulated and noted.

Committee was invited to consider issues relating to the two projects, as referred to at 7. & 8. below.

179.7 COVERED AMENITY SPACE - CASTLECROFT

The Head of Corporate and Development Services reported on issues relating to the development of the Council's amenity space at this location and development proposals on adjoining site, in respect of which the Chief Executive had taken legal advice and instructed Council's Solicitors to act to protect Council's interest and its asset. Members endorsed the action taken by the Chief Executive in this matter. A further report will be made to the Consultation Committee on 19th February.

Councillor Kennedy left at 8:30 pm

179.8 BALLYMONEY MUSIC CENTRE PROPERTY/COMMUNITY HUB PROJECT

Committee recommended at its last meeting that no further action be taken on this project, it being noted that the cost of acquiring the property and adapting it for use as a Community Hub, taking account of the LSP funding of £150,000, is estimated at £1,267,500, excluding VAT, plus professional fees and legal fees involved in the transfer and building contract. No budget provision has therefore been included in the 2007/08 rate estimate. Council at its meeting on 5th February decided to defer the recommendation to allow a member to pursue other options.

The LSP has been advised of the present position in the matter and is scheduled to review the matter at its March Meeting.

The meeting closed at 8.35 pm