

BALLYMONEY BOROUGH COUNCIL

Development Committee Meeting No 190 - 21st January 2008

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**BALLYMONEY BOROUGH COUNCIL
DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE**

Minutes of Meeting No 190 held in the Council Chamber, Riada House, Ballymoney, on Monday 21st January 2008 at 3.30 pm.

IN THE CHAIR: Councillor I Stevenson

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

Councillors
A Cavlan
J Finlay, Mayor
M McCamphill
T McKeown
A Patterson
E Robinson
I Stevenson
R Wilson

APOLOGIES: **Councillor**
P McGuigan

IN ATTENDANCE: Chief Executive
Head of Corporate & Development Services
Committee Clerk

190.1 MINUTES OF MEETING NO 189 – 17TH DECEMBER 2007

Matters Arising

1.1 Job Losses (189.13)

Following representation by the Mayor to Minister Dodds, he has agreed to meet with Council to discuss measures to bring new jobs to Ballymoney. Arrangements will be made for him to meet Council on a date to be agreed.

The Minister had also passed to DEL Minister, the Mayor's request for assistance for Reid former employees to secure new jobs or training opportunities and to ensure they are treated fairly in the redundancy process. It was noted that DEL had provided advice to the employers on employment, training and education opportunities. In conjunction with SSA, the employees had been given advice on entitlement to benefits. A redundancy clinic had also been held providing help and support on self-employment opportunities, training provision and starting a new business.

1.2 Adoption of Minutes

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

that the minutes of Meeting No 189 – 17th December 2007, as circulated, be confirmed as a correct record.

190.2 RURAL DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME

[a] Tenders

Seven tenders have been received for the council cluster assignment to support the establishment of a Local Action Group, develop projects and cluster based strategies. Initial assessment has taken place on behalf of the lead council, Ballymena, and following interview of shortlisted consultants and consideration by Ballymena Council, a further report will be made to committee/Council.

[b] North Antrim Leader

North Antrim Leader (NAL) has requested to make a presentation on the impact of NAL+ programme to date and also how Ballymoney area and North Antrim in general can benefit most from the new rural development programme. They also urge council to enter into consultation with existing rural organizations through eg a one-day seminar/workshop, which could help formulate the basis for the new programme. Council has also much to learn from NAL, in particular, with regard to delivery of rural development programmes and **IT IS RECOMMENDED** that the Manager be invited to make a presentation.

A number of requests from other organizations interested in delivering the rural development programme are pending. Given that council has now formed a cluster to take this matter forward **IT IS RECOMMENDED** that consultation with these bodies be undertaken as part of this process.

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

to recommend to Council:

1. ***that the Manager of NAL be invited to make a presentation on the impact of NAL+ programmes and how Ballymoney area and North Antrim can benefit most from the new rural development programme.***
2. ***that Council facilitates a consultation event with those organisations interested in the rural development programme.***

190.3 HOTEL DEVELOPMENT

Members were made aware during consultation on its hotel study assignment that a number of expressions of interest had been lodged. A developer advancing a project in the town centre has requested to present to Council on his proposal. The development of at least one new hotel in the area is a key target in Council's development plan. **IT IS RECOMMENDED** that the developer be invited to present to committee's next meeting.

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

to recommend that Council extend an invitation to the developer to present to the next meeting of committee.

Alderman Campbell welcomed this initiative, which has received the support of local residents. Councillor Finlay concurred with Alderman Campbell.

190.4 TWINNING ASSOCIATION

An application has been received from the Twinning Association for its annual grant for the current year. The Association has made a recent presentation to committee. **IT IS RECOMMENDED** that a contribution of £4,000 be made to the Association.

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

to recommend that a contribution of £4,000 be made to the Association for its annual grant for the current year.

190.5 FINE FOOD AND CRAFT MARKET

Following the results of a consultation exercise with both stallholders and consumers, **IT IS RECOMMENDED** that committee consider changes to the operation of the market in the coming year. The proposed changes have the support of TCM.

Since its establishment in 2005 with the support of North Antrim Leader+ and Ballymoney Borough Council, Ballymoney Fine Food and Craft Fair has achieved many of its original objectives. This has included the two primary objectives of providing consumers with an increased choice of high quality locally produced food and craft items as well as giving local producers the opportunity to market their products directly to the consumer and to use the Fair as a forum through which they could build their business.

Since then consumers have enjoyed a regular supply of locally produced ranges including breads, meats and preserves as well as an intriguing range of craft products. For the stallholders the Fair has also been successful, not only in terms of a ready market for their produce but also providing that much needed regular sales base on which to build their businesses.

This has resulted in a number of the traders now having a regular outlet, and pre-orders, for their produce as well as having their produce regularly stocked in local shops, whilst one particular trader has developed his business to such a level that he has progressed to the setting up of a local shop, thereby growing his business from a once a month to a six-days per week enterprise.

Having operated successfully for just over two years, and having overcome a number of obstacles along the way, not least of all the winter weather prior to the erection of the roof, it was time to decide the next stage of development for the Fair.

With the success of the Fair to date there was a strong feeling amongst all the interested parties that it should continue but the experiences of the past two years and the input of both traders and customers have suggested that a number of strategic changes would be an advantage if the Fair was to progress further.

Consequently **IT IS RECOMMENDED**

- [1] that rather than holding a general monthly market a number of themed Fairs should be held throughout the year, focusing on the particular products of the season. The result will be that there will be an 'Easter Fair', a 'May Fair', a 'Summer Fair' a 'Halloween Fair' and a 'Christmas Fair' and the exact dates of these proposed Fairs will be published soon".
- [2] that the Fair should be held on Friday mornings rather than the current Saturday mornings.

The support of both the various traders and the general public in making Ballymoney's Fine Food and Craft Fair so successful is very much appreciated and valued and it is clear that both groups have benefited greatly from having a local food and craft fair in the town. The proposed changes will require some adjustment by both customers and traders alike but if past experience and levels of support are anything to go by then the new arrangements will also prove to be a success.

Ballymoney Fine Food and Craft Fair is supported by Ballymoney Town Centre Management, North Antrim Leader+ and Ballymoney Borough Council

- * **Councillor Wilson and Alderman Connolly left the meeting at 3.50 pm.**

It was proposed by Councillor Robinson, seconded by Councillor Patterson and **AGREED:**

to recommend to Council:

1. ***that general monthly fairs be replaced with themed fairs to be held throughout the year ie Easter, May Summer, Halloween and Christmas, exact dates of which to be finalised.***
2. ***that each fair should be held on Friday mornings rather than the current Saturday mornings.***

In an ensuing discussion, Councillor Robinson congratulated the Town Centre Project Officer and the Head of Corporate & Development Services for their contribution to the success of the monthly markets. Councilor Finlay and Councillor Stevenson concurred with Councillor Robinson's comments. At the request of Alderman Simpson, the Head of Corporate & Development Services clarified the rationale in moving to seasonal rather than monthly markets.

190.6 EU COMPETITIVENESS PROGRAMME (DETI)

The Department of Enterprise Trade and Investment have provided clarification on a number of issues relating to the LED element of the new Competitiveness Programme. The Programme was approved by the European Commission at the end of October 2007, in line with our anticipated timescale.

- * **Alderman Campbell left the meeting at 3.52 pm**

In the early months of 2008, one of the key priorities of DETI EU Programmes Branch will be preparing for the commencement of implementation of the new Competitiveness Programme. The next few months will see a focus on rolling out the Programme and engagement in publicity work. As part of this work, DETI will liaise extensively with all our partners, including of course the Councils on LED activities.

Projects to be supported under the new Programme will not be approved until April 2008 at the earliest with drawdown of funding to follow. The first N+2 target for the New Programme is not until December 2009. The following specific issues are addressed:

- **Open Call**

The position is that the public launch of the New Programme will take place early in the New Year, probably through a Ministerial Press Release. Following the launch, applications for the LED Measure will be invited **only** from the 26 Councils. Only the Councils will be able to seek support under this part of the

Programme and it will not be available to other Agencies who work in the local economic development field.

- **Project V Programme Submission**

There will be move away from global allocations to support on an individual project basis. It is an EU requirement under the new Programme that individual projects will have to be identified on the new EU Central Database. One of the key reasons behind this change is to enable the establishment and monitoring of much more specific indicators and outcomes, and the Commission will expect to see financial and non-financial monitoring take place at individual project level. The thematic programme approach previously supported through BSP will not be the basis for allocating funding in the future, although it is expected that project applications submitted will fit within a thematic programme context at Council level. Councils can of course submit multiple applications for projects to DETI. Preference will be given to those projects where there is Regional Co-operation and where there are significant outputs. All projects under this Measure will have to be Lisbon compliant.

- **Expenditure Profile.**

It will be DETI's responsibility to ensure that there is sufficient expenditure to meet the first N+2 target date. They also have to ensure that there is a balance between Capital and Resource expenditure to meet our own PE Requirements. Councils will need to demonstrate in their applications to the Department that expenditure can be achieved within the timeframe stated. This is a "Rolling Programme" and expenditure which the Department will commit to by way of Letter of Offer will have to be achieved by Council(s) within the defined timeframe for both the first N+2 target plus successor N+2 targets up to the end of the Programme. If monies aren't being drawn down as anticipated these will be re-allocated to other projects, which can deliver the outputs, we desire within the eligible timeframe.

- **Lisbon Agenda Percentage.**

It is confirmed that, contrary to previous advice, 100% of the LED element of the Competitiveness Programme will have to be Lisbon compliant.

- **Retrospective Approvals.**

It is hoped to have systems and selection panels in place over the next few months with a view towards first project approval in April 2008. The previous branding associated with supported projects will have no bearing in determining either eligibility or success in attracting funding. However supported projects which have already commenced will, once EU funding has been approved, have to meet all EU compliance conditions, which include procurement and publicity.

- **Salary Costs.**

DETI wrote on 19 January 2007 to all Chief Executives to advise that programme management costs would be ineligible under the New Programme unless they could be directly linked to a specific admissible activity. The programme, on this basis, has now been adopted by the Commission. Salaries can be supported only in the context of achieving specific project objectives.

- **Legacy of BSP.**

DETI have commissioned an independent evaluation of the BSP LED Programme and this should be completed by February 2008. Its focus will be to look at the outputs against targets, to see what worked well and what didn't in all 26 District Council areas.

* **Councillor Robinson left the meeting at 3.55 pm.**

190.7 NORTH EAST PARTNERSHIP (NEP)

NEP has produced a status update on 2nd tier projects currently being worked up for inclusion in NEP Multi-annual plan, a copy of which was circulated together with a revised budget profile and SEUPB governance guidance. Members were invited to consider the project information and to contact the Head of Corporate & Development Services if there are items of interest.

190.8 BUILDING CREATIVE LOCAL ECONOMY – STUDY TOUR TO MAINE USA, APRIL 2008

Members' attention is drawn to this event, organized by PSM Consulting, Coleraine. In recent years the state of Maine, with many natural, cultural and economic similarities to NI has implemented a state-wide initiative to develop its creative economy by utilizing and integrating many of its existing key strengths in arts, crafts, tourism, technology and design etc. The success to date has been striking, with job creation figures rising impressively. Not all best practice models from USA are readily transferable but Maine, with a population of just over 1.3M and a predominantly rural and coastal geography, is a good fit for NI. The week-long study tour runs from 5-12 April.

190.9 SISTER CITIES ANNUAL CONFERENCE

The 2008 conference will be held in Kansas City 16-19 July 2008.

Councillor Finlay, who attended the conference in 2007, advised members that in 2009, it is the intention of the organization to host their annual conference in Belfast. In advance of this, Northern Ireland is required to host a reception on Friday 18th July at the 2008 conference being held in Kansas. Tourism Ireland will be funding the greater part of the budget that will be required to cater for 700

delegates and Council and other invited Councils are requested to meet any shortfall in funding of up to £1,000. It is **RECOMMENDED** that Council undertake to contribute an amount of up to £1,000 towards the event.

* **Councillor Cavlan left the meeting at 4.00 pm.**

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

to recommend that a contribution of up to £1,000 be made available towards the cost of the reception at the 2008 Inter Cities International Conference in Kansas.

Councillor Finlay expressed the view that a budget be considered by Committee to secure a stand at the conference in 2009 with the aim of promoting tourism on the Antrim Coast.

It was **AGREED:**

that this matter be placed on the agenda for the next meeting.

190.10 NORTHERN REGIONAL COLLEGE

An approach has been made to Council by Northern Regional College requesting to make a presentation to the Development Committee to outline its future plans. The College believes that this will provide an opportunity to strengthen its links with, and build on its existing relationship with Council.

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

to recommend that representatives from Northern Regional College be invited to give a presentation to Committee on its future plans.

190.11 INTERNATIONAL LINKS

Various sporting visits have taken place during 2007 between Ballymoney and Douglas, Isle of Man. The Twinning Association plans to host a reciprocal visit in March when it is expected that the Mayor of Douglas and one other representative will be in attendance. It is **RECOMMENDED**, that Council meet the cost of accommodation for these visiting dignitaries, in line with previous protocol.

It was proposed by Councillor Finlay, seconded by Councillor McCamphill

to recommend that Council meet the cost of accommodation for the Mayor of Douglas and one other representative during their reciprocal visit in March 2008.

Alderman Simpson expressed the view that such visits should incorporate other cultural as well as sporting events.

At the request of Councillor Finlay, the Head of Corporate & Development Services agreed to ascertain whether a reciprocal is due to be scheduled for representatives from Vanves in France.

190.12 NORTH ANTRIM COMMUNITY NETWORK – CONTRIBUTION

Application for funding for 2007/08 was tabled. The matter will be placed on Committee's next agenda.

190.13 RURAL DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL – COMMUNITY SUPPORT GRANTS

Schedule of Applications, including one by Derrykeighan Community Association, noted.

This being all the business, the meeting closed at 4.12 pm.