

BALLYMONEY BOROUGH COUNCIL**Development Committee Meeting No 194 - 23rd May 2008****Table of Contents**

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**BALLYMONEY BOROUGH COUNCIL
DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE**

Minutes of Meeting No. 194 held in the Borough Offices, Riada House, on Friday 23rd May 2008 at 3.25 pm.

In the Chair Councillor I Stevenson

Members

Aldermen
C Cousley
H Connolly
F Campbell

Councillors
J Finlay (Mayor)
M McCamphill
T McKeown
A Patterson
E Robinson

In Attendance Chief Executive
Head of Corporate & Development Services
Committee Clerk

194.1 PRESENTATION – Northern Regional College

The Chair explained that due to the date change of the meeting, the presentation had been deferred and will be re-scheduled.

194.2 MINUTES – Meeting No. 193 – 21st April 2008

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

that the minutes of committee meeting, No. 193, on 21st April 2008, as circulated, were confirmed as a correct record.

European Programme Addendum

Attached as Appendix A, for completeness of record, is addendum to Committee's last meeting, adopted by Council at its meeting on 6th May.

194.3 LED COMPETITIVENESS PROGRAMME (DETI)

DETI has now issued details of the programme and invited stage 1 applications. Stage 2 applications are to follow shortly with guidance on how to present

information. This is a competitive process and DETI are looking for projects which will make a significant contribution to the region. A selection criteria has been approved by the monitoring committee and projects must achieve a minimum of 130 out of 200 (65%). The matter is receiving active consideration and following consultation with stakeholders with regard to projects a recommendation will be brought to committee.

Notice has been received recently of a meeting to brief officers on this programme. There will be differences in the process from the last programme and bids will be on a competitive basis. Further information with recommendations will be brought to a future meeting.

194.4 MINERAL PROSPECTING LICENCES

Correspondence, in response to Council's representations, has been received from DETI. It is pointed out that the 1969 Mineral Development Act (NI) covers all minerals except precious minerals and common substances including crushed rock, sand, gravel and brick clays, but excluding lignite. Also the provisions relating to prospecting for minerals are separate and distinct from those relating to the development of minerals. The legislation and the licensing process and the requirement for environmental impact assessment reflect the fact that there is no automatic continuity between prospecting and development work. DETI expect an applicant to provide rationale for the proposed prospecting showing an understanding of the existing geological information and to submit a phased costed work programme. Cllr Storey, MLA, has also provided for Committee's information a copy of correspondence received from Mr Nigel Dodds from DETI. It was noted that the Minister, last October renewed the moratorium on lignite prospecting licences for a further three years and extended its coverage to all of Northern Ireland. Mineral Prospecting Licences issued by the Department excludes lignite. His Department will strongly encourage Lonmin to communicate clearly and regularly with the Councils during the licence period.

Councillor Finlay welcomed the letter and the news that lignite is excluded from the licences. Alderman Connolly and other members agreed.

194.5 NATURAL GAS DEVELOPMENT

Firmus Energy has confirmed that their prices will remain unchanged until at least January 2009. The company is bringing natural gas to 10 towns outside Belfast, including Ballymoney.

Members welcomed this news.

194.6 PROJECT UPDATE

All projects have been completed.

194.7 NORTHERN CORRIDORS RAILWAY DEVELOPMENT

Councillor McCamphill placed before the meeting correspondence to Mr Declan O'Loan MLA from the DRD Minister regarding Dunloy Halt and the petition for its reinstatement.

The Head of Corporate and Development Services read the response from Mr Conor Murphy MP, MLA, Minister for Regional Development. The Minister explained that, while recognising the support of the local community for a new halt at Dunloy, there are a number of factors which need to be taken into account in assessing the case for the construction of a new halt on any part of the network. These include the number of passengers likely to use the halt on a daily basis, the proximity of other stations, the availability of funding and the impact on journey times.

The statement of support which was the subject of the petition falls some way short of constituting evidence to justify provision of a new halt. Departmental officials have now looked at these matters in more detail. Independent research suggests that in order to justify provision of a halt there should be 2,550 people living within 800metres of the site with 81 daily passengers. According to the 2001 census Dunloy's total population at that time was 1,071. The population of nearby Cullybackey was recorded as 2649. There are currently some 159 passengers who use the Cullybackey halt on a daily basis and, extrapolating across, it is difficult to see how these numbers would point to provision of a further halt at Dunloy.

The case for a halt is further undermined by the fact that the area is serviced by two stops relatively close to Dunloy, one at Ballymoney seven miles to the north and one at Cullybackey, ten miles to the south.

The Minister also pointed out that the rail network has suffered from under-investment over a number of years and it is important to direct scarce financial resources to those parts of the network which are in the poorest condition. In this regard the Department has been able to fund the track life extension work between Ballymena and Ballymoney and to sanction the go ahead of work in preparation for a track relay between Coleraine and Derry.

While appreciating that the analysis will be a disappointment to the community at Dunloy the Minister expressed the hope that people will recognise the rationale for not pursuing the matter further at this point in time. However NIR is planning for a full relay of the line between Coleraine and Ballymena following the work between Coleraine and Derry, and the case for a halt at Dunloy could be reviewed again at that stage.

Councillor Robinson commented that free travel for older people is made difficult when the closest stations to Dunloy are Ballymoney 7 miles away and Cullybackey 10 miles away. Alderman Connolly agreed and felt that Translink should be encouraging use of the train with passengers being able to join at Dunloy.

Councillor McCamphill questioned the number of residents living in Dunloy stated in the letter and pointed to the population in the rural hinterland of Dunloy and

Cloughmills for whom the halt would be a benefit. He suggested that the Minister be asked to receive an all party delegation on this matter when further data is gathered to support the case.

Councillor Finlay urged members to consider that the aim is to have a fast train from Londonderry to Belfast, and the more halts, the longer the journey time. There is also need for places where two trains can pass allowing for express trains as well as other slower commuter trains.

The Chief Executive informed members of a North/South Ministerial Council had met to consider upgrade of the entire line with view to including Donegal. The meeting of the Northern Corridor Rail Group to be held next Tuesday at 10.30am in Coleraine would receive a report of this. The next stage is to improve the service with passing opportunities, the purchase of new train sets and the upgrade of signalling. It is hoped there will be an express service and other trains. He suggested that there was need to balance local needs with the argument for the line to be preserved and such matters could be considered by the Railway Group.

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

that the issue of the Dunloy halt be tabled for review at the September meeting of Committee.

194.8 TOWN CENTRE DEVELOPMENT

Councillor Finlay initiated a discussion on measures to redevelop and bring vacant and derelict property into use.

Members noted Council powers to acquire property by agreement or vesting and current initiatives by parties to address such issues and encourage new investment.

This being all the business the meeting closed at 3.55pm

Appendices attached:

Appendix A – European Programme Addendum

APPENDIX A

European Programme Addendum

DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE ADDENDUM – 1/5/08

1. Rural Development Programme

Following consideration of options for delivery structures and management for the Rural Development Programme in the North East Ballymena have confirmed their lead Council role. As members know each of the Council's in the north east cluster nominated two elected members to serve on the LAG. This process is now complete and unfortunately the political make-up of the elected members does not meet criteria set down by DARD for composition of the LAG. The assistance of the political parties is being sought to address the political imbalance prior to submission of the bid.

2. Peace III

Following consideration of options for delivery structures for the Peace III programme Coleraine Borough Council have agreed to take the lead. As members are aware Coleraine have been leading to date in the process and **it is recommended** that Council confirm Coleraine Borough Council as lead council for this programme.

3. North East Partnership / Interreg IV

The 'Tourism and Enterprise' elements of the Partnership 'Multi-Annual Plans' have been considered by the independent steering committee. Circa €8m (£6.4m) allocated to 7 out of the 13 projects tabled under the NEP bid and assessed for SEUPB by KPMG as follows;

Enterprise

- * Absenteesim led by Antrim BC - approved in principle
- * Innovation and Growth led by Udaras - approved in principle
- * Market Towns - led by Newtownabbey BC - approved in principle
- * Contingency Planning - led by Antrim BC - not approved
- * Water Management for SMEs - not approved
- * BIDS (Business Improvement Districts) - led by Ballymena BC - not approved
- * Think Food - led by Coleraine BC - not approved

Tourism

- * Causeway Connections - led by CCAG RTP - approved in principle
- * Off-shore Islands - led by Donegal Co Co - approved in principle
- * Gobbins & Slieve League - led by Imeal Tra - approved in principle
- * National Cycle Network - Dumfries to Dundalk - approved in principle
- * Native Birds as tourism resource - led by RSBP - not approved
- * Motorcycle Tourism - led by Imeal Tra - not approved

The final figures for individual projects has yet to be determined.

The 'approved in principle' projects will now be submitted to the responsible department in Northern Ireland - in this case DETI.

The outcome of the third theme projects - Public Sector Collaboration - will not be known

until late June 2008. There are 4 projects submitted under this theme and two further projects being worked up.