

BALLYMONEY BOROUGH COUNCIL

Development Committee Meeting No 207 – 21st September 2009

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207.3	North East Partnership	<i>Agree Joint Committee structure & commit contribution</i>
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207.14	International Links	<i>Discussed</i>

207.15	Ballymoney Borough Twinning Association	<i>Grant approved</i>
207.16	Social Economy Enterprise Strategy 2009-2010	<i>Draft response approved</i>
207.17	Firmus Energy	<i>Tabled</i>

**BALLYMONEY BOROUGH COUNCIL
DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE**

Minutes of Meeting No 207 held in the Council Chamber, Riada House, on Monday 21st September 2009 at 4.30pm.

IN THE CHAIR

Councillor J Finlay

PRESENT**Aldermen**

F Campbell, Mayor

H Connolly

C Cousley, MBE, Deputy Mayor

J Simpson

Councillors

R Halliday

M McCamphill

T McKeown

E Robinson

I Stevenson

IN ATTENDANCE**Northern Health & Social Care Trust (Item 2)**

Ms Claire Smith, Senior Human Resources Manager

Ms Maryna Wylie, Senior Human Resources Manager

Chief Executive

Head of Corporate & Development Services

Clerical Assistant

207.1. 1.1 MINUTES OF MEETING NO. 205 – 15TH JUNE 2009**1.2 MINUTES OF MEETING NO. 206 – 22ND JUNE 2009**

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

that the minutes of Committee meeting, No. 205 on 15th June 2009 and minutes of Committee meeting, No. 206 on 22nd June 2009, as circulated, be confirmed as a correct record.

207.2 PRESENTATION – NORTHERN HEALTH & SOCIAL CARE TRUST

A presentation was given by Maryna Wylie and Claire Smith, Senior Human Resources Managers, Northern Health and Social Care Trust (NHSCT) on the current position of NHSCT jobs within Ballymoney.

The presentation included their job role, details of NHSCT facilities within the locality and numbers currently employed.

Concerns have been raised regarding public sector jobs within the Borough and desire expressed by members for information to Council on changes. Responses were given to Councillors' questions. Replies to any matters not relating to Human Resources will be sent to Head of Corporate and Development Services.

The Chair thanked Ms Wylie and Ms Smith for the presentation and reiterated members' views that jobs should be kept in Ballymoney.

The presentation finished at 4.46pm

207.3 NORTH EAST PARTNERSHIP

- [a] Establishment of Statutory Joint Committee and
- [b] Council contribution
- [c] Programme Update

The following motion is being presented to the eight NEP member councils seeking agreement to:

[a] Establishment of Joint Committee

Establish a Statutory Joint Committee underpinned by Body Corporate legislation and consolidated by a legally binding Partnership Agreement in order that the NEP can perform its new role under INTERREG IVA.

1. *This is as per the recommendation obtained from KPMG Management Consultants and L'Estrange and Brett Solicitors*

[b] Council Contribution

Collectively contribute up to £100,000 match funding over a five-year financial period April 2009 to March 2014 toward the project management and development role that the NEP will play. Seek initial NEP member council commitment of £2,500 each per year for two-year period 2009/10 and 2010/11 to be reviewed thereafter as part of the new RPA arrangements. *This represents a 50% decrease from the annual £5,000 NEP council match funding sought for the previous financial year.*

Approval of these requests will allow the North East Partnership to fully undertake the management function of circa £10m INTERREG IVA funding for approved projects over the period 2009-2013. The successful implementation of these projects will have a positive impact across the North East and also the relevant project partners regions in Western Scotland and the Border Counties of Ireland.

IT WAS RECOMMENDED that Council agree to the establishment of Joint Committee as set out above and commit to a contribution of £2,500 per annum to North East Partnership in 2009/10 and 2010/11.

In response to Councillor Robinson, the Head of Corporate and Development Services confirmed provision has been made within the budget.

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

that Council agree to the establishment of Joint Committee as set out above and commit to a contribution of £2,500 per annum to North East Partnership in 2009/10 and 2010/11.

[c] Programme Update

A copy of updated Multi-annual plan status at July 2009 was circulated. In addition to the Multi-Annual Plan projects Council has signed up to Biodiversity Project Officer and Inland Waterways Project (River Bann). The area would also benefit from the STEM Project (science, technology, engineering and maths) (NEELB and Monaghan) and Kite (Enterprise) – (NRC, Sligo and Ayr).

Councillor Robinson welcomed the inclusion of STEM project.

207.4 RURAL DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME

- [a] Contract
- [b] Programme Launch
- [c] Special Calls
- [d] Project proposals – expressions of interest

[a] Contract

Ballymena Borough Council at present is acting as Administrative Council with respect to the delivery of the Rural Development Programme for the North East area cluster of Councils which also includes Ballymoney, Coleraine, Larne and Moyle.

The Lead Councils of the seven clusters established across Northern Ireland engaged with DARD regarding the legal structures and agreements necessary to ensure appropriate governance of the programme. Omagh District Council (Chief Executive)

and Walker, McDonald Solicitors led the negotiations with DARD and their Solicitors on behalf of the seven clusters across Northern Ireland.

Drafting of the contract and 6 annexes for the Rural Development Programme is now complete and the main contract has been agreed with DARD. The core content of the annexes have been agreed between the administrative councils to ensure continuity of approach across Northern Ireland but does allow for flexibility between the various clusters. The annexes are detailed below:

Annex 1	Agreement between Council's forming a Joint Committee
Annex 2	Joint Committee Service Level Agreement with the Administrative Council
Annex 3	Axis 3 and 4 Measure Sheets
Annex 4	Joint Council Committee and Local Action Group Agreement
Annex 5	Local Rural Development Strategy
Annex 5b	Implementation Plan
Annex 6	Axis 3 and 4 Operating Rules

Within the main contract it has been agreed that the Local Action Group should be established as either a Company Limited by Guarantee or a Limited Liability Partnership. At its meeting of 2 September 2009 the North East Local Action Group agreed to establish a Company Limited by Guarantee.

Council at its meeting on 7th September 2009 agreed to confirm that Ballymena Borough Council act as Administrative Council for the North East Cluster Rural Development Programme; sign Annex 1 – Agreement between Councils forming a Joint Committee and Annex 2 – Service Level Agreement between the Joint Committee and Administrative Council (Ballymena BC)

[b] Programme Launch

The programme was formally launched at The Braid on 1 May 2009 and at this stage formal calls for applications under Measure 3.1: Diversification into Non-agricultural Activities and 3.2: Business Creation and Development were made. A call for applications under Measures 3.3: Encouragement of Tourism Activities, 3.4: Basic Services for the Economy and Rural Population and Measure 3.6: Conservation and Upgrading the Rural Heritage was launched on 1 September 2009 in Portballintrae. It is anticipated Measure 3.5: Village Renewal and Development will be launched January/February 2010.

[c] Special Calls (cluster wide programmes)

Special Calls are to issue for the following programmes, which it is intended to be in place by end of 2009 to achieve maximum effect.

Actions by social economy organizations can be funded 75% + 20% "in kind", but must include at least 5% cash matched funds. Private applicants will be funded at 50%.

1. Out of state marketing for Rural Tourism (£75,000 over 3-4 years)
2. Increase knowledge of rural tourism activities £75,000 over 3 years
3. Regional Food tourism initiative (200,000 over 4 years)
4. Rural Transport Initiative (£100,000 over 3-4 years)
5. Rural Research Report (£30,000 – one off document which would inform decision making in community sector)
6. Village renewal/development officer (initially £50,000 p.a.)
7. Access to Built & Natural Heritage (250,000 over 4-5 years)

Councils could bid for programmes 2, 3, 5 & 6.

The Head of Corporate and Development Services informed members of likely interested parties and outlined the programmes. It was confirmed that there was provision within the budget to fund participation in programmes.

IT IS RECOMMENDED that Council bid (as Lead Council) for programme 2, with all Councils in the partnership participating, at a cost of £500 p.a. each, and that Council participate in programmes 3 5 & 6 under bids being led by Coleraine, Larne and Moyle Councils respectively, with contribution of £500 p.a. (programme 3 & 5) and £300 p.a. for the research report.

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

to recommend that Council bid (as Lead Council) for programme 2, with all Councils in the partnership participating, at a cost of £500 p.a. each, and that Council participate in programmes 3 5 & 6 under bids being led by Coleraine, Larne and Moyle Councils respectively, with contribution of £500 p.a. (programme 3 & 5) and £300 p.a. for the research report.

The Head of Corporate and Development Services confirmed that the contract regarding Joint Committee is currently being processed and calls have opened.

[d] Programme Proposals – Expressions of Interest

IT IS RECOMMENDED that expressions of interest and bids for funding be submitted by Council for the following programmes, match funded from the current Council budget allocation.

- Biker Tourism
- BunnyFest (at Drumaheglis)
- Ballymoney Byways – downloadable tourism product guide
- Celebrating Culture of Rural People (Life and Times of George Shields – Playwright)

The Head of Corporate and Development Services outlined the above programmes, which will address themes in the Business Plan. Estimated costs will be reported to Committee in due course. Discussions on above programmes followed.

* **Councillor McKeown left the meeting at 5.11pm.**

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

to recommend that that expressions of interest and bids for funding be submitted by Council to the Rural Development Partnership for the following programmes, match funded from the current council budget allocation and including contributions in kind

- ***Biker Tourism***
- ***BunnyFest (at Drumaheglis)***
- ***Ballymoney Byways – downloadable tourism product guide***
- ***Celebrating Culture of Rural People (Life and Times of George Shields – Playwright)***

207.5 PEACE III

[a] Contract

[b] Programme update

[a] Contract – Amendment

Some minor changes to section 4.3.3. and 4.3.6 of the Partnership Agreement were requested by a member council and these were accepted and agreed by the Partnership and the Joint Committee on 9th September. These have been examined and accepted by Councils Officers.

IT IS RECOMMENDED: that Committee endorse the revision to the Partnership agreement.

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

to recommend that Committee endorse the revision to the Partnership agreement as set out at [a] above

[b] Programme Update

Information sessions have been arranged during September/October in the various council areas to which all community groups in the region have been invited with regard to the “Lets Talk” programme, 5.a. The Ballymoney event will be held in Ballymoney Community Resource Centre on 22nd September 10.00 a.m. – 12.00 noon.

207.6 DEVELOPMENT PLAN – PROGRAMME OF WORK

A number of projects have been developed to address the strategic themes in the business plan (enterprise, tourism, town centre, community planning, ICT). A number have already been approved by Council, while others are at the development stage. A number the projects are designed for match funding by EU programmes. A number of these have been detailed in the funding programme reports.

Application for the SME business development programme under the competitiveness programme has been revised following meeting with the funder. It was reported that total estimated cost was £48,000, covering participation by all Councils in RPA cluster (led by Ballymoney) and grant sought was 50%.

A town centre marketing and development plan is being advanced in association with the Town Centre Group and Chamber of Commerce, to be funded from existing budget, with contributions from the trade.

Discussions followed on various events in other Council areas aimed at attracting visitors and spend to the town. The Head of Corporate and Development Services advised that events were part of the marketing plan and gave examples of working with other organisations promoting events to gain economic benefits for town's shopping and hospitality sectors. Further discussions ensued on encouraging visitors to town centre and the officer advised that suggestions would be taken on board as part of the development of town marketing and development plan being developed.

* **Alderman Connolly left the meeting during discussions at 5.15pm.**

DECLARATION OF INTEREST

Chief Executive and Alderman Simpson declared an interest in item 207.6 as Board Members of Acorn Business Centre.

* **Chief Executive and Alderman Simpson left the meeting at 5.21pm.**

Following a recent meeting with Development staff and staff at Acorn Business Centre to share information on business development proposals and consider collaborative working a further report will be presented in due course.

IT IS RECOMMENDED that Council, in collaboration with Acorn, deliver a further phase of the successful business club, with a contribution of £2,000.

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

to recommend that that Council, in collaboration with Acorn, deliver a further phase of the successful business club, with a contribution of £2,000.

An action plan of projects Council is delivering/participating in will be produced for presentation in due course.

* **Chief Executive rejoined the meeting at 5.25pm**

207.7 RURAL CHALLENGE PROGRAMME (DARD)

DARD have announced a new programme and funding opportunities – Rural Challenge Programme 2009 - £400,000. The programme invites community/voluntary groups to identify a local need and propose an initiative that will address poverty and social exclusion within their rural community. The programme was developed as a direct response to issues identified in the Rural Anti Poverty & Social Exclusion Framework. Grant assistance, up to a max of £5,000, will be made available to 80 groups. Projects must focus on one of the 8 target groups identified – children & young people, lone parents, unemployed, disabled, carers, elderly, ethnic minorities and low paid workers.

207.8 NORTH ANTRIM BUSINESS AWARDS

An application for funding up to £2,200 to cover the budgeted shortfall for this event has been requested. Discussions were held with Moyle District Council who were considering this application in the same amount. **IT IS RECOMMENDED** that Council, in collaboration with Moyle District Council, contribute up to £2,200 to cover any shortfall, on the basis of the same commitment for Moyle District Council.

Head of Corporate and Development Services responded to members' questions regarding North Antrim Business Awards.

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

to recommend that Council, in collaboration with Moyle District Council, contribute up to £2,200 to cover any shortfall, on the basis of the same commitment for Moyle District Council.

207.9 BALLYMONEY ENVIRONMENTAL IMPROVEMENT PROGRAMME

Regular communications are issuing to the trade in connection with the implementation of the scheme. Work on the East side of Main Street is now complete and work has commenced on the West side to be completed over the next three weeks, including

works in the diamond area, prior to moving to Seymour Street. Council has signed off the memorandum of understanding (MOU) between DSD, DRD and Council. The project liaison group and project implementation team will meet over the period of the project and Council has committed to monitoring and reporting as required under the MOU.

207.10 DISPOSAL OF LAND

Officers are currently looking at various parcels of land in Council ownership, which may be disposed of. An approach has been made by an adjoining landowner in Dervock and options relating to its disposal are being evaluated. A report on various land issues will be presented as soon as the exploratory work and necessary research is complete.

207.11 COUNCIL LAND AT CASTLECROFT SQUARE BALLYMONEY

Committee received an update on occupation of Council land and proposals for development of Council's site.

Council has on 20th August 2009 received planning permission for construction of 2 shop units and 4 apartments over, creation of pedestrian link between Main Street and Castlecroft car park. Options for the development of the site are now being developed and will be appraised for committee's consideration. In this connection estimates on development costs and rental and capital values are being secured.

* **Alderman Cousley left the meeting at 5.36pm**

207.12 LINENHALL STREET RE-DEVELOPMENT AREA

Committee was advised on a meeting with the owners of the site and interim proposals to improve the appearance of hoardings.

207.13 BALLYMONEY MUSIC CENTRE

The interest expressed by Ballymoney Regeneration Company in the acquisition and development of this site, on the basis of Council acting as sponsors, has been reviewed and it has been decided that the project will not be pursued at this time. The Department of Finance & Personnel have been advised and also requested to keep Council informed as to disposal of the property.

207.14 INTERNATIONAL LINKS

Council's delegation, including representatives from the Twinning Association, visited Vanves 11-14 September. The programme included Visit of the Michelet high school /

meeting with teachers, boat tour on the Seine River, visit of the Opéra Garnier and / or shopping in the “grands magasins”, official ceremony of the twinning between Rosh Ha' Ayin and Vanves, Forum of the associations in the city, Special twinning stand with tourist information and food degustation, Concert by the Conservatory and associations and a working morning.

A funding application has been developed in line with the Citizens for Europe programme aimed at reinforcing commitment to European integration.

The Chair reported on the Twinning Association visit which was worthwhile and the group were well received. The Chair felt that finance should be made available for visits by the new Mayor and Chief Executive of Douglas. This is to be considered at the next meeting.

Councillor Robinson reported she is the contact point for the new project for 11-16 years olds. Alderman Campbell reiterated the worthwhile visit.

207.15 BALLYMONEY BOROUGH TWINNING ASSOCIATION

The Twinning Association presented its report on work and activities earlier in the year. **IT IS RECOMMENDED** that Council approve grant of £1,000, in accordance with the budget provision.

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

to recommend that Council approve grant of £1,000, in accordance with the budget provision.

207.16 SOCIAL ECONOMY ENTERPRISE STRATEGY 2009-2011

The Department of Enterprise, Trade and Investment has issued a consultation document on the above and comments are invited by 9th October. A draft response to the consultation, prepared by the Development Officer, for committee's consideration, was circulated (Appendix A).

IT IS RECOMMENDED that Council approve the draft response to the consultation document 'Social Economy Enterprise Strategy 2009-2011'.

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

that Council approve the draft response to the consultation document 'Social Economy Enterprise Strategy 2009-2011'.

207.17 FIRMUS ENERGY

Advice from Firmus regarding a cut in natural gas price by 17.7% has been received.

This being all the business, the meeting closed at 5.50pm

Appendices attached

Appendix A: Draft Response to Social Economy Enterprise Strategy 2009-2011

Appendix A

Ballymoney Borough Council's Development Services welcomes the opportunity to comment on this draft strategy, which will take the Social Economy (SE) sector through this period of transition under the Review of Public Administration (RPA).

The Strategy provides a comprehensive framework for the development of the SE sector. It recognises that the original objectives are still current and require more action, and the number of actions developed to meet these objectives are pertinent.

However, there are a number of other considerations that do not appear to have been sufficiently addressed; these are as follows:

1. Representation

The Social Economy Network is supposed to be representative of the sector and, admittedly, it could be argued that the majority of the organisations on its board are social enterprises. However, most of the board (as listed in Annex A) seems to consist of Belfast biased or Social Economy support organisations rather than individual social entrepreneurial businesses.

There is no representation of social enterprises that are rural and/or west of the River Bann, yet reference is made to the substantial membership from rural entrepreneurs (page 27). This would strengthen the rationale for the need for rural areas to be represented on the board of Social Economy Network (SEN). It could be argued that the umbrella organisations cover these areas, but this is rather unsatisfactory.

Additionally, the weighting towards support or umbrella organisations leads to a concern that any need identified or support provided would be biased in relation to what the support organisations could offer. It appears that there is little direct input at board/strategic level from the social economy enterprises that SEN is supposed to represent.

To address this matter, there should be equal representation from individual social enterprises (that do not provide support to the sector itself) taken from across the province to ensure that the SEN board is truly representative.

2. The Current RPA Transition Period

Although it refers to the local government reform programme (RPA) on page 14, the Strategy makes a limited attempt to take advantage of the opportunity to ensure the effect of the transition in 2011 on the SE sector is minimised.

The Social Entrepreneurship Programme will transfer to the new district councils, which will come into effect in May 2011, only 17 months from the date that the consultation for this strategy closes. Yet, within the 61 action points contained within the 6 actions, specific reference to local authorities only features twice.

This perceived exclusion of the future deliverers of the Social Entrepreneurship Programme (SEP) from the current strategy could be addressed by incorporating the elements listed below into the strategy. This would ensure a smoother transition of the SEP from Invest NI to the local authorities, as relationships would have already been established with the key stakeholders in this sector prior to the transition.

- Enable input to policy by local authorities through a relevant forum (Action 1.1, DSD: 2nd point). This could be through the inclusion of a local authority representative on the Social Economy Policy Group.
- Include local authorities as recipients for any policy, developmental or monitoring information. (Action 1.1 - DSD: 3rd point; Action 1.2 - Invest NI: 1st point, etc.).
- Include local authorities in the development of any ongoing or new initiatives to be incorporated into the SEP, i.e. *'in conjunction with local authorities'* (Action 2.1 – Invest NI)
- Include for local authorities awareness-raising, best practice, lessons learned from the current SEP programme deliverer's perspective, i.e. Invest NI, as well as from the sector's perspective.

It is vital that this is included in the strategy to ensure that these actions for the inclusion of local authorities are also incorporated into the evaluation of the strategy in 2010/2011.

3. 'Branding' the Social Economy Sector

The social economy sector has a unique element that sets it apart from the rest of the business sector. By including the promotion of this sector within the Invest NI 'Go For It' promotional campaign (Action 1.1 – Invest NI), the opportunity to highlight this competitive advantage could be lost.

Devising a unique but simple brand for the sector, such as adding 'A Social Economy Enterprise' (logo optional) to all of the sector's advertising campaigns, whether collective or individual, would heighten the profile of the sector alongside the profile of the individual organisation in their area. Highlighting that these enterprises make a unique contribution to society would be particularly beneficial at a time when the general population's awareness of social issues is heightened.

4. Flexible Learning

In relation to Action 2.2 'Building the business skills of SEEs, it is believed that the term flexible should be included in the strategy to ensure that this is incorporated into any new, innovative or existing programmes.

Most businesses and their managers, especially during the establishment phase, have many demands on their time and resources. Courses and qualifications should therefore be accessible in terms of location and financing and flexible in approaches to learning.

Furthermore, to ensure that rural areas are not neglected in the provision to develop professionally as a social entrepreneur, there should be an element of targeted outreach included in the strategy. At the moment, the arrangements for developing professionally as a social entrepreneur appear to be sited solely within urban areas, i.e. through the School for Social Entrepreneurs in Ireland, which is based in Belfast (and whose online promotions relate solely to Belfast social entrepreneurs), or the Universities, which are all based in urban areas.

Admittedly, there is reference to assistance through the Rural Development Programme but why should rural enterprises have to rely on specialist support and be debarred from mainstream provision merely because of location. In this day of modern technology, more innovative methods of applying distance learning to a collective must be considered.