

BALLYMONEY BOROUGH COUNCIL**Development Committee Meeting No 216 – 21st June 2010****Table of Contents**

216.1	Minutes – Meeting No 215 – 17 th May 2010	<i>Adopted</i>
216.2	Proposal for Re-Development of 25 Castle Street, Ballymoney – Correspondence concerning right of access	<i>Agree in principle and further report. Invite proposals to provide a valuation service.</i>
216.3	Development Opportunities 3.1 Castlecroft Square	<i>Extend permission to 30th June 2010. Development options deferred</i>
	3.2 Other Council Land - Disposal	
216.4	Development of International Links	<i>Deferred and further report</i>
216.5	Economic Development Plan 2010-2011	<i>Noted</i>
216.6	Town Centre Regeneration Initiatives	<i>Noted</i>
216.7	Northern Regional College Improvement Plan	<i>Consultation arrangements noted</i>
216.8	Project Updates 8.1 Interreg Project 8.2 Frosses Trees Survey	<i>Noted</i>
216.9	Key Economic Statistics, June 2010	<i>Noted</i>
216.10	Visitor Information Plan for NI – NITB Consultation	<i>Comments agreed</i>
216.11	Moy Park Expansion	<i>Noted</i>
216.12	Twinning Visit	<i>Noted</i>

**BALLYMONEY BOROUGH COUNCIL
DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE**

Minutes of Meeting No. 216 held in the Council Chamber, Riada House, on Monday 21st June 2010 at 3.15 p.m.

IN THE CHAIR: Councillor J Finlay (Chair)

PRESENT:

Aldermen:
F Campbell (Mayor)
H Connolly
J Simpson

Councillors:
A Cavlan
R Halliday
B Kennedy
M McCamphill
T McKeown
A Patterson
I Stevenson

APOLOGIES:

Aldermen:
C Cousley (Deputy Mayor)

Councillors:
E Robinson

IN ATTENDANCE: Chief Executive
Director of Borough Services (Item 216.2)
Head of Corporate & Development Services
Committee Clerk

216.1 MINUTES - Meeting No 215 – 17th May 2010

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

that the minutes of meeting No. 215 on 17th May 2010, circulated, be confirmed as a correct record.

**216.2 PROPOSAL FOR RE-DEVELOPMENT OF 25 CASTLE STREET, BALLYMONEY
– CORRESPONDENCE CONCERNING RIGHT OF ACCESS**

The Director of Borough Services was in attendance to present this item.

A request has been received on behalf of McIntyre Properties. Council has been asked that it permit the removal of a facing wall and planters, etc., adjoining 25 Castle Street, Ballymoney and thereby allow multiple access to the proposed four storey mixed use development which would then front directly onto Castle Street near its junction with Main Street. The proposed development comprises four commercial units and six dwellings – a hot food take-away and two other commercial units on the ground floor, a restaurant on the first floor, together with three dwellings on each of the next two floors.

In support of the proposal, the following points are made by the developer's agent –

- “Regenerates 25 Castle Street as this shop unit was empty for over a year without looking Council grants for regeneration.
- Creates much needed jobs in Ballymoney one of the highest unemployment ratios in Northern Ireland.
- Improves the look of Ballymoney as you enter and leave by Castle Street.
- Saves Council funds maintaining flower beds and cleaning litter in hedges.
- Brings much needed funds to Council through rates of new business.
- Hides the rear of rough premises on Main Street cleaning up the area.
- Removes areas where rats and mice can nest behind walls and hedges.
- Will enhance the look when visitors come to the memorials opposite.
- The restaurant will bring and keep people in the evenings adding to town centre living.
- Provides apartments for town centre living without going through the living over the shops initiative that I believe is still running in Ballymoney at the moment (LOTS)”.

It is considered that Council ought to deal with the request made in the same way it has dealt with similar requests previously regarding the disposal of an asset. The developer and his agent have been made aware of this.

Director of Borough Services responded to members' questions on the location and ownership of the land, other agencies involved, the planning application process and the process involved and extent of current information available.

* **Councillor Cavlan and Councillor Kennedy joined the meeting at 3.16pm during discussions.**

IT IS RECOMMENDED that Council agrees to disposal of the land in principle and that a further report be brought when the most appropriate means of obtaining best value has been determined.

The Chief Executive and Director of Borough Services responded to members' questions and the Director advised that the planning application for the proposed development had been considered at a previous Consultation committee and had been in the public domain for some time. He confirmed that if Council does not agree in principle to dispose of the lands then the file would be closed.

It was proposed by Councillor Stevenson, seconded by Councillor Cavlan:

to recommend that Council agrees to disposal of the land in principle and that a further report be brought to committee when the most appropriate means of obtaining best value has been determined.

- * **Councillor Kennedy left the meeting at 3.38pm and rejoined at 3.39pm.**

Following further discussion the Chair put the motion to the vote with 5 members voting in favour and 2 voting against.

The Chair declared the motion passed.

Alderman Simpson advised that he abstained from voting as he wished to study the plans, file and background of the proposed development. The Chair advised that full details could be inspected at Planning Service Office under their open file process.

- * **Director of Borough Services left the meeting at 3.40pm.**

The Head of Corporate and Development Services pointed to the need to procure the services of a valuer for this and other land disposal issues and **FURTHER RECOMMENDED** that Council invites applications to provide valuation services to Council, as and when required. It was confirmed that there was no cost to Council in progressing procurement for these services for which a specification would be drawn up.

As regards disposal of land the principle had been established that where Council accedes to requests to dispose of lands such disposal, should the land not placed on the open market, would be progressed on the basis of the applicant meeting all Council's costs.

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

that Council invites applications to provide a valuation service for any future sale of Council property, as and when required, provided there is no initial expense to the Council.

216.3 DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES

3.1 CASTLECROFT SQUARE

- * **Councillor McKeown left the meeting at 3.52pm.**

The Chief Executive updated members on correspondence between Council's Solicitor and the Solicitor representing the adjoining developer regarding the removal of scaffolding from Council lands at Castlecroft Square, advising that it is planned that plastering and painting to the building would be completed after 8 days.

IT IS RECOMMENDED that Council extends the permission to allow scaffolding on Council land at Castlecroft Square to 30th June 2010.

It was proposed by Councillor Kennedy, seconded by Councillor Halliday and **AGREED:**

to recommend that Council extends the permission to allow the adjoining developer's scaffolding on Council land at Castlecroft Square to remain until 30th June 2010.

The Chief Executive referred to the various options for the development of Castlecroft Square, namely develop the site and rent / lease, develop the site and sell, dispose of the site via a Development Brief and dispose of the site with covenant(s), considered at a previous committee meeting.

During discussion members considered the present use, benefits to be derived from development, current economic climate and market conditions, current maintenance and licence costs.

The Chief Executive that advised Castlecroft Square is the most valuable asset of Council which is not used for delivering a service. Other assets identified need to be considered for disposal.

It was proposed by Councillor McCamphill, seconded by Councillor Kennedy:

to recommend that the matter be deferred until committee's meeting in June 2011.

Following discussion the Chair put the motion to the vote with 6 members voting in favour and 1 voting against.

The Chair declared the motion passed.

* **Councillor Cavlan left the meeting at 4.11pm.**

3.2 OTHER COUNCIL LANDS - DISPOSAL

It was reported that an application by an adjoining landowner to purchase a portion of Council lands in Dervock village, which Council had on the committee's recommendation in December 2009 agreed with preconditions, was now being further progressed, the applicant having indicated his wish to proceed.

Work was continuing on examination of various other parcels of land in Council ownership, which may be disposed and a further report would be made to committee in due course.

216.4 INTERNATIONAL LINKS

A request has been received on behalf of the Alderman of Culture & tourism in VVV Heuvelland. The organisation is starting to plan preparations to commemorate the First World War, which left their region marked with enduring scars. One of Heuvelland's most famous personalities during this Great War is

Private John Meeke, who helped the wounded Major William during the Battle of Messines Ridge. Private Meeke is buried in Derrykeighan Graveyard and because of the link with Ballymoney Heuvelland and because of this significant link Heuvelland have expressed interest in establishing a twinning link with Ballymoney. Initial correspondence has been entered into with Heuvelland to confirm the historic links and they have been advised that their request will be put to the Development Committee for consideration.

Members considered the potential for development of this link, reasons for developing links and financial impact given that there was currently no budget provision for research and development of new links. The Chief Executive advised that the Local Authority concerned was located on the French border.

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

that the matter be deferred to enable further information to be obtained and a report brought back to committee.

216.5 ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT PLAN 2010-2011

The Economic Development Plan 2010-2011 was noted, Committee having approved a two year plan in 2009 for 2009-11.

216.6 TOWN CENTRE REGENERATION INITIATIVES

Through the Townscape Heritage Programme, the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) grants of between £500k and £2M are being offered for projects that help communities to regenerate designated conservation areas. The deadline for submission of bids for round one is 30th November. The Development Unit intends to be represented at an information seminar to obtain further information and explore the opportunities offered. A further report will be made to committee.

A consultation with town businesses on regeneration, marketing and events initiatives is to be held to obtain discuss issues to be taken account of in any development processes being pursued.

* **Councillor Patterson left the meeting at 4.19pm during item 216.5.**

216.7 NORTHERN REGIONAL COLLEGE IMPROVEMENT PLAN

Consultation is underway with interested parties with a view to a round table meeting later this month to assist in the formulation of a draft response to the consultation on this plan.

The Public Service Union, NIPSA are available to talk to Council regarding the impact the closure of Ballymoney campus would have on the town. It was agreed take up the offer to discuss the matter with NIPSA.

216.8 PROJECT UPDATES

8.1 INTERREG PROJECT

It was reported that following Council's representations to SEUPB regarding delay in the assessment and implementation of projects under the programme the Chief Executive of SEUPB, Pat Colgan and his colleague Howard Keery had attended the NEP meeting on 26th May to update members on current projects and discuss related issues.

8.2 FROSSES TREES SURVEY

A Roads Service survey had been carried out and concluded that seven trees should be felled due to their condition and the potential risk to drivers. Other identified trees should be pruned. Work commenced at the beginning of June.

216.9 KEY ECONOMIC STATISTICS, JUNE 2010

Copy of key economic statistics, June 2010, circulated.

216.10 VISITOR INFORMATION PLAN FOR NI – NITB CONSULTATION

During September 2009 the Northern Ireland Tourist Board initiated a process to deliver a Visitor Information Plan for Northern Ireland. The Plan aimed to identify opportunities to maximize the delivery of visitor information across Northern Ireland within the context of visitors' changing needs.

Following a range of detailed consultations, plus over 1,000 visitor surveys, a draft report has issued for comment. The draft plan is downloadable from www.nitb.com/viplan. An extract from the executive summary is attached. A workshop was held in Belfast on 17th May. The closing date for comments is 25th June. Comments will be presented for members consideration.

The Head of Corporate & Development Services gave an overview of the major objectives, the survey undertaken of TIC visitors; the vision for 2020 and the action areas, covering people, places, promotions, partnerships and visitor scenarios.

The following comments were put forward for committee's consideration.

Council believes that this Draft Visitor Plan will address many of the aspects of developing the visitor experience that have not been addressed to date and commends NITB on the work done on this draft plan. However, one overriding concern is the concentration on the 5 signature of projects, which are only a small part of Northern Ireland and the Northern Ireland experience.

Northern Ireland is a relatively small area on the outskirts of Europe and unless a more holistic view is taken to promote the variety that is on offer with regards to

landscapes, traditions, culture, food and even language and dialects, in the long-term the vision of people staying longer and spending more will not be maintained.

While this is touched upon in theory, one information centre, The Belfast Welcome Centre, received more attention than the other 30 put together. This would suggest that there is extreme positive bias towards this centre. It would have been useful to include some of the less peripheral areas in the study as the results may be skewed by the surveys' locations.

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

that the comments on Visitor Information Plan for NI – be submitted to NITB

216.11 MOY PARK EXPANSION

Details of the announcement by Moy Park of its intention to acquire O'Kane Poultry Limited was reported. It was noted that, subject to due diligence and regulatory approval, this would see two of Northern Ireland's leading poultry firms coming together to create a business with the scale and sustainability needed to meet growth opportunities across the UK, the Republic of Ireland and Europe. In due course the company plans for innovative growth would be published and committee would be kept informed of further developments as appropriate.

216.12 TWINNING VISIT

The Chair highlighted a recent Twinning Association sporting event with visitors from Vanves and Isle of Man and local teams taking part in what proved to be a very successful.

This concluded the business of the meeting the time being 4.32 p.m.