

**BALLYMONEY BOROUGH COUNCIL
DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE**

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BALLYMONEY BOROUGH COUNCIL

Minutes of Development Meeting No 222, held in the Council Chamber, Riada House, Ballymoney on Monday 17th January 2011 at 3.25 pm.

IN THE CHAIR: Councillor Finlay

PRESENT:

Aldermen
H Connolly
C Cousley, MBE, Deputy Mayor
J Simpson

Councillors
R Halliday
B Kennedy, Mayor
E Robinson

APOLOGIES:

Aldermen
F Campbell

Councillors
A Cavlan
M Storey, MLA

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

222.1 MINUTES – MEETING NO 221 – 15TH NOVEMBER 2010

It was proposed by Alderman Connolly, seconded by Councillor Kennedy and

AGREED:

that the minutes of Meeting No 221 – 15th November 2010, as circulated, be confirmed as a correct record.

222.2 GEOLOGICAL SURVEY NI – LIGNITE

This matter was referred by Council for review. The Head of Corporate and Development Services asked the members if they wished to seek any further information on the lignite issue. Agreed no action at present.

222.3 EXPLORING ENTERPRISE PROGRAMME – (Acorn)

Committee agreed in principle to support an application by Acorn The Business Centre for funding towards its Exploring Enterprise programme.

It is recommended that Council contribute £5,000 towards the 2011/12 programme.

It was proposed by Councillor Kennedy, seconded by Councillor Stevenson and
AGREED:

that Council contribute £5,000 towards the 2011/12 exploring enterprise programme.

222.4 RURAL DEVELOPMENT CONTRIBUTION – SPECIAL CALLS

The NE Region Rural Development Partnership has requested a contribution from the five constituent councils for match funding for special calls projects for 2011/12.

It is recommended that Council confirm a contribution of £2250 towards the special calls programme, comprising three projects:

- Regional Food Tourism Initiative
- Rural Villages Regeneration Facilitator
- Rural Tourism Product Knowledge

These costs assume that up to 20% of the match funding is an in kind contribution.

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

that Council approves a contribution of £2250 towards the special calls programme, comprising three projects:

- *Regional Food Tourism Initiative*
- *Rural Villages Regeneration Facilitator*
- *Rural Tourism Product Knowledge*

222.5 CONSULTATION - BUSINESS IMPROVEMENT DISTRICTS (BIDS) AND LICENSING OF PAVEMENT CAFES

The Department of Social Development is seeking views on its proposals for primary legislation in two separate but complementary areas – Business Improvement Districts and Pavement Cafes. Both initiatives are aimed at the local business community and will prove useful in supporting town centres to recover from the current economic downturn. In addition to improving the commercial environment it is expected that these proposals will bring wider benefits and help make town centres more attractive, safer, cleaner and more enjoyable for all.

(a) Business Improvement Districts (BID)

A business improvement district allows businesses within a defined area to vote for collective investment in specific additional services in order to improve the commercial environment within that area. Additional services or projects are funded by a local business levy and all businesses within the potential BID have the opportunity to vote on proposals before the levy is imposed. Proposals are developed by local business-led partnerships, usually in co-operation with the local council. The BID levy offers a sustainable source of finance to fund additional services or projects required by the local business community.

(b) Pavement Cafes

There has been a significant increase in the number of pavement cafes operating in towns and cities across Northern Ireland, particularly since the 2007 introduction of the smoking ban. However, no legislation exists to enable the authorisation and control of such areas. In response to representations made to various Ministers, the Department is seeking views on a suitable licensing scheme to regular this activity. The scheme would apply to the proprietors of relevant businesses such as cafes, restaurants, hotels and pubs who propose to provide a designated out-door area furnished with tables and chairs for the benefit of their customers. It is noted that in the review of Café Culture undertaken no café culture was identified in Ballymoney.

Comments invited by 28th February 2011.

The Association of Town Centre Management would be submitting a response and there was an opportunity to contribute. A BIDS conference was also planned.

222.6 CONSULTATION: PLANNING POLICY STATEMENT 16: TOURISM

The Department of Environment has published for consultation draft Planning Policy Statement 16 entitled "Tourism". This draft PPS16 sets out the Department's planning policy for tourism development and for the safeguarding of tourism assets. It seeks to manage the provision of sustainable and high quality tourism development in appropriate locations within the built and natural environment.

PPS16 proposes:

- The removal of the tourist needs test, which is applied to tourist accommodation applications in the countryside;
- Sets out the circumstances in which hotels, self-catering units and holiday parks are permitted in the countryside;
- Provides for minor extensions to existing static holiday or caravan parks in the countryside and for new small-scale touring sites;
- Provides for tourist amenities in the countryside that are not suited to an urban or village locations (such as angling centres);
- Includes design criteria that will be used to assess all applications for tourism development to ensure sustainable, safe and high quality tourism schemes.

Comments are invited by 25th March 2011.

The Head of Corporate and Development Services advised members, that specific comments could be brought forward before 25th March 2011. A discussion ensued regarding the difficulties in getting planning approval for tourism development in rural areas. Details to be circulated and the matter could be reviewed at the next meeting.

222.7 PLANNING POLICY STATEMENT 4: PLANNING AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

The Department of Environment has published the final version of the Policy Document "Planning Policy Statement (PPS4): Planning & Economic Development". This follows consultation on the development document published in January 2003. The policy document sets out the Department's planning policies for economic development uses and indicates how growth associated with such uses can be accommodated and promoted in development plans. It seeks to facilitate and

accommodate economic growth in ways compatible with social and environmental objectives and sustainable development. The document and the consultation responses can be accessed on the Planning Service Website www.planningni.gov.uk

222.8 SUNDAY TRADING

Following representations and his own consideration, the Minister of Social Development has announced plans to review the current Sunday shopping law and has invited comments.

222.9 PLASTIC BAGS TAX

Councillor Finlay asked if Council were in support of this scheme. The Chief Executive advised that at present he had no details of the scheme and there is no indication that Council will be involved in its implementation. The Head of Corporate and Development Services added that some traders had made representations to MLAs on this Private Member's Bill, brought before the Assembly, on the basis that they believed the Bill would favour large supermarkets and lead to job losses in the independent retail sector and packaging industry and increased cost to consumers. The Chamber of Commerce planned to address the matter.

A discussion ensued regarding the costs to business owners changing from plastic to paper bags and the impact on businesses in the current climate.

222.10 BUSINESS BULLETIN

Issue No 5, Autumn/Winter 2010 circulated.

222.11 TOURISM DEVELOPMENT & MARKETING

11.1 Review of Regional Tourism Delivery

Council, Agency and private sector consultations have been completed. The Member Consultation event takes place on 19th at ECOS. Six members have indicated their intention to attend. A client workshop will follow.

11.2 Celebrities Favourite Places

Tourism Ireland has teamed up with some celebrities to find out their favourite places to visit in NI. You can join Eamonn Holmes as he discovers the Causeway Coastal Route.

11.3 Biker Tourism

Causeway Coast & Glens Tourism, Tourism Ireland and the organisers of various road races and travel companies have developed biker product promotional leaflet for use at shows. The leaflet would also be available on the Council's website.

11.4 Genealogy Product

A new report has highlighted that increasing international interest in genealogy is helping to boost Northern Ireland's tourism figures. Of the 4,000 people who visited the Public Records Office of NI (PRONI) last year, 1,600 were international tourists. International visitors also accounted for 83% of

the 635,000 users of PRONI's website. We are currently reviewing our product with a view to looking at potential for further development

222.12 RURAL DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME

12.1 Village Renewal Programme

Village Plans approved for Dunloy, Stranocum, Ballybogey and Dervock. Village projects: 2 applications considered. Cloughmills project approved.

The Head of Corporate and Development Services stated that she will be discussing with the Dervock Group their request for Council to act as guarantor, it being explained that grant was retrospective. A further report will be brought to Committee's next meeting.

In response to Councillor Stevenson, the Head of Corporate and Development Services advised that two projects are to be approved, and will commence this year with two the following year.

There was a general discussion on the principle of this method of financing projects. The Chief Executive and some members voiced caution on the adoption of such a policy.

12.2 Bygone Ballymoney Project

This project has been withdrawn due to project issues with funder and delivery partners.

12.3. Rural Tourism Initiative (IndiGENous Project)

Letter of offer awaited.

12.4 New Project Proposals

Projects have been worked up for electronic marketing, Lower Bann development, tourism and community infrastructure projects, technical support for rural business development, tourism product – scenic routes and outdoor pursuits packages, funded within existing budget provision.

The Head of Corporate and Development Services gave an outline of the new project proposals.

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

that the projects be approved in principle, further explored and expressions of interest submitted to the rural development programme.

222.13 EU COMPETITIVENESS PROGRAMME

13.1 Steps to Success Programme

Noribic has been appointed to deliver this cluster wide project. Recruitment completed – two businesses in Ballymoney participating.

13.2 LED Collaboration – Council/INI

The NILGA/SOLACE Engagement Event was held on 13th December. The discussion centred on how councils might wish to move forward on the opportunities for collaborative economic development work under the EU Sustainable Competitiveness Programme, as identified by Invest NI at a previous meeting. Invest NI confirmed that they are open to match-funding enterprise development initiatives, thereby potentially reducing the match-funding requirement from councils from 50% to 25%. They have also endeavoured to establish consensus on their role and remit vis-à-vis that of councils at a local level within business development support.

Issues considered included:

Whether Councils are, in principle, supportive of collaborative development initiatives; Identify what budgetary availability there might be for this type of activity; How regional and sub-regional partnerships in this field might work in practice; Options for delivery of this work; Explore how individual council schemes, capital and revenue, might be taken forward.

It was decided to establish a working group tasked with taking forward the proposed collaborative approach to local economic development between Invest NI and local councils. A nomination was agreed at sub-regional level. This will allow councils to feed into the development and design of the new collaborative arrangements.

At programme level, the sustainable competitiveness programme aims to support the key objectives of the EU's Lisbon agenda, that is growth and jobs. Specifically the measure is aimed at supporting innovation, research & development and entrepreneurship. Examples of anticipated outcomes for successful projects are:

- Sustaining or increasing jobs;
- Creating new business starts;
- Improving competitiveness eg turnover, profit, sustainability
- Reducing production costs
- Sharing of best practice in business processes
- Improving export potential
- Developing new product lines
- Participating in business networks/collaborative ventures

The DETI Minister issued a consultation paper before Christmas on "priorities for sustainable growth and prosperity 2020" and a number of consultation questions were posed, with responses by 24th February 2011. NILGA are preparing a response on behalf of local government.

222.14 TOWN CENTRE PROGRAMMES

14.1 Townscape Heritage Initiative

Formal acknowledgement of Council's application has been received. A Grants Officer will be allocated to assess the application and will be contacting us soon. It has been pointed out that the value of requests for grants is far higher than the monies available, so applications may be in competition for funding.

14.2 Marketing/Development Programme

Discussions have taken place with the Federation of Small Business, the Retail Association and the Chamber of Commerce. A consultation workshop is to be held with the Chamber in January to review and consider marketing and development opportunities.

14.3 Retail Study

Information requirements have been provided. Work is progressing on the study and the project team is to meet during January to review progress.

The Head of Corporate and Development Services explained that due to the poor weather conditions the meeting was postponed and will be taking place soon.

14.4 LOTS

NIHE have advised that the availability of funding for 2011/12 remains unclear at present. At their request we have advised applicants, particularly those in the early part of the process who may be considering the payment of some statutory fees in the short term, outlining the level of risk attached to future funding of the scheme. Those with planning and building control applications already lodged should still, we hope, be able to meet the approval deadline of March 2011.

222.15 INTERREG PROGRAMME**15.1 Inland Waterways Project**

The Drumaheglis project was reworked to reduce costs by 50% as required by SEUPB. This necessitated the removal of the community building and link path. Revised planning permission has been prepared. However when all project proposals were submitted to NEP the project, which included an enhanced element for rescue services, totalled 3.7m euros (original cost 3.29m euros). Partners were asked to further reduce projects. We were also asked for further detailed breakdown of project costs by the consultant carrying out the economic appraisal. Detailed costings are not available and could not be secured in the timeline set by SEUPB.

Councillor Robinson expressed disappointment regarding the limited time allowed for additional information being sought.

In response, The Head of Corporate and Development Services gave an account of the various submissions sent to NEP following request from the consultants assessing the project.

15.2 Enterprise Call (closed 21st January)

This is the last call for applications on this theme in the current programme. Outline projects were developed on behalf of NEP but it was not possible to complete the necessary work required by SEUPB and DETI to submit an application based on Project Kelvin within the timeframe. An approach was made to the North West Cross Border Group to see if the NEP area could be included in their proposal, which was a similar project, but they were unwilling to incorporate the NEP as part of their application, either now, or as a phase two option. However other cross border groups, COMET and ICBAN had

been approached and are keen to consider submitting joint applications in the future.

15.3 Tourism Call

Opens 24th January – 25 March

The Causeway Connections project will be reworked for submission.

15.4 Collaboration Call

Opens 4 April – 13 May

15.5. NEP MAP

Project summary circulated and current status noted. Concern was expressed at the number of projects rejected and the lengthy application process with only two projects at letter of offer stage.

222.16 CAUSEWAY CLUSTER COLLABORATIVE STRATEGY

Feedback has been received from the project team members and the strategy and action plan document is being revised and updated. This will be issued for consultation to councils.

222.17 DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITY SITES

A number of opportunities remain active. Members were updated on the current status of sites being considered for disposal or development proposals.

A lengthy discussion ensued regarding sale of Council owned land to raise revenue. Some members considered that due to the current economic climate it was not the most appropriate time to sell land while others believed it could stimulate economic activity.

The Chief Executive responded to Councillor Finlay regarding process for selling assets and explained all requests would be put before Council for approval. However, it is imperative to get the best value for the ratepayer. Legal and valuer's advice would therefore, be sought where appropriate

Councillor Finlay suggested investigating the sale of the gap site in Main Street and, after discussion, on the options to offer for sale, or sale contingent on Development. Committee. agreed

to recommend that Council seek offers for the site.

***Councillor Patterson left the meeting at 4.00 p.m.**

222.18 TRANSLINK MEETING ON 2ND DECEMBER 2010

In relation to the meeting on 2nd December 2010 with Translink, Councillor Stevenson stated that he was aggrieved that Translink had given a presentation to 18 out of 26 Councils and that Ballymoney was one of those excluded. He suggested that

Council should write to Translink and enquire why they did not present to Council and if they would reconsider their position.

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

that Council write to Translink and request that they reconsider their position and provide a presentation to members.

222.19 FUND-RAISING EVENT FOR CANCER – TRIP ALONG THE RIVER BANN

Councillor Kennedy advised members regarding a fund raising group requesting to camp overnight in tents at Drumaheglis Marina

The Chief Executive clarified that it was not Council's policy to offer free facilities, however, the group could apply to the Leisure & Amenities Committee for a contribution to cover the costs of the overnight stay.

The meeting closed at 4.35pm.