

BALLYMONEY BOROUGH COUNCIL
DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE
MEETING NO. 169 - 13TH MARCH 2006

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BALLYMONEY BOROUGH COUNCIL
DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

MINUTES OF MEETING NO. 169 HELD IN THE BOROUGH OFFICES, RIADA HOUSE, ON MONDAY 13TH MARCH 2006 AT 4.00 P.M.

In the Chair Councillor J Finlay (item 1 - 12 inclusive)
 Councillor M Storey MLA (item 13)

Present **Aldermen:**
 C Coulsey (Mayor F Campbell
 J Simpson
 Councillors:
 M McCamphill D McKay
 E Robinson I Stevenson (Deputy Mayor)
 R Wilson

In Attendance Corporate Services Officer

169.1 - CHAIRMAN

It was proposed by Alderman Campbell seconded by Councillor Wilson and AGREED:

That in the absence of the Chair and Vice-Chair Councillor John Finlay be appointed to chair the meeting.

169.2 - MINUTES

It was proposed by Councillor Wilson seconded by Councillor McCamphill and AGREED:

That the minutes of the committee's meeting, No. 168 on 13th February 2006, as circulated, be confirmed as a correct record.

Matters arising:

2.1 - Development Tour

Draft development tour programme for Friday 24th March 2006, circulated, was agreed.

169.3 - START A BUSINESS PROGRAMME

Committee was invited to give further consideration to providing funding for the programme in 2006/07, deferred by Council, until the rates were determined. Report, set out in minute 167.2, was circulated.

It was proposed by Alderman Campbell seconded by Councillor Wilson and AGREED:

To recommend that no additional funding be allocated in the current year but an amount of £20,000 be made available in the incoming financial year, 2006-07, towards the Business Start Programme.

169.4 - VISIT TO VANVES

Council has agreed to committee's recommendation at its last meeting to send a delegation of five to Vanves during a visit by the Twinning Association in June 2006. Committee is invited to nominate its delegates.

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

To recommend that the Chief Executive or his nominee be appointed to take part in the visit to Vanves on 21st June 2006.

It was AGREED:

To recommend that the following members be appointed to take part in the visit to Vanves on 21st June 2006.

The Mayor, Councillor McCamphill, Councillor Robinson, Councillor Storey (with Councillor Finlay as substitute)

169.8 - VISIT BY DOUGLAS BOROUGH COUNCIL MAYOR

It was agreed to host the Mayor and Mayoress of Douglas Borough Council on a visit to the borough in May 2006.

169.6 - ULSTERBUS STRATEGIC REVIEW - COLERAINE AREA

A number of enhancements are planned for Ulsterbus services in their Coleraine area, which includes Ballymoney. The developments are designed to improve frequency, punctuality, accessibility and provide a local network of easy to use services more suited to the needs of passengers. Translink will present the changes it proposes to implement at a public meeting in the Lodge Hotel, Coleraine on Tuesday 14th March at 7.30 p.m. Invitations have been passed to the Chairman and Vice-Chairman.

It was AGREED:

To recommend that members attend this information event.

There was discussion on the need to take up again the matter of the rail line and it was noted that a meeting of the Northern Corridor Rail Group would be held shortly. Members were also agreed on the need to continue to press the case for the upgrading of the A26 route.

169.7 - RURAL DEVELOPMENT BRIEFING

The Rural Development Council are holding a Roundtable Briefing on "Rural in the Future of the Region" on Monday 20th March at the Stormont Hotel, 10.00 a.m. - 2.00 p.m. The event is targeted at rural stakeholders in rural Northern Ireland.

The event will address

- what the latest patterns of change and trends are affecting rural Northern Ireland and what opportunities these hold;
- how "thinking rural" can make better economic sense, with potential savings on government department spend;
- future rural policy and its impact on the diversity of rural communities;
- how will RPA facilitate the role of rural citizens in planning their own development.

Committee is invited to consider member representation at the event.

The following members indicated their intention to attend:

Councillor Wilson, Councillor Robinson, Councillor Stevenson and Alderman Cousley.

169.8 - BIKER TOURISM INITIATIVE

Six European Union Funded Rural Development Agencies - stretching from Dumfries and Galloway and across the entire North West of NI have got together to fund a special research and development programme to promote Biker Tourism as a means of enhancing rural economies. An expression of interest has been lodged with regard to biker accommodation during Bikefest. If successful match funding will be required.

It was AGREED:

To recommend that Council lend its support to the above funding bid.

169.9 - BALLYMONEY BUSINESS CLUB

Council agreed (DC156.4) to support Ballymoney Business Club, as delivered by ACORN, for the 12-month period ending 31 March 2006. This support was to be in the form of a financial contribution of £1,000.00, co-financed by BSP, and was subject to possible extension for 2006/2007.

During the past 12 months speakers covering a range of business related subjects have addressed business owners in the town. The subjects covered have included amongst others business use of the Internet, stress management, financial management, marketing and employment legislation and the speakers selected have been recognised experts in their own particular fields. Attendance numbers at each of the monthly presentations have been very steady and the formal assessments completed very positive.

Following on the success of this past year it was proposed by Alderman Campbell seconded by Councillor Wilson and AGREED:

To recommend that Council extend its support for this initiative for a further year by providing £1,000 in 2006/07. Co-funding at the rate of 50% is available from EU BSP Programme.

The next years programme includes presentations in April and May on the cost/benefit analysis of professional merchandising in retail establishments followed by a workshop on the practical application of theory: June's meeting would be addressed by a representative of the Centre for Competitiveness.

169.10 - COMMITTEE MEETINGS

Committee gave consideration to timing of its meetings. It was agreed that future meetings be held at 4.00 p.m.

169.11 - PROGRESS REPORT

Progress report indicating status of current projects was tabled.

169.12 - DSD STREETScape SCHEME

It was reported that agreement had been reached with DRD Roads Service on provision of 47 new/ upgraded signage on the A26 together with 20 new tourist information signs. The total cost of £13261, was being funded by DSD who had arranged for the provision of the signs by their nominated tenderer.

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

To recommend that Council approve the procurement of the road/street signage to the value of £13,261 from DRD nominated tenderer rather than through the Council's procurement process.

- Councillor Storey joined the meeting at this stage, 4.40 p.m. and assumed the Chair.

169.13 - JOB LOSSES - TYCO HEALTHCARE

The Chairman advised, with regret, of an announcement by Tyco Healthcare, that due to the recent reduction in volume and with no foreseeable increase, they have had to reduce the Plant manufacturing activity at Ballymoney. As a result of this manufacturing reduction there was a possible redundancy situation. It was noted that they had, to-day, commenced redundancy consultation discussions with Union Representatives and their Workers Forum which will last for a 30 day period. Regrettably, the proposal may result in the loss of approximately 30 jobs across the plant.

Commenting on the devastating announcement, the Chairman said Tyco's announcement is another serious knock for the people of Ballymoney, following on as it does within a few months of the surprise announcement by The British Textile Manufacturing Company that its Northern Ireland operations base in Ballymoney is to close.

He stated that whilst unemployment numbers in the borough are below the NI average, the borough also has a proportionately low level of manufacturing and another announcement like this one, which potentially makes a further 30 local residents redundant, erodes our manufacturing base even further and as a result is bad news for everyone.

Whilst he did fully accept and understand that the company is operating in an extremely volatile and competitive global market, and that it is not outside the bounds of possibility that the securing of another contract in the interim might lead to the reinstating of the employees whose jobs are currently at risk, this is a particularly difficult time for the 30 employees whose jobs are currently in question

and anything and everything must be done to help secure these residents future employment.

The Chairman added that although all the details are not yet available and the process is just beginning he had met with Tyco to see what can be done to overturn this announcement. As part of the process to help deal with the situation he proposed that a task force should be set up in the area to look at the wider economic and social issues which prevail in our town and how Council and local industry can work together to mitigate against the effects of further announcements such as this one today.

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

To recommend to Council that representations be made to the Economy Minister, Mrs Angela Smith, to establish a taskforce for the borough.

This concluded the business of the meeting, the time being 5.00 p.m.