

BALLYMONEY BOROUGH COUNCIL**Development Committee Meeting No 209 – 16th November 2009****Table of Contents**

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**BALLYMONEY BOROUGH COUNCIL
DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE**

Minutes of Meeting No 209 held in the Council Chamber, Riada House, on Monday 16th November 2009 at 3.30pm.

IN THE CHAIR Councillor M McCamphill, Vice-Chair

PRESENT

Aldermen
F Campbell, Mayor
H Connolly
C Cousley, MBE, Deputy Mayor

Councillors
J Finlay
R Halliday
A Patterson
E Robinson
I Stevenson

APOLOGIES Councillor A Cavlan

IN ATTENDANCE Chief Executive
Head of Corporate & Development Services
Clerical Assistant

209.1 MINUTES – MEETING NO 208 – 19th OCTOBER 2009

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

*that the minutes of meeting No 208 on 19th October 2009 be confirmed as
a correct record.*

209.2 CASTLECROFT SQUARE DEVELOPMENT

2.1 - Temporary Occupation

The adjoining site owner has requested a short extension, of no more than two months, of the permission granted by Council for occupation of its site to allow the scaffolding to remain in place.

* **Councillor Stevenson joined the meeting at 4.31pm**

IT IS RECOMMENDED that Council agree one final extension of two months from the date of the request (to 22/12/09), at which point the site should be cleared and reinstated to Council's satisfaction. The Chief Executive responded to member's questions regarding progress on development of the adjoining site.

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

that Council agreed one final extension of two months from the date of the request (to 22/12/09), at which point the site should be cleared and reinstated to Council's satisfaction.

2.2 - Development Options

The Chief Executive gave further consideration has been given to the possible options and their benefits and disbenefits and to estimated development costs, current capital and rental values of the development proposal comprising two ground floor shop units, two first floor and two second floor apartments and making provision for relocation of the existing roof structure.

He outlined options identified, listed below, and invited committees comments on these to enable the proposal to be further developed.

- Develop site and rent / lease
- Develop site and sell
- Dispose site via Development Brief
- Dispose site with covenant(s)

- * **Councillor Finlay and Alderman Cousley joined the meeting during discussions at 3.47pm and 3.53pm respectively.**

It was **AGREED** the matter be deferred until committee's meeting in May 2010.

- * **Alderman Connolly left the meeting at 4.01pm.**

2.3 – Licence Agreement

The Head of Corporate & Development Services updated the meeting on correspondence from DRD Roads Service on proposed licence agreement for Department lands occupied by Council and recalculation of valuation.

It was **AGREED** that Chief Executive have further discussions with the Department regarding the method of calculation of value and proposed transfer of lands to Council in 2011.

209.3 COUNCIL LANDS – REVIEW

With regard to the approach from an individual for the purchase of Council land at Dervock efforts are being made to determine area of land Council could consider selling and basis of the sale. A further report will be brought to a future meeting.

In response to Councillor Patterson, the Chief Executive explained the location of the land in the village.

209.4 PROPOSED CULTURAL MUSIC FESTIVAL AT LESLIE HILL ESTATE

A proposal has been developed for WOMAD Festivals to be staged at Leslie Hill estate, providing a unique cultural opportunity and economic benefits for Ballymoney area. Following a meeting with the event promoters funding bids are being developed to DCAL/NI Tourist Board and the Rural Development Programme. A

letter of support has been requested.

IT IS RECOMMENDED that a letter of support be given on the basis of the projects fit with Council and regional tourism strategies.

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

that a letter of support be given on the basis of the projects fit with Council and regional tourism strategies.

209.5 PROPOSAL TO DEVELOP “STORIES MAP” – CAUSEWAY COASTAL ROUTE

Picture This Productions have developed a proposal to develop a Stories Map with short films and audio stories on a web map about the history and heritage of the Causeway Coastal Route which has been submitted for funding to the NI Tourist Board Innovation Fund. A letter of support has been given on the basis of the projects fit with Council and regional tourism strategies.

IT IS RECOMMENDED that Council endorse the letter of support to this proposed project.

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

that Council endorse the letter of support for this project.

209.6 TWINNING ASSOCIATION – REPRESENTATION

Councillor Robinson has indicated that she wishes to stand down as the Council's representative on the Association due to other commitments and wishes to nominate Councillor Finlay to take her place.

IT IS RECOMMENDED that Council confirm the appointment of Councillor Finlay to fill the vacancy on the Twinning Association, arising from the resignation of Councillor Robinson.

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

that Council confirm its revised representation on the Twinning Association.

209.7 SMALL BUSINESS RATE RELIEF

The Chamber of Commerce has called on the First Minister to bring forward the implementation date for proposals for small business rate relief. Northern Ireland is the only part of the United Kingdom which does not offer small business relief from their rate liability. Schemes operate in England, Scotland and Wales to redistribute the rate burden away from small companies who are considered to be disproportionately burdened by their rate liability.

At the request of Councillor Finlay, the Head of Corporate and Development Services clarified the issue of cost for collection and Councillor Robinson questioned where the loss of income would come from.

IT IS RECOMMENDED that Council lend its support to the Chambers representations for the rate relief for small businesses to be brought forward.

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

that Council lend its support to the Chambers representations for the rate relief for small businesses to be brought forward.

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

that the Chief Executive write to the Department seeking clarification on where the compensation for the reduction in income will come from.

PROJECT ACTIVITY REPORT UPDATE @ 10.11.09

209.8 ED STRATEGY 2009-2011

The Economic Development strategy is being revised and updated to take account of a number of economic and other changes.

209.9 COMPETITIVENESS PROGRAMME

The Steps to Success for Small Business Programme application has been successful and approved subject to economic appraisal. This programme will be delivered cluster-wide with Council acting as lead.

209.10 RURAL DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME

Project Bids

In advance of the deadline on 23rd October 2009, Council has submitted three applications to the Rural Development Programme for the following:

Ref. 6193 - The IndiGENous Gen Rural Tourism Initiative

(Measure 3.3 Special Calls Application)

Ref: 6208 – The Bygone Ballymoney Shiels Event

(Measure 3.6 Conservation & Upgrading of the Rural Heritage)

Ref: 6211 – Ballymoney Bunny Fest

(Measure 3.3 Encouragement of Tourism Activities)

Arising from feedback from RDP on the expressions of interest full applications were not submitted for the following two projects:

Biker Tourism

Ballymoney Byways Downloadable Tourism Guide

It was reported that a further project "Menu of North Coast", an agri-food initiative aimed at helping to strengthen and develop the existing and open up new supply chains to local food producers within the North Coast area, to be led by Moyle District

Council, had been submitted for funding. This was a follow on to work undertaken by council in association with Moyle District Council in the development of a local produce directory. Any cost arising from participation would be met from existing budgets.

Programme Calls

Measures 3.3(Tourism Activities), 3.4(Access to Basic Services), 3.6(Conservation and Heritage) closed on the 23rd October. The village renewal measure (3.5) will be delayed until early 2010. DARD have stated it should not proceed until the Village Renewal Thematic group reaches a consensus on a Northern Ireland wide approach. This could delay implementation until late 2010. Measures 3.1 and 3.2 re-opened on the 28th September and closes on the 27th November 2010. There will be at least 2/3 further calls in 2010 and subsequent years. Due to volume of applications and time commitment to applications it is anticipated that the next call for any of the measures does not open until late Feb or early March 2010.

Members expressed disappointment that the village renewal project was to be delayed, stressing the need for action in this area.

First Funding Round

It is likely that 32/33 applications will be approved with a total of approx £700,000 of spend. The main reasons for projects being unsuccessful are eligibility issues.

Co-operation Projects

Part of the requirement of the RDP programme is to participate in projects with other groups in NI, ROI, GB and other parts of the EU. Budget for this is in the region of £440,000 at present. To date there has been interest from Donegal, Estonia, France, Scotland (Dumfries and Galloway and Argyll and the Islands), Waterford and Dorset as well as more local NI partners.

* **Alderman Campbell left the meeting at 4.25 p.m.**

209.11 NORTH EAST PARTNERSHIP:

[1] -Transition from INTERREG IIIA to INTERREG IVA

A meeting to move towards the transition from INTERREG IIIA to INTERREG IVA periods is scheduled in early December. There is likely to be one final winding up meeting of NEP in early 2010 to formally sign-off audited accounts.

[2] - INTERREG IVA

In terms of the new agreed NEP Joint Committee structure work is proceeding with the formal setting up of the Joint Committee, a process which is expected to take up to 6 weeks. Each member council will be asked to nominate 2 elected members to new JC in early 2010 and a council officer.

Also in early 2010 a series of Partnership Agreements will be put in place at NEP and sub-project levels specifying various roles and relationships with regard to INTERREG IVA obligations. The projects proper are likely to start in Spring 2010 after all outstanding SEUPB assessment/appraisal issues and NEP partnership agreements settled.

209.12 TOWN MARKETING PROGRAMME

The Christmas shopping and community events guide, published in association with local businesses has been distributed to 20,000 homes in the borough and beyond. This years activity includes competitions to switch on the Christmas lights, a pamper package for mum and a Christmas cracker competition. Arising from discussion the officer advised of arrangements for feedback from participating businesses in order to evaluate the success of the marketing initiative.

* **Alderman Campbell rejoined the meeting at 4.30 p.m.**

209.13 NI BROADBAND FUND – Call for Applications

DETI has issued a 4th call for applications for support with a closure date for submission of project proposals of 27th November 2009.

209.14 COMMUNITY PLANNING

A report of the community planning conference “The New Council, Communities and Agencies Working Together” held on 18th September, under the auspices of Community Places, has been produced. A copy is available from the Office of the Chief Executive.

209.15 BUS SERVICE TO BALLYMONEY

In response to representations to the operating company about extension of the service to Vow Road it has been advised that due to the low take up it is not commercially viable to operate this route. The company would however consider setting up a reduced service which had the financial backing of council if Council wish this option considered.

209.16 BUSINESS BULLETIN

A further issue of the new Ballymoney Business Bulletin has been emailed to businesses and a copy is available on the business section of the website, copy circulated to members.

209.17 NORTH ANTRIM BUSINESS AWARDS

Moyle Enterprise Agency have advised that the Awards have been postponed and may take place in early 2010.

209.18 BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT LIAISON

Unit staff have met with NRC and Acorn to re-establish a closer relationship between the 3 main organisations responsible for economic development support in Ballymoney.

209.19 STEPS TO WORK INITIATIVE (DEL)

A 'Steps to Work' client has commenced a 13-week placement in the Development Unit, assisting with administrative and research services.

209.20 INDEPENDENT REVIEW OF ECONOMIC POLICY (DETI & Invest NI)

A detailed response to the recommendations in this consultation on behalf of the NILGA Economic Development Working Group is tabled.

Three key messages are highlighted as follows:-

1. Integration of support for Economic Development – We are very concerned and disappointed at the absence of any meaningful reference to the role of Local Government in the development and delivery of economic development policy. It is evident that there is currently a very fragmented approach to service delivery with numerous agencies and departments pursuing economic development agendas with little shared coherence or strategic vision. We believe that only a fully integrated and truly inclusive approach to economic development policy development and implementation can successfully realise sustainable economic growth and make progress towards addressing the existing productivity gap. We therefore welcome the proposal to establish an integrated economic strategy for Northern Ireland and would stress the importance of engaging local government in the development and delivery of any proposed integrated approach to local economic development;
2. Greater decision making efficiency – We believe the review has identified an over-bureaucratic decision making process and highlighted the need for greater efficiency in this process, particularly in relation to Invest NI support and planning applications. We believe that greater integration of support for economic development, as highlighted in Point 1, and the development of a more flexible approach to decision making can enhance efficiency and increase effective output. We welcome the recommendation to establish realistic and competitive planning application targets and also to review the casework protocol for Invest NI support;
3. Enhance entrepreneurial capacity and knowledge – Concern exists in relation to the Global Entrepreneurship Monitor (GEM) findings that suggest that Northern Ireland exhibit less favourable attitudes towards entrepreneurship than other regions of the UK and that 'fear of failure' is a significant deterrent to entrepreneurship. We welcome engagement with the education sector and efforts to introduce entrepreneurship into the curriculum at all stages. However, we believe that there is a fundamental issue in relation to redressing the balance of support between larger and smaller businesses with the report highlighting that over the course of the years 2002-2008, 30% of the grants made by Invest NI were made to just 10 companies. We believe that redressing this balance and establishing more visible support for entrepreneurs could have a considerable positive impact on our levels of entrepreneurial activity.

209.21 NI MULTIPLE DEPRIVATION MEASURES 2009 CONSULTATION

Council's response to the consultation questionnaire was shared with NILGA. A copy of the NILGA composite response to the consultation is circulated.

209.22 BUDGET

Arising from Councils request for savings of 3% across budgets in the current year
A reduction of £2292 has been indicated, with consequent loss of levered grant
Funding of up to 75%.

209.23 ICT SEMINAR

The Head of Corporate and Development Services provided details of a forthcoming ICT seminar to be held at Acorn Business Centre on 24th November, details of which had been circulated to local businesses.

Recognising that using broadband and IT saves valuable time, helps cut operating costs, can help businesses find contracts in your specific area, helping the business to grow, the economic development unit and Acorn the Business Centre have joined together with Invest NI and Commendium UK to bring a day dedicated to free advice on Information and Communication Technology (ICT) for Ballymoney businesses.

The Log-on.ni Mobile Demonstration Unit, which is part-financed by the European Regional Development Fund through DETI and managed by Commendium UK will be in the Acorn the Business Centre carpark from 10.00 am until 4.00 pm. The unit is equipped with the latest technology; including a satellite broadband Internet connection, and is staffed by several of Commendium's experienced advisors.

There will also be an Invest NI free seminar, which is aimed at all non-technical business people.

This being all the business the meeting closed at 4.45pm.