

BALLYMONEY BOROUGH COUNCIL**Development Committee Meeting No 210 – 21st December 2009****Table of Contents**

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**BALLYMONEY BOROUGH COUNCIL
DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE**

Minutes of Meeting No 210 held in the Council Chamber, Riada House, on Monday 21st December 2009 at 3.58pm.

IN THE CHAIR Councillor J Finlay, Chair

PRESENT

Aldermen
F Campbell, Mayor
C Cousley, MBE, Deputy Mayor
J Simpson

Councillors
R Halliday
M McCamphill
E Robinson
I Stevenson

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

210.1 MINUTES – MEETING NO 209 – 16th NOVEMBER 2009

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

that the minutes of meeting No 209 on 16th November 2009 be confirmed as a correct record.

210.2 COUNCIL LANDS – DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES

As reported to committee previously Officers are currently looking at various parcels of land in Council ownership, which may be disposed of and these will be brought to committee as investigations are completed. In respect of one of the parcels of land identified an approach has been made by an adjoining landowner in Dervock and options relating to its development potential and disposal have now been evaluated.

Discussions followed on the development potential of lands surplus to Council's requirements in Dervock and their location in relation to Council's extant facilities which would remain at the site.

* **Councillor Stevenson left the meeting at 4.03pm during discussion.**

- * **Councillor Robinson joined the meeting at 4.05pm, during discussion.**

IT IS RECOMMENDED that Council consider disposal of the land to the applicant (an adjoining property owner), on the precondition that the applicant agree to meet all Council's valuation, legal and other costs of such transfer and to existing sightlines to Council facilities being maintained.

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

that Council agree to consider the disposal of the land to the applicant (an adjoining property owner), on the precondition that the applicant agree to meet all Council's valuation, legal and other costs of such transfer and to existing sightlines to Council facilities being maintained.

- * **Councillor Stevenson rejoined the meeting at 4.08pm.**

210.3 DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY AND ACTION PLAN 2009-11

Work on the review and updating of the Economic Development Strategy is nearing completion and a draft will be available for presentation to committee in the near future.

This strategy, building on the previous Integrated Local Strategy, covers the period up until the implementation of the new Council structures under RPA in May 2011. The strategy provides the rationale for Ballymoney Borough Council's Economic Development Action Plan and outlines how, in conjunction with other organisations, the Council plans to meet its strategic aim of encouraging social and economic development in the borough. The associated Action Plan will incorporate those projects and programmes approved by Council and others being developed to meet the objectives identified in the business plan approved by Council and working within budgets allocated by Council.

The Head of Corporate & Development Services gave an overview of key aspects of the boroughs economy and strategic priority areas for action. It was explained that tourism development proposed projects developed for delivery by Council, with assistance of grant from EU programmes, were designed to contribute to the objectives of the Causeway Coast and Glens Regional Plan aimed at developing attractions and increasing visitors. Proposed projects focus on product development and events, aligning with the regional plan activity themes. In response to questions the Officer explained that Causeway Coast & Glens provides strategic leadership for tourism in the causeway coastal region (covering Ballymena, Ballymoney, Coleraine, Carrickfergus, Larne, Limavady, Moyle and Newtownabbey) with the key function of international marketing (destination marketing) while Councils developmental activity would focus on local product development and marketing.

210.4 KEY ECONOMIC STATISTICS QUARTERLY REPORT, DECEMBER 2009

A report on key economic statistics at December 2009 was circulated. Some of this information will be included in the strategy document, under development. Relevant unemployment statistics etc will be reported to committee on a quarterly basis.

Councillor Robinson highlighted the need for timely approval of planning applications for projects applying for funding through the Rural Development Programme. The Head of Service advised that during the strategic development process this issue had at request of the officer cluster team been raised by DARD with Planning Service as it had been a problem area with regard to applications under the previous North Antrim Leader programme requiring planning permission, resulting in projects not being able to be progressed. She undertook to pursue the issue with the partnership.

210.5 RPA ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT CLUSTER GROUP – PREPARATIONS FOR FORMAL ACTION PLAN FOR 2011

Economic Development Managers and Officers in the Causeway Cluster region are progressing work with regard to preparation for RPA, including profiling the region and scoping the development service, including economic, tourism and community development and incorporating policing and community safety partnerships. The work was feeding into the transition committee.

In connection with the economic development preparatory work Coleraine BC has completed a business needs analysis, while Moyle DC and Limavady BC are in the process of conducting this exercise. In the light of this it is also planned to undertake a similar exercise in Ballymoney Borough, to be completed by March 2010, thus providing the basis for a strategy and action plan for the first year of the new Causeway Council. This work can be done within existing staff resources. It is estimated that the development and production of a strategy and action plan would cost £12,000, requiring a contribution of £3000 from each Council in the cluster.

IT IS RECOMMENDED that Council set aside £3000 to meet its share of strategy and action plan development.

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

that Council set aside £3000, from existing budgets, to meet its share of economic development strategy and action plan for the first year of the new Causeway Council.

210.6 REVIEW OF REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY – NI KEY SETTLEMENT STUDY

The Review of the Regional Development Strategy has been published and the content as it relates to Ballymoney summarised for members information – this

matter was withdrawn and will be taken into account under the development strategy work.

210.7 YOUNG ENTERPRISE BUSINESS MASTERCLASS PROGRAMME – Application for assistance

Young Enterprise invites Council in join with them in jointly hosting a Primary Masterclass around the theme of “Our Nation P6” to be delivered by Young Enterprise in all primary schools in our borough (P6 pupils) in the first quarter of next year. A maximum of 110 pupils can be accommodated. The programme gives an introduction to main types of business, introduce career building blocks dealing with pupils attitudes, education and skills. Pupils will be encouraged to assess their own skills and interests. The cost for the two day programme is £1,800.

Young Enterprise programmes are based on the principle of “learning by doing” to promote a culture of enterprise from an early age. Many of their programmes complement existing education programmes by offering specific curriculum links. Students gain first-hand insight into enterprise, business and the world of work, as all Young Enterprise Programmes are delivered by business volunteers. Some programmes offer students direct experience of enterprise by running their own real company, others are structured around seminars and classes, using games, activities and role-play to help students understand and develop skills and capabilities for their future.

During discussion the Head of Service explained the value in terms of economic development of Young Enterprise as it plants the seed for future enterprise leading to job creation and sustainable business and it had done some excellent work with schools in the borough under previous programmes. With the assistance of local business volunteers pupils had set up and run a business to manufacture and sell products to learn about running a business – raising capital, marketing, financing and selling the product, concluding with the presentation of report and accounts. She also commented that their work would build on the excellent culture of self employment and establishment of small business in the borough.

IT IS RECOMMENDED: that Council provide funding towards this programme.

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

that Council provide funding of £1,800 towards this programme, from the existing programme budget.

210.8 CORE REGIONAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT GROUP – CLOSURE

Ballymena Borough Council, in relation to the closure of the Core Regional Economic Development Initiative, has advised that £5,857.83 is due to Council by way of refund on the Business Start Programme. This funding can be set against existing business support programmes.

210.9 NORTHERN RAILWAY CORRIDOR – DEVELOPMENT STUDY (FINAL)

The Final Report on the Northern Corridor Development Study has been published and will be considered at the next meeting of the Group.

210.10 PLANNING APPLICATION – ENVIRONMENTAL STATEMENT – Redevelopment Of existing industrial site with 8 new industrial units at 150 Bann Road, Ballymoney

Members are asked to note the issue of the Environmental Statement in respect of this application. As a planning consultation matter it will be progressed via Health & Environmental Services Committee under the statutory consultee process.

Members discussed the planning history of the site and welcomed the investment interest in bringing the site back into productive use. The Chair agreed that this matter would be revisited following completion of Council's statutory consultation response to the environmental statement via Health & Environmental Services Committee.

210.11 BIOMASS ENERGY PLANT, GLENAVY – ECONOMIC CONSEQUENCES –

Correspondence from Ballymena Borough Council advises that a planning application has been lodged for the project and expresses concern that any decision, less than full planning permission, would have serious negative economic consequences, including loss of jobs in the poultry sector. Council has already lent its support to the project and agreed to join in a delegation to the Minister with regard to this project.

210.12 CLOUGHMILLS COMMUNITY PROJECT

Committee is invited to consider request for a letter of support to an application to the Rural Development Programme for funding towards fit out of the new community hall in Cloughmills. Some members voiced need for clarification as regards ownership of the building, management arrangements, proposed role etc before considering the matter.

It was proposed by Councillor McCamphill, seconded by Alderman Simpson:

that Council provide a letter of support.

Following discussion the Chair put the motion to the vote with 2 members voting in favour and 3 voting against.

The Chair declared the motion lost.

Alderman Campbell, Councillor Robinson and Councillor Stevenson advised that they had abstained from voting as they sit on the Rural Development panel which considers applications for funding.

210.13 PROJECT ACTIVITY REPORT

a. Interreg Tourism Projects

Following a meeting with DETI there has been some movement on three tourism projects (Gobbins, Causeway Connection and Biker Tourism) in that SEUPB will now bring these forward to the DETI casework committee as soon as possible on the very comprehensive and up to date information and economic appraisals that currently exist for these. This will mean that they can be progressed to letter of offer stage by early 2010. Given the abandonment of the market towns project, in which Council had registered interest, consideration was being given to an application for inclusion in the Bids programme aimed at improving urban centres, as an alternative option to enhancement of the town centre.

b. RDP Food Tourism Application

Coleraine is submitting on behalf of the NE Rural Development Cluster, a food tourism application under the special call. The proposed budget is £270,000 over three years and if successful £200,000 will be secured from the RD programme. Officers are meeting in early January to further develop the project which will consist of audit of food producers, outlets and distributors; extension of the Menu of Moyle Initiative across the cluster; developing a food trail and good food guide and developing food events. It was intended to consider aligning Council's food festival activities with this initiative.

c. Peace III Programme

Quarterly report, December 2009, tabled, indicated contracts awarded and spend at 1 December 2009.

d. Business Club

A report was given on the success of the ICT event at Acorn The Business Centre on 24th November, a collaborative initiative by Council, the Business Centre, Invest NI and Commendium UK, bringing 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 was located at 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. Free advice was available on improving business through ICT, from customer service, to staff retention, to using Internet Phone services to lower your call charges and right through to the bottom line, help with setting up business' broadband router. Delegates also had the benefit of an Invest NI's free seminar, aimed at all non-technical business people and were able to gain knowledge, through practical demonstration, on how to increase potential customer base, convert prospects to customers and turn customers into loyal advocates cheaply and quickly using the latest internet technologies.

e. Town Centre Development

Town marketing activity targeted at the tourism sector for next season was being progressed as was trade promotion through increased activity on development of web site shopping, activities and attraction directories. Consultation with trade to obtain feedback to inform future marketing and events activity, retail & hospitality training initiatives and environmental improvements was planned. The Environmental Improvement Scheme in Main Street/Seymour Street had been completed and was officially opened by the Minister of Social Development, Margaret Ritchie, on 16th December. Members expressed satisfaction with the quality of the improved streetscape and the Mayor recorded thanks to DSD for their investment in the scheme, but highlighted the need for further investment in the town streetscape. Councillor Stevenson expressed his appreciation of the work of Cheers Youth Club on the production of murals.

A report on the successful food and craft fair in the Town Hall on 4 December, which attracted over 30 stalls, was given.

Two local residents were recipients of Christmas competitions, promoted as part of the Christmas marketing programme - A Pamper Package for Mum, sponsored by Top Ten Hair and Beauty and Buds & Bows – A Christmas cracker competition in the event programme.

f. Community Development

Arising from discussion on financial support for proposed community development initiatives in villages assisted under the rural development programme the Head of Service advised of services available through the community resource centre and assistance the development unit had given to applicants for funding by way of advice and provision of data for funding applications. It was noted that the unit did not currently have a scheme to provide financial support for such projects.

This being all the business the meeting closed at 5.10pm.