

**BALLYMONEY BOROUGH COUNCIL
DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE**

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244.20	Small Business Rate Relief Extended	<i>Welcomed</i>
244.21	Environment Improvements	<i>Consultation held</i>

- 244.22** Resurfacing of Townhead Street Car Park *Contract let*
- 244.23** Town Marketing and Events Programme *Draft programme developed*

TRANSPORTATION

- 244.24** Regional Transportation Strategy (RTS) 2002-12 *Copy available from OCE.*

ENERGY

- 244.25** GAS (Applications for Licenses and Extensions) (Amendment) Regulations *Information.*
- 244.26** Northern Regional College Campus Amalgamation Proposals (240.5) *Meeting deferred*

**Ballymoney Borough Council
Development Committee**

Minutes of Development Meeting No 244, held in the Council Chamber, Riada House, Ballymoney on Wednesday 20th February 2013 at 6.30 pm.

IN THE CHAIR: Alderman B Kennedy

PRESENT: **Aldermen**
F Campbell
C Cousley, MBE

Councillors

J Atkinson
W Blair
A Cavlan
J Finlay
R Halliday
R McAfee
E Robinson
I Stevenson

IN ATTENDANCE: Head Corporate and Development Services
Paul Sampson, MARA [Item 1-2]
Committee Clerk

244.1 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no Declarations of Interest.

244.2 PRESENTATION – MARA (Maximising Access to Services Grants & Benefits in Rural Areas)

This project aims to improve the health and wellbeing of rural dwellers in Northern Ireland by increasing access to services, grants and benefits. It will proactively target the vulnerable households in identified rural communities using a community development approach, seeking to also increase access to home improvement schemes, full Benefit Entitlement Checks; local services and community transport. The programme works within the Rural Coleraine & Ballymoney (Ballymoney rural wards of Benvardin, Kiloquin Lower & Upper,

Ballyhoe, Corkey, Stranocum, Knockaholet, Dunloy, Seacon, Dervock, The Vow, Clogh Mills).

The Chair welcomed Mr Paul Sampson to the meeting and invited him to present details of the project. Mr Sampson explained that The Maximising Access in Rural Areas project aims to improve the health and wellbeing of rural dwellers in Northern Ireland by increasing access to services, grants and benefits, is underway and gathering momentum in the local area. The project is a £3m joint initiative between the Department of Agriculture and Rural Development (DARD) and the Public Health Agency (PHA).

Causeway Rural and Urban Network (CRUN) has been commissioned to roll out the project in the Ballymoney and Coleraine areas, ensuring that rural dwellers are both aware of and are availing of any grants and benefits they are entitled to. The project will help explore the householders eligibility for such schemes as 'Warm Homes' (energy saving), Community Transport and Translink's SmartPass, amongst others. The project will also help put householders in touch with local and regional services available to them such as local community groups, social clubs and training centres.

Mr Sampson advised that the project had been operating in Coleraine since June and he was now looking to move into Ballymoney area. In Coleraine linking in with councillors was the biggest asset and he hoped he would have support of councillors to raise awareness of the scheme and signpost individuals.

Mr Sampson answered a number of member queries and an information leaflet was circulated to every member. Members indicated their support and co-operation for the scheme.

- * **Councillor Robinson arrived at the meeting at 6.40pm.**
- * **Mr Paul Sampson left the meeting at 6.45pm**

244.3 MINUTES OF MEETING NO 243 – 16TH JANUARY 2013

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

to recommend that the Minutes of Meeting No 243 – 16th January 2013, as circulated, be approved.

244.4 MAGILLIGAN PRISON VISIT

On 12 February 2013, Councillor I Stevenson, Chief Executive and Mr J Dowds representing Ballymoney Chamber of Commerce joined a party of representatives

from Limavady and Coleraine to visit Magilligan Prison (Derry City Council was invited but did not send any delegates).

The visit lasted some four hours and gave the opportunity to see the various standards of buildings (from Nissen Huts to modern high security prison accommodation) which exist on the site. There was also time to see examples of the various training and education facilities on offer and to meet some of the staff and prisoners in Foyleview, the unit which houses low risk prisoners nearing the end of their sentences.

During the working lunch which followed the tour, information on the types of community engagement work done by prisoners over the last four years or so was provided to the delegation and ideas for work placements in Councils, community groups and the private sector were discussed. In order to develop these further it was agreed that the three Chief Executives would meet with relevant prison staff and that a first meeting of the Councillor Liaison group would be arranged. The likely date is 4 March at 2 pm in Limavady.

Committee is asked to note the report.

DECLARATION OF INTEREST

Alderman Cousley declared an interest in item 244.5 as a Director of Acorn the Business Centre and left the meeting at 6.50pm.

244.5 ACORN BUSINESS CENTRE - REQUEST FOR FUNDING

An application has been received from Acorn Business Centre for part funding for year three of Exploring Enterprise Programme for the financial year 2013/14. The programme comprises outreach and awareness, pre assessment, training and post assessment. Enterprise NI secured the programme with 65% funding from DEL and ESF and each Enterprise Agency needs to obtain match funding of 35%. Funding required is £5771.49. Acorn Business Centre has a successful record in delivering this programme and producing good outcomes, with 75% - 80% of the participants on the three programmes to date going on to start their own businesses, start a course of study or finding employment.

IT IS RECOMMENDED that Council continue to support this programme and provide funding of £5771.49.

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

to recommend that Council continue to support the Exploring Enterprise programme and provide funding of £5,771.49.

*

Alderman Cousley rejoined the meeting at 6.53pm.

244.6 COMMUNITY FOCUS LEARNING, PORTGLENONE – REQUEST FOR FUNDING

An application has been received from Community Focus Learning, Portglenone, for match funding towards delivery of the ESF CFLearn2Earn programme, across the areas of Ballymena, Magherafelt, Antrim, Ballymoney and Coleraine, towards which 65% (£332,000) has been applied for to deliver the two year programme with 120 people participating. Ballymoney is requested to contribute £6,000 per year for two years, with a target number of 7 participants per year. No budget is currently available to support this programme.

It was noted that the application was currently being subjected to economic appraisal and a funding offer had not yet been secured. Also the proposal was similar to that being delivered by Acorn Business Centre and supported by Council. The application was noted.

244.7 BUSINESS PROGRAMMES

Recruitment has been rolled out for the Retail to Manufacture Programme (Coleraine BC led) and the Innovation & Growth programme (NEP) with a borough business participating in each programme.

244.8 LOCAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT (LED) MEASURE

Invest NI has written to Chief Executives with regard to progress on the LED measure, now in the final quarter of the current financial year. The deadline for submission of LED applications, as set by DETI and DFP, is 28 February 2013.

Particular attention was drawn to a mobile app which has been developed by Invest NI to promote the NI sales proposition and for which Lisburn Council is piloting a sub region version. A contribution of £2,500 is being sought.

An initiative “Northern Ireland Connections” which aims to develop and grow the support of people with a connection to Northern Ireland by birth, family, education and business has also been developed.

Due to other priorities Ballymoney has not been able to allocate budget to the LED projects being developed and implemented within the North East Region, but is participating in enterprise projects, through the local enterprise agency, the North East Partnership, in a food business programme led by Coleraine Borough Council and was signposting businesses to other programmes available from other delivery agents.

Programmes on offer in the INI regional LED programme were being reviewed taking account of the programme areas Council had expressed interest in (DC223.10) ie, innovation development, engineering growth, green energy and exploring enterprise (one step further).

Committee **AGREED:**

that the mobile app sales proposition should not be progressed at the present time and would best be taken forward as a cluster council initiative.

- * **Councillor Finlay arrived at the meeting at 6.55pm during consideration of the above matter.**

244.9 INVEST NI – EXPORT SKILLS & KNOWLEDGE WORKSHOPS

A programme of workshops on export skills and knowledge, available through Invest NI has been drawn to attention of local business. Providing knowledge and understanding of the processes involved in planning and implementing export activity and building export skills, the workshops are delivered by highly experienced industry practitioners who have held responsibility for managing the exporting function within their own businesses or for employers. This and similar programmes available to local business are included on Council's.

244.10 SOCIAL INVESTMENT FUND

Council's Community Recreational Facilities Programme at Glebeside has been selected for progression to the economic appraisal stage.

244.11 DRUMAHEGLIS MARINA & CARAVAN PARK (RIVERS PROJECT)

A commission has been awarded for design and build of interpretation, part funded by NITB, at the Drumaheglis site. A revised annex to letter of offer had been issued following review of the financial plan taking account of the tender value and this had been signed on Council's behalf.

244.12 ECAR PROJECT

This project is now rolling out, with the first installation in Ballymoney (not yet live) in the Townhead Street Car Park. The new facilities will be promoted in association with private sector partners when all installations were in place.

244.13 VISITOR PASS

A workshop has been held with attraction providers and council officers in the Causeway Coast & Glens region to explore the development of a visitor pass.

244.14 CAUSEWAY COAST & GLENS HERITAGE TRUST - FUNDING

Arising from the report to the last meeting on the application by the Trust and request for a letter of "intent to support" the Trust for the next two years to increase the longer term stability of the organization **IT IS RECOMMENDED** that Council confirm funding of £7,000 to the Trust in the year 2013/14, as provided for in the rates and provide a letter of intent to support the Trust in the following year 2014/15.

Over the next two years the Heritage Trust will continue to enhance the delivery of its activities for its Board, funding partners and the wider communities who live work and enjoy the Causeway Coast and Glens, including specific projects in the Ballymoney borough.

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

to recommend that Council confirm funding of £7,000 to the Causeway Coast and Glens Heritage Trust in the year 2013/14, as provided for in the rates and provide a letter of intent to support the Trust with funding of £7,000 in the following year 2014/15.

244.15 CUSTOMER CARE AWARDS

Managers and staff from the Accommodation, Activities, Hospitality, and Passenger Transport sectors have successfully completed the internationally recognised customer service training programme, World Host.

The delegates were presented with their certificates by The Chair, Alderman Bill Kennedy, at a reception held in the Council Offices last week. A further funded programme will be run in the council offices on Tuesday 26th February and Tuesday 5th March 2013.

To help businesses gain the competitive edge at this time of opportunity for tourism in Northern Ireland the Northern Ireland Tourist Board has partnered with the sector Skills Council People 1st to provide World Host customer service training in Northern Ireland. Financial assistance is available from the Department of Employment and Learning for organisations in the private sector in the retail,

hospitality, leisure, travel or passenger transport sectors with less than 250 employees.

The Chair said Ballymoney has often been known for its excellent customer service, and now this training course has developed these skills and formally recognised them. This will help businesses gain the competitive edge at this time of opportunity for tourism. He encouraged other businesses within tourism and retail to take part in the next course later this month.

The Chair recorded congratulations to the successful participants and commended the programme, which he said provided excellent value for money, to tourism and retail sector in the borough.

244.16 TRAILS DEVELOPMENT

A business meeting hosted by Ballymoney and Moyle Councils on 18th February, on the occasion of a visit by the Clan Donnell Trust, Isle of Skye, for the official opening of Sheans Horse Farm Historical & Heritage Centre, explored the development of The Clan Donnell trail in the North East. The facility is based in Ballymoney Borough as is the Orra battle site. The proposed scheme at Altarichard View Point will be a key link and one of Ballymoney's hidden treasures –Croaghan mountain- is one of the most spectacular views in Ireland. A 360 degree panoramic view takes in from the Glens of Antrim, to the Ayrshire Coast, the Highlands and Western Isles of Scotland and from Donegal and Monaghan to the Mourne Mountains in Co. Down.

This new Heritage and Historical Trail Centre on the farm at Armoy, on the edge of the Glens of Antrim was officially opened on the 19th February 2013 by a delegation from the Isle of Skye Scotland, reaffirming the traditionally close links between North East Ulster and the Highlands and Western Islands of Scotland. It is the first dedicated centre of its kind which details the history, heritage, myths and legends of this part of North East Ulster and gives a fascinating insight into the lives of rich and colourful characters that rose to prominence in the early 16th and 17th centuries, a time of great economic, political and social turbulence in this part of Ulster. A central theme will be the strong influence of the McDonnell Clan who in the 16th century controlled the Highlands and the Western Islands of Scotland and intermittently large parts of the North Coast of Ulster.

The Centre tells of the struggle for power between the Irish Clans and Chieftains and with the English during the 16th century. It focuses on the story of one clan chieftain, Sorley Boy Mac Donnell, who had very strong links with Scotland and on his great influence on the North Coast. His story links many of the old monuments along the Causeway Coastal Route from Dunluce to Carrickfergus Castle with the Mc Donnell clan.

Alderman Kennedy commenting on the visit to Shean's Horse Farm Historical & Heritage Centre, said it was very interesting and a powerful presentation which was well supported and has a lot of potential.

Commenting on the business meeting the Chair said that the visitors were very interested to learn of the history of this part of North East Ulster and to have the opportunity to view the many rare finds from bronze and medieval periods on display in our Museum, and the memorabilia associated with Irish Motor Cycle Road Racing. Referring to the historic links and the common history between the two areas, particularly the story of Clan Donald, he said there was interest in exploring the development of this unique history to the mutual benefit of both Ballymoney and Moyle district and further afield. The visit from representatives from the Clan Donald Trust to the opening of Shean's Horse Farm Historical & Heritage Centre presented a marvelous opportunity for us to explore the development of the Clan Donald links here and a key part of the story is the famous battle of Orra, located at Shean's Horse Farm in our borough.

Congratulating the facility owner, Danny McKinney, on the enhancement of Shean's Horse Farm to incorporate a heritage and historical centre he said that this adds value to the visitor experience. This part of the borough, on the edge of the Glens, is particularly beautiful with some spectacular views along the Orra Scenic Route. The Council's plans to enhance the Altarichard View Point where there is outstanding scenery and long distance views to Bally Valley and the North Coast will also add value to our tourism product and it is great to have the opportunity to build on it.

The Officer advised that arising from the successful business meeting, and support by Moyle District Council, Tourism Partnership and Heritage Trust for developing a McDonald trail in the region, an application was being submitted by the Heritage Trust to the EU Northern Periphery Programme to explore the initiative. Preparation of detailed plans and application for planning permission for the Altarichard View Point was being accelerated in the light of its strong links with the McDonald trail with a view to proposed implementation under year one of the landscape partnership scheme.

244.17 EVENTS 2012 - HER MAJESTY'S DIAMOND JUBILEE YEAR

A letter of thanks has been received from Her Majesty's Lord Lieutenant for Co. Antrim, Mrs Joan Christie, OBE, thanking Council for the support received during the Diamond Jubilee year which had ensured the delivery of a programme of events of which she was very proud.

244.18 EVENTS 2013

A cross Council workshop on events is to be held. An outline events programme for 2013 events has been prepared and will be considered by the events group

and presented to committee for consideration. Delivery of events in collaboration with event partners is also being explored.

244.19 TOWNSCAPE HERITAGE INITIATIVE

Arising from approval of the rate estimate 2013/14, **IT IS RECOMMENDED** that Council confirm the additional £10,000 towards this HLF initiative in the year 2013/14.

The recruitment exercise, on behalf of Ballymoney Regeneration Company, for a THI Project Manager to implement the THI initiative has commenced and it is hoped that the official launch of the scheme will take place in early summer.

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

to recommend that Council confirm the additional £10,000 towards this HLF initiative in the year 2013/14.

244.20 SMALL BUSINESS RATE RELIEF EXTENDED

There has been an extension, by the Assembly, of the small business rate relief scheme and also the extension of the threshold to include, from 1st April, properties with net annual valuation (NAV) of up to £15,000. The aim of the scheme is to support the growth and sustainability of small businesses in Northern Ireland. According to the Minister the extended scheme will add a further 3,500 businesses benefitting from a reduction in their rates. The extension of the rate relief scheme had been welcomed by local businesses who were appreciative of the support of council and local MLAs in representing the case to the Finance Minister and the Assembly.

The DSD Minister has published a report on the role of his department in supporting Northern Ireland's town and city centres. The report, produced by a taskforce of senior civil servants, was developed following 29 public meetings across Northern Ireland, including one in Ballymoney, to hear the views of local traders and high street businesses. A report will be tabled at committee's next meeting.

244.21 ENVIRONMENTAL IMPROVEMENTS

A consultation event was held on 12th February to present and seek views of local community and business group representatives on the proposals for the treatment of properties in the Linenhall Street Development opportunity site and at our key gateways to the town centre. The project aims to transform the appearance of a terrace of derelict buildings in Linenhall Street and Charles Street in co-operation

with owners. A second phase of work looks wider at transforming the appearance key access points which are creating a negative and unwelcoming impression of the town.

The project involves minor building repairs, painting, removal of vegetation and erection of virtual window graphics representing the town's commercial and residential history. While accepting that the spruce-up scheme is a short-term fix, it is believed that taking these simple measures can help Improving the physical environment and streetscape, generating media interest, increase footfall and trade, increasing civic pride, improve the image of the town and reduce anti-social behaviour and vandalism.

The funding bid to DSD towards the Linenhall Street Opportunity site is currently being subjected to economic appraisal, while the bid to DoE for dereliction intervention funding was unsuccessful. The DoE funding totaling £1M was awarded to five districts in Northern Ireland - to Fermanagh, £380,000 in the run up to the G8 summit, Belfast a £300,000 package, benefitting hundreds of derelict sites and properties at Broadway on the Falls and the Crumlin Road Belfast, a spruce up of Lisburn City Centre is awarded £160,000, while removal of eyesores Moyle district (Bushmills, Ballycastle, Ballintoy, Waterfoot, Mosside, Armoyle) will get £100,000 with Down district getting £60,000 for Ballynahinch, Newcastle and Downpatrick.

A review of current town environmental improvement initiatives is underway and revised proposals will be presented in due course.

Council is required by DSD to undertake survey work and footfall counts to provide baseline information for the Linenhall Street virtual shop project and resource will be required to undertake this work which is outwith the funding provided by Council.

* **Councillor Finlay and Alderman Campbell left the meeting at 7.20pm.**

244.22 RESURFACING OF TOWNHEAD STREET CAR PARK

DRD Roads Service has let a contract for resurfacing of Townhead Street Car Park. These improvements are a welcome investment by DRD in the town. Work is planned to start on week commencing 18th February and efforts will be made to carry out as much of the preparation as possible during night hours and on Sunday's (24/2 and 3/3) when main resurfacing aspects are planned. While some daytime work will be required it is hoped to keep the car park open and minimize disruption.

244.23 TOWN MARKETING AND EVENTS PROGRAMME

A review of the Christmas programme has been carried out and event teams will develop proposals for fashion and food events. A draft marketing plan including

events and marketing and advertising campaigns is being developed and costed. Arrangements have been made to consult with the Chamber of Commerce on the draft plan and to agree priority actions.

244.24 REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION STRATEGY (RTS) 2002-12

The Department of Regional Development has issued the RTS Monitoring Report for the period 1 April 2007 – 31 March 2012. The purpose of the RTS is to support the Regional Development Strategy and to make a significant contribution towards achieving the longer-term transportation vision – *“To have a modern, sustainable, safe transportation system which benefits society, the economy and the environment and which actively contributes to social inclusion and everyone’s quality of life.”*

The report covers the Belfast Metropolitan Transport Plan (BMTP), Regional Strategic Transport Network Transport Plan 2015 (RSTN TP), Sub Regional Transport Plan (SRTP), Accessible Transport Strategy, other RTS Transportation-related initiatives, equality monitoring and financing of DRD RTS Transportation initiatives.

A copy of the report is available, on request, from the Office of the Chief Executive. The report and related documents are published on the Department’s website www.drdni.gov.uk/rts.

244.25 GAS (APPLICATIONS FOR LICENCES AND EXTENSIONS) (AMENDMENT) REGULATIONS

The Gas (Applications for Licences and Extensions) (Amendment) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2013 were made on the 7th February and layed at the Assembly Business Office.

The Regulations will come into operation from 11th March 2013 - with the revised fees payable with gas licence applications to the Northern Ireland Authority for Utility Regulation applying from today.

A copy of the Regulations and supporting Explanatory Memorandum can be found on the attached link.

<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/nisr/2013/24/contents/made>

244.26 UPDATE: NORTHERN REGIONAL COLLEGE CAMPUS AMALGAMATION PROPOSALS (240.5)

Head of Corporate & Development Services advised that NRC Director and his management team had initially agreed to attend a meeting with Council, however, they have withdrawn from this meeting deeming it inappropriate to discuss prior to

the Minister reaching his decision. The Director has indicated that they will attend after this.

This being all the business the meeting closed at 7.25pm.