

Ballymoney Borough Council
Development Committee Meeting No 260 – 17th September 2014

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BALLYMONEY BOROUGH COUNCIL

Minutes of Development Committee Meeting No 260 held in the McKinley Room, Riada House, Ballymoney on Wednesday 17th September 2014 at 7.00 pm.

IN THE CHAIR: Councillor J Finlay

PRESENT: **Aldermen**
F Campbell
C Cousley

Councillors
W Blair
R Halliday
R McAfee
T McKeown
A McLean
I Stevenson
Councillor E Robinson, MBE

APOLOGIES **Alderman**
H Connolly
Councillor
J Atkinson
A Cavlan

IN ATTENDANCE: Head of Corporate & Development Services
Chief Executive

Elgin Energy (Item 3)
Ronan Kilduff MD
David Meehan

260.1 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

260.2 MINUTES - MEETING NO 259 – 18TH JUNE 2014

It was proposed by Alderman Kennedy, seconded by Councillor McLean and
AGREED:

that the minutes of Meeting No 259 – 18th June 2014, as circulated, be confirmed as a correct record.

260.3 PROPOSED SOLAR PV DEVELOPMENT ON LANDS AT RASHARKIN

Representatives Managing Director, Ronan Kilduff and David Meehan from Elgin Energy, attended the meeting to present an outline of their proposed solar PV development on a farm located to the west of the village of Rasharkin which has now been developed to the stage where the consultation process has commenced. The planning application the company are preparing to lodge next week for the Rasharkin project is for an 18MWp development. Elgin Energy has developed a large pipeline of projects across England, Wales and Scotland and has been working in Northern Ireland since 2011.

The Rasharkin project is for an 18MWp development. It will be one of the largest projects under consideration in Northern Ireland and when completed will represent an overall investment of over £20,000,000. Elgin MD Ronan Kilduff explained the economic, environmental and social advantages of Solar PV development, a photovoltaic energy where sunlight is converted into electricity. The installation will have a life expectancy of about 30 years. Existing hedgerows will be retained and during its lifetime the site can continue to be used for sheep grazing, returning to agricultural use upon decommissioning of the project.

The Chair thanked the representatives for attending and updating members on the proposed project. Mayor Alderman Kennedy welcomed this significant investment in the Council's area, the spin off benefits, the farm diversification opportunity and the community benefit fund which the company is committed to establishing. He expressed the hope that it will be positively received by the local community and planners.

260.4 JOBS FAIR

The Department of Employment and Learning in conjunction with Council, are hosting a Job Fair at the Joey Dunlop Leisure Centre on Thursday 25th September, 10 a.m. – 4 p.m., with the support of Mervyn Storey MLA. There has been an excellent response from employers and Council in association with Acorn The Business Centre who will be represented at the event.

The event's aim was to facilitate constituents find career opportunities, let them know about jobs available, help them find opportunities to develop their skills, and provide help and support through a number of organisations who can offer advice and guidance on skills development, up-skilling, job search, interview techniques, business start up and careers guidance.

The Head of Corporate & Development Services acknowledged the contribution of M Storey, MLA in securing the event and working to encourage employer participation.

260.5 BROWN SIGNS

Brown tourism signage is being advanced with Roads Service for the Dark Hedges and Memorial Gardens.

260.6 TOWN EVENTS

Event & marketing plans have been developed for Food Festival 11-25th October; Halloween 29th – 31st October and Christmas Programme & Switch On (20th November).

Members put forward suggestions for the event programmes and marketing activity.

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

to recommend that a £10,000 advertising budget be allocated for development and delivery of an advertising and marketing campaign in the run up to Christmas.

260.7 TOWN DEVELOPMENT

7.1 Project Delivery Arrangements

Town development and regeneration initiatives, including the THI Project and Masterplan initiatives are being advanced in association with Ballymoney Regeneration Company. Given that the TCM Group, a limited company without a share capital, has been dormant for several years arrangements have been commenced to wind up the company. Any remaining funds, it is recommended, be transferred to Regeneration Company, a like company.

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

to recommend that the proposal to wind up Ballymoney town Centre Management Group Limited, with any remaining funds being transferred to Ballymoney Regeneration Company, be endorsed.

7.2 Revitalisation Investment for Town

The Social Development Minister, Nelson McCausland, has formally announced funding of £200,000 for the Ballymoney Revitalisation Project. The total cost of the project is £250,000, with Council contributing the balance of £50,000. The scheme will be administered by Council and is being managed by a project steering group comprising members nominated by the Chamber of Commerce and Council. It will provide for improvements in the appearance and exterior of properties in Main Street/Castlecroft area and provide for a promotional and marketing programme.

The Head of Corporate & Development Services advised that Commercial properties in the scheme area were invited at the end of July to make application for a share of the funding. The process closed on 22nd August. Some 30 applications have been received, but due to a slight delay in securing funding for the scheme consideration of the applications was delayed. The assessment process has now commenced and applicants will be informed of the outcome as soon as possible thereafter. Works have to be complete by 31st March. The proposed initiative is based on previous successful regeneration schemes in others towns and cities whereby government funding was directly targeted at distinct commercial districts and small retailers and traders.

The Chair expressed concern at what he described as “misinformation” circulating about a proposed shopfront scheme and what use the funding of £200,000 secured from DSD for town centre revitalisation is to be put to. A statement would issue to clarify that this is not a dereliction intervention scheme, similar to those funded by DoE, but rather a shop front improvement scheme. He said that the investment is really good news for the town and would create a more attractive environment for shoppers.

The Head of Corporate & Development Services explained that the scope of works, targeted at a distinct commercial district, will involve minor repairs, painting of shopfronts, new signage to enhance the character of the conservation area and the overall appearance of premises in the designated area. The project also includes a marketing and events plan to promote the destination.

7.3 THI

It was reported that the THI Project Manager had resigned to take up a new post. Temporary arrangements to cover the post had been put in place pending filling the post via vacancy control/recruitment.

7.4 Transportation Assessment – Ballymoney & Ballycastle

DSD are currently facing a difficult funding situation and no revenue projects, including the transportation assessment for Ballymoney & Ballycastle, are being approved. This assignment is critical to the advancement of a range of projects included in the masterplan action plan. While we have completed a procurement exercise and established a select list of three contractors who were successful at the PPQ stage, and we are preparing ITT documents, in the absence of confirmation of funding we are unable, currently, to proceed to the invite tenders. A further report will be made to committee.

* **The Chair (Councillor Finlay) left the meeting and the Chair was taken by the Vice Chair Councillor Blair.**

7.5 Music/Teachers Centre

There has been a delay in the issue of the public sector trawl for this former Music/Teachers Centre in Charles Street in which Council renewed its interest to safeguard for future generations this key part of the heritage and history of the town.

The Head of Corporate & Development Services advised that the NEELB intended to move forward in the near future with a trawl involving interest from public sector bodies in the property. A further report will be made at the next meeting of Committee.

260.8 DRUMAHEGLIS MARINA PROJECT (NITB/Interreg)

The project completion evaluation report has been completed and submitted to NITB.

A range of PR and advertising is rolling out via radio and other marketing channels to promote the “Fresh Waters” brand campaign and a summer camp exchange between Cavan and Coleraine is being progressed as is a Walking Festival between the partner towns. A closing event for the Rivers Project is to be arranged with Drumaheglis as the suggested venue.

The meeting was updated on promotional events for weekend and mid-week breaks at Drumaheglis Camping Cabins, a fashion shoot at Drumaheglis with the River Bann backdrop and plans for an awards initiative on favourite places along the lower Bann.

260.9 CAUSEWAY COAST & GLENS HERITAGE TRUST – HEART OF THE GLENS PROJECT

Issue No. 3 of the project newsletter was tabled.

260.10 WW1 LEGACY FUND

Site visits have taken place and projects are progressing. A request for amendment to Dunaghy Flute Band Legacy project providing a Memorial Mural rather than the original proposal for a memorial plaque at the Glendinning Memorial Hall, Dunaghy had been considered and agreed and an amended letter of offer, with conditions, issued and accepted.

260.11 LOCAL GOVERNMENT REFORM – DEVELOPMENT SERVICES

The Leisure & Development Cluster Working Groups have been advancing strategy documents and in respect of the Development Committee functions committee is advised that a tender has been awarded to Blueprint Development Consultancy for development of an economic development strategy and tenders have been received and are to be assessed in the next week for a tourism strategy. Engagement continues with DETI/INI/DSD on transferring functions. The report on the Tackling Deprivation assignment has been completed and is scheduled to be presented to the Shadow Council.

Following on from the CCG Capital Project Workshop a Cluster Physical Generation Working Group has been established comprising officers from development units for the purpose of integrating and planning urban, rural and resort regeneration within the strategic context of CCG area of responsibility. The three key tasks being taken forward are: The merging of the Cluster Councils Capital Projects and DSD Projects; The review and ratification of the live and pipeline projects; and the development of a terms of reference for a CCG Urban / Physical / Resort Regeneration Strategy.

260.12 REVIEW OF THE NORTHERN IRELAND TOURIST BOARD AND WIDER TOURISM STRUCTURES

This consultation exercise has been reported to committee and a draft response was tabled and key comments outlined. The NILGA engagement event on 16th September was attended by the Chair of Committee, Officer.

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

to recommend that the Mayor, Committee Chair, and Head of Corporate & Development Services meet to review the draft responses and finalise Council's response which would be tabled at Council's meeting on 6th October.

260.13 RURAL DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME – LAG FORMATION & ANIMATION

With the reform of local government, the Rural Development Programme (RDP) is proposed to be aligned to new Council boundaries which inevitably means change to the current operations. Representatives of RDP clusters have met to discuss and formulate proposals to DARD on LAGA Formation and Animation and a report has been compiled by the Rural Network for NI for submission to DARD.

260.14 CONSULTATION ON PROPOSED CHANGES TO THE NORTHERN IRELAND RENEWABLES OBLIGATION (NIRO)

The Department of Enterprise Trade & Investment has published a statutory consultation on proposed changes to the NI Renewables Obligation.(NIRO) The NIRO is the main financial support mechanism for encouraging the development of renewable electricity generation in Northern Ireland.

This consultation sets out proposed Renewables Obligation Certificate (ROC) banding levels under the NIRO for small scale onshore wind, hydro and anaerobic digestion generating stations with a maximum installed capacity up to 5 Megawatts (MW) and for solar photovoltaic (PV) generating stations up to 250 Kilowatts (kW). It is proposed that the changes will be made through the Renewables Obligation Order (Northern Ireland) 2015 to come into operation on 1 April 2015. The consultation document is available on the DETI website at www.detini.energy.niro.gov.uk

The consultation closes for responses on 25 September 2014.

260.15 INTERNATIONAL LINKS

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

to recommend that an invitation to the Mayor and four delegates from Vanves be confirmed for October, including attendance at the Sports Awards.

This concluded the business of the meeting the time being 8.35 pm