

LIMAVADY BOROUGH COUNCIL
COMHAIRLE BHUIRG LÉIM AN MHADAIDH

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE
1 DECEMBER 2003

Minutes of a meeting of the above Committee held in the Council Chamber, Council Offices, 7 Connell Street, Limavady at 7.30 pm on the above date.

PRESENT:

Aldermen M Carten, J Dolan, Councillors A Brolly, F Brolly, B Brown, M Coyle, M Donaghy (in the chair), B Douglas, G Mullan, J Rankin, E Stevenson.

IN ATTENDANCE:

Town Clerk, Economic Development Officer, Clerk
Ms Catherine Doherty, Community Development & Funding Support Officer
Mr Paul Beattie, Project Officer LAP Ltd/RVRD Ltd

APOLOGIES:

Alderman G Robinson, Councillors L Cubitt, M McGuigan.

ABSENT:

Councillor D Lowry.

MINUTES:

The Minutes of meeting held on 3 November 2003 were approved and signed, on the proposal of Councillor M Coyle, seconded by Alderman J Dolan.

MATTERS ARISING

None.

Members agreed to bring forward item 4 on the agenda.

BUSINESS START PROGRAMME – TO RECEIVE MR MARTIN DEVLIN, LIMAVADY SMALL BUSINESS AGENCY:

The Chairperson welcomed Mr M Devlin to the meeting.

Mr M Devlin gave a detailed presentation on the current status of the Northern Ireland Business Start Programme (NIBSP). He reported that:

- NIBSP was a 4-year programme to create 6,270 new businesses, 135 within the Limavady Borough Council area;
- the partnership of funders included Limavady Borough Council, Invest Northern Ireland and ERDF;
- analysis of programme activity from 01.09.01 – 31.12.03 (31 months) resulted in 382 enquiries, 292 interviews completed, 112 offers placed and 179 jobs created;
- the projected new-start performances to 31.08.05 (48 months) could result in 173 actual new starts with the target being 135;
- the cost per business to Council was £350;
- the cost per job to Council was £219;
- the current activity of Limavady Small Business Agency included NIBSP, Limavady Business Development Programme, Small Companies to Wider Markets, Roe Valley Business Club, ICT training for farmers, Entrepreneurship.

Mr M Devlin answered members' questions and the responses were noted as follows:

- Invest N Ireland would continue to liaise with Council about the future of the programme after August 2004;
- the farming community and former employees of Desmonds had taken part in the programmes;
- clients would be contacted in the New Year to discuss pitfalls in the programmes;
- in terms of successful businesses the service industry had created much more employment than any other sector;

The Chairperson commended Mr M Devlin for his continued effort and success in the Business Start Programme throughout the Borough and thanked him for attending. He left the meeting at 7.55pm.

Councillor J Rankin joined the meeting at 7.55pm.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT REPORT – DECEMBER 2003:

The Economic Development Officer presented his report for December 2003 and enlarged on it as follows:

The Town Clerk joined the meeting at 8.00pm.

Community Development: The Economic Development Officer said the officer's role involved significant co-ordination and team working responsibilities within Council and with other partners together with monitoring and evaluation of the effectiveness of funds.

He explained that one of the primary roles was to assist sections of the community who need additional help to access funding for projects. In summary the officer assisted some 214 groups and over the last years had assisted 23 groups to secure £412k of funding and that many groups had declared their satisfaction with the support they had received.

The Community Development & Funding Support Officer answered members' questions and the responses were noted as follows:

- groups initially required assistance in community development practices which could take from 3-5 years;
- community groups would not be able to sustain their groups on their own;
- funding bulletins were the main source of information to community groups in relation to current information of funding and information sessions and sources of funding available;
- under EU guidelines the officers were not permitted to complete application forms on behalf of community groups/individuals;
- guidance and assistance would continue to be given equally throughout the community in the Borough;

Members congratulated and commended the work of the Community Development & Funding Support Officer throughout the whole Borough and thanked her for preparing such a comprehensive report.

PEACE 2 and LEADER+: The Economic Development Officer stated that the roles of Council's Local Economic Development Strategy and PEACE and LEADER Programmes was complementary in the Borough of Limavady whilst each had its own distinctive themes. The operation of the service level agreements between Council and the PEACE and LEADER boards had greatly facilitated this complementarity in practice.

The Project Officer tabled a detailed summary of the current status of both the PEACE and LEADER+ programmes.

The Project Officer answered members' questions and the responses were noted as follows:

- there may be a PEACE 3 but it would be difficult at this stage to know what format this would take;
- additional funding could be forthcoming for the PEACE programme which would be allocated to a reserve list of capital projects;
- slippage money would be re-distributed into the community;
- advertisements for different measures within the programmes were regularly placed in the local press and on the PEACE and LEADER websites;

The Chairperson thanked both officers for attending and they left the meeting at 8.40pm.

Rehabilitation of Prisoners: The Economic Development Officer reported that further discussions with the Department for Employment and Learning (DEL) had indicated that the Department was considering a “prison surgery” service for prisoners being released in line with the existing provision in Great Britain. He added that DEL was still conferring with the N Ireland office on this matter. He stated that Council could organise an awareness programme for local businesses in conjunction with NIACRO which would have to be funded.

Councillor B Brown proposed, seconded by Alderman J Dolan, that no action should be taken until the “prison surgery” service had been implemented.

Councillor A Brolly proposed an amendment, seconded by Councillor F Brolly, that Council had a moral obligation to organise an awareness programme for local businesses.

The amendment, on being put to the meeting, was declared lost, 3 voting for, 6 against.

The proposal, on being put to the meeting, was declared carried, 8 voting for, 2 against and 1 abstention.

The substantive motion, that no action should be taken until the “prison surgery” service had been implemented, was declared carried.

The Economic Development Officer’s report for December 2003 was approved, on the proposal of

ANY OTHER BUSINESS:

Integrated School: The Town Clerk reminded members about the forthcoming steering committee meeting to be held in Radisson Roe Park Hotel.

NEXT MEETING:

5 January 2004.

**THIS CONCLUDED THE BUSINESS
(The meeting ended at 9.00pm)**