

**LIMAVADY BOROUGH COUNCIL  
COMHAIRLE BHUIRG LÉIM AN MHADAIDH**

**DEVELOPMENT SERVICES COMMITTEE**

**11 DECEMBER 2007**

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

**PRESENT:**

Aldermen G Mullan, J Rankin and G Robinson. Councillors A Brolly, P Butcher, M Carten, B Chivers, L Cubitt, M Donaghy, B Douglas, C Ó hOisín, J F McElhinney, A Robinson (chair) and E Stevenson.

**IN ATTENDANCE:**

Committee Clerk, Director of Development and the Chief Executive.

**APOLOGIES:** - Councillor M Coyle.

**PRESENTATION BY OAKMORE DEVELOPMENTS REGARDING THE MARKET YARD SITE:**

**IN COMMITTEE** on the proposal of Councillor Brolly, seconded by Councillor McElhinney. Councillor Douglas requested that his opposition to discussing the presentation in committee be noted.

The Chair welcomed Mr Charlie Mullan, Market Yard Developer, Mr Mark McCaul, Letting Agent, Mr Kevin Cartin and Mr Leon Smith, Architects for Oakmore Developments to the meeting.

Mr Mullan explained that the Catherine Street area required regeneration to capitalise on the current retail opportunities available and Oakmore Developments intended to provide Limavady with a high quality retail facility on the lands bound by Linenhall Street, Catherine Street and the River Roe.

He outlined that the major retail development on the former market yard site would not go ahead without the proactive support of Limavady Borough Council as a small area of grass of less than 1% of the total 5 acre site had not been acquired by agreement from the owner of no 61 Catherine Street. He reminded members that the site had two full planning approvals, the first for 109 residential units and second full approval for a 70,000 ft<sup>2</sup> retail park. He said the site was of economic importance and the opportunity of benefit to the public and ratepayers should not be lost. He suggested that Council take responsibility to ensure the site would be developed for the benefit of citizens and traders of the Borough.

Mr Cartin stressed that the retail option would ensure inward investment of £25 million, create 250 – 400 new jobs, bring in £260K by way of rates, refresh vibrancy levels to the town centre, be of interest to a major hotel chain in locating to a purpose built facility and would bring social, tourism and leisure possibilities, such as cinema as a result of private investment.

Mr Mullan highlighted that because of recent job losses in Limavady and commercial threat to the town due to two new retail schemes in Coleraine, it would be a mistake of monumental proportions if this opportunity was lost. He gave a commitment that the residential option would be shelved and Oakmore Developments would immediately proceed with the necessary logistics, including enabling works to being on site early in the new year, with a target date of mid September 2008 for hand over of phase 1 to end users.

The Chair thanked the representatives from Oakmore for their informative presentation and the deputation left the chamber at 7.45 pm.

Councillor Butcher proposed that Council exercise their powers under the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Northern Ireland Order 2002, Section 8 to support economic development, and the rejuvenation of Limavady Town Centre by commencing the process to acquire part of the grass area and sheds currently blocking the Retail Development of the lands at Catherine Street, Linenhall Street/Main Street, so that the Retail Development of these lands can successfully go ahead. The proposal was seconded by Councillor Brolly.

The overall development was welcomed by members but a number of objections were put forward to Councillor Butcher's proposal and caution was expressed at Council getting involved in something that was not within its remit. Reference was made to the views of the owner of no 61 Catherine Street and it was suggested that members use their influence to negotiate rather than proceeding to vest the land. Reference was also made to human right issues and it was suggested that legal opinion be obtained regarding the proposal.

After further debate, the Chief Executive pointed out that although no further guidance had been identified on the matter, if approved Council could apply to vest the land for economic purposes but this could be objected to and could lead to a public enquiry. Council was advised to get further legal opinion.

A recorded vote was requested and the proposal was put to the meeting and declared carried with 8, Councillor Carten, Alderman Mullan, Councillor Chivers, Councillor Butcher, Councillor Donaghy, Councillor Brolly, Councillor Ó hOisín and Councillor McElhinney voting for and 2, Councillor Douglas and Alderman Robinson voted against, with Councillor Robinson, Councillor Stevenson and Alderman Rankin abstaining from the vote. **OUT OF COMMITTEE** on the proposal of Councillor Butcher, seconded by Councillor Chivers.

#### **MINUTES:**

The minutes of meeting held on 13 November 2007 were approved and signed on the proposal of Alderman Robinson, seconded by Councillor Carten.

#### **MATTERS ARISING:**

**North West 200:** It was agreed on the proposal of Alderman Robinson, seconded by Alderman Rankin that Council would provide financial support for the 2008 North West 200 in the sum of £3,500. It was noted that Council would be promoted in a variety of ways, including branding, access to website, trade exhibitions and media coverage in the week leading up to the event and post event.

## **DIRECTOR OF DEVELOPMENT REPORT – DECEMBER 2007:**

The Director of Development presented the Development Report for December 2007 and enlarged thereon. The recommendations within were adopted on the proposal of Councillor Ó hOisín, seconded by Alderman Robinson subject to the following:

**Replacement Tourist Information Points:** The Director of Development informed members that tenders had been sought for replacement of the 9 tourist information points throughout the Borough and recommended that the tender submitted by Condor Community Services Ltd in the sum of £8,730 be accepted. Agreed. It was also agreed that an additional sign be purchased and sited at a suitable location in Greysteel, subject to any statutory approaches required.

**Proposed Work and Purchases under the 2007/2008 Capital Programme:** The Director of Development gave an overview of proposed work and purchases under the 2007/08 Capital Programme. It was agreed that the works would be progressed. A request was made for additional bins to be provided at Benone Beach.

**Request for Financial Assistance:** Council approved application received and assessed in accordance with policy for funding of Irish National Sheepdog Trial by Irish National Drumsurn 2008 Organising Committee in the sum of £750. It was agreed that the request for £200 financial assistance to hold a Road Safety Primary School Poster Competition by Limavady Road Safety Committee would be supported from either Community Safety or the DPP first, then allocate to Community Development.

Councillor Butcher queried recommendation to refuse request by St Patrick's College, Dungiven for financial assistance towards costs associated with their school musical production and said this could be seen as discrimination. In response to a query it was confirmed that funding towards events held as part of the Jazz & Blues Festival went to the Festival Committee.

The Chief Executive explained that the recommendation by the Director of Development was in line with Council policy not to provide financial assistance for events such as this, as Council did not have a remit for education. After further clarification, Councillor Butcher withdrew comments made in relation to the recommendation.

**Development of Plans for Enhanced Community/Recreation Provision for Dungiven and Surrounding Area:** The Director of Development sought approval to secure external assistance to undertake a local consultation, prepare a feasibility study, undertake an economic appraisal and develop draft plans for enhanced community/recreation provision for Dungiven and surrounding area. Agreed, subject to extending the report on recreational needs to cover all areas of the Borough.

**Request from Roe Valley Chamber of Trade:** Members noted that the Roe Valley Chamber of Trade had requested a meeting with Council to discuss the recent decision regarding the Civic Centre. It was agreed on the proposal of Alderman Robinson, seconded by Alderman Mullan that the meeting would take place in January 2008. It was also suggested that consideration be given to meeting with the ratepayers to hear their views regarding a Civic Centre in the Borough.

**Grant Assistance under the Community Support Plan:** The Director of Development outlined that the Community Services grant applications had been received & scored and recommended that the 24 groups who met the criteria be awarded funding as outlined within the report.

A number of queries were raised regarding the recommendations. It was suggested that the criteria for the grants be reviewed for the following year. The recommendation was agreed and the Director of Development agreed to respond to the queries raised.

**Pathway from Irish Green Street to Blackburn Park:** The Director of Development reminded members of the suggestion made at the November 2007 Monthly meeting to close the pathway from Irish Green Street to Blackburn Park. She said the pathway was considered a public right of way and there was no evidence of Council owning the path, which was still used by the public. It was suggested that Roads Service or Council provide additional lighting on the pathway and the park itself.

**Seagate Plant:** Members were updated on response from Aideen McGinley, Permanent Secretary, Department of Employment & Learning to the Seagate closure and that a meeting was being arranged with her. It was suggested that when foreign companies came into Northern Ireland there should be a stipulation that if they left before staying a minimum of 20 years that they hand back a percentage of any grants they received. It was further reinforced that Seagate should hand back part of the site for units indigenous firms.

**Town Centre Regeneration – Meeting with DSD:** The Director of Development recommended that Development Staff organise a walk-through of the town, in conjunction with the Chamber of Trade to pick out areas which would benefit from Environmental Improvements which would be presented to the Department for Social Development. It was agreed that the Mayor – Councillor Stevenson, Alderman Rankin Councillor Cubitt and Councillor Ó hOisín would take part in the walk.

**Town Centre Forum:** The Director of Development informed members that the Forum met in December 2007 and after discussion by members, it was agreed the forum would be dissolved. Councillor Ó hOisín queried this and said a sub committee of Council could not be dissolved without going through Council meeting. He requested clarification on status of the Forum.

**TABLED FOR INFORMATION:**

- Timetable for series of public meetings to take place across Northern Ireland from Consultative Group of the Past.
- EHS Coast issue 02/2007
- Northern Ireland Coastal & Marine Forum – Integrated Coastal Zone Management, Striking a Sustainable Balance.

**ANY OTHER BUSINESS:**

- Reference was made to a stabbing incident at an event in Dungiven. It was suggested that if Council was going to support events, consideration should be given to minimise the risks associated with these, such as Risk Assessment Training for community organisations.
- Several members welcomed the announcement that a new prison was being built at Magilligan and the jobs this would create.
- Reference was made to vandalism at Ballykelly Community Hall and the prompt action by Council staff in providing additional lighting and erecting fencing around the bins was noted.
- Referring to the decision made earlier in the meeting to adopt the proposal to vest land at the former market yard site, the Chief Executive wanted to make it clear that he would also be seeking senior Counsel opinion regarding the matter. Agreed.
- It was agreed that the Chief Executive would try and negotiate with Omagh District Council regarding Limavady Borough Council taking the lead role in the cluster group for the Rural Development Programme.

**DATE OF NEXT MEETING:** - 8 January 2008.

**THIS CONCLUDED THE BUSINESS**  
**(The meeting ended at 9.50 pm)**

**Signed:** \_\_\_\_\_  
**Chair of Meeting**