

COOKSTOWN DISTRICT COUNCIL

Minutes of Proceedings of a DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE MEETING held in the Council Chamber on Tuesday 16th November 2010 at 7.00 pm

Present: Councillor Cassidy (Chairman)

Councillors: Baker, Clarke, Glasgow, Lees, McAleer, McCrea, McFlynn, McGarvey, McIvor, McNamee, Molloy and Quinn

Officers: Adrian McCreesh Director of Development
Emma Bell Administrative Officer

1. APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were reported on behalf of Councillors Greer, McCartney and Wilson.

2. LOUGH NEAGH PARTNERSHIP

2.1. Lough Neagh Partnership Annual Contribution

The Director of Development advised Members that Council previously agreed to provide Lough Neagh Partnership with a financial contribution of £7,500 for the financial year 2010/11 to be paid in two instalments. Approval is now sought for the release of Council's second payment of £3,000 for this financial year. As indicated within the 6 monthly Progress Report, for the period ending 30th September 2010, it is evident that Lough Neagh Partnership is evolving significantly. Furthermore Mr Shane O'Neill has recently been appointed as Chairperson for Lough Neagh Partnership and to date has been very enthusiastic to progress and achieve the organisation's key objectives over the next few years. It is anticipated they will make an application to the Heritage Lottery for a £600,000 funding project, furthermore in Spring 2011 they plan to submit an application to the Northern Ireland Tourist Board (NITB) to devise a Destination Management Plan for the Lough Neagh area. In addition funding applications have also been submitted to DCAL and the Northern

Ireland Environment Agency (NIEA) resulting in Lough Neagh Partnership's application being shortlisted by NIEA. NIEA funding confirmation is expected to be received in early 2011.

The Director of Development concluded that Lough Neagh Partnership have identified 3 key areas which will enhance and sustain the organisation's viability. It is evident that the organisation has a very clear vision which will assist them to become stronger.

It was proposed by Councillor McGarvey
Seconded by Councillor Molloy and AGREED

That Council make its second stage payment of £3,000 to Lough Neagh Partnership for the 2010/2011 financial year.

2.2. Lough Neagh Partnership

Members were advised that a letter was received from Mr Shane O'Neill, Chairperson, Lough Neagh Partnership, dated 29th October 2010 providing Members with an update on Lough Neagh Partnership's future activities. Councillor Cassidy highlighted that Lough Neagh Partnership has recently won another prestigious award within the NI category of the UK Landscape Awards. As a result Lough Neagh Partnership will now represent N Ireland as one of the 6 finalists at the UK conference in Liverpool. In addition, Lough Neagh Partnership won 3 categories of the BURA Awards earlier this year, which related to the organisation's innovative approach of both statutory and community interests working together on Lough Neagh. Councillor Cassidy congratulated Lough Neagh Partnership on their significant achievements.

NOTED.

3. SPERRINS TOURISM LTD

The Director of Development advised that Council approval is sought to release the second payment of £10,750 to Sperrins Tourism Ltd for the financial period 2010/2011. The Sperrins Tourism Progress Report for the first 6 month period ending 30th September 2010 outlines the organisation's key targets and achievements to date. Sperrins Tourism Ltd are now working in conjunction with the Northern Ireland Tourist Board (NITB) on a joint initiative to produce a Destination Management Plan for the Sperrins Region, which may assist in leveraging further funding in the future.

It was proposed by Councillor McGarvey
Seconded by Councillor Baker and AGREED

That Council release its second payment of £10,750 to Sperrins Tourism Ltd for the financial year 2010/2011.

4. ICBAN

The Director of Development advised Members that a report had previously been presented to Council outlining ICBAN's objectives for the financial year 2010/2011. ICBAN have now submitted their 12-month report outlining the achievements of their targets for 2009/10 and all documentation required for 2010/2011 has now been received to enable the first payment for 2010/2011 to be released.

It was proposed by Councillor Molloy
Seconded by Councillor McAleer and AGREED

That Council release its first payment of £6,250 to ICBAN for the financial year 2010/2011.

5. COMMUNITY SERVICES

5.1. Good Relations

Members NOTED minutes of Good Relations Meeting held on 13th October 2010.

6. DISPOSAL OF FIELDS AT LOUGHRY CAMPUS, COOKSTOWN

The Director of Development advised that the letter received from Susan Henderson, Central Advisory Unit, Land and Property Services, dated 28th October 2010, regarding the disposal of fields at Loughry Campus, Cookstown has transpired from a meeting held with Minister Michelle Gildernew MLA on 3rd February 2010 at Loughry Campus. At present Cookstown District Council is not in a position to purchase the land on their own, however Members approval is sought for Council to submit an expression of interest for the acquisition of land at Tullaghoge within the 3 week timeframe from 28th October 2010. The NIEA is prepared to work in partnership with Cookstown District Council to acquire some of the land. Furthermore the NIEA has also submitted an expression of interest in respect of this land. Members were reminded that a previous funding application submitted to Heritage Lottery some years ago was unsuccessful, however if this application is successful then it would link lands adjacent to and surrounding the Fort. The Director of Development informed Members that approval is sought from Council to forward a letter, dated 12th November 2010, to Susan Henderson, Central Advisory Unit, Land and Property Services, to express an interest in the disposal of fields at Loughry Campus, Cookstown. The letter was subsequently read out to Members seeking their approval to forward such to Land and Property Services.

It was proposed by Councillor McGarvey
Seconded by Councillor Clarke and AGREED

That Council forward an expression of interest letter, dated 12th November 2010, to Susan Henderson, Central Advisory Unit, Land and Property Services regarding the disposal of fields at Loughry Campus, Cookstown.

Councillor McCrea arrived 7.15pm.

7. LOCAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME

The Director of Development advised Members that the Department of Enterprise, Trade and Investment (DETI) conducted a “Review of the Local Economic Development Measure within the EU Sustainable Competitiveness Programme,” which encompasses the projects delivered by Council’s Economic Development Manager. The maximum value of funding that may be received is 50% and each local Council must match fund all projects. £25m has been earmarked for this measure and to date only £3m has been spent within the EU Sustainable Competitiveness Programme. There are many possible reasons for this such as local Councils being unable to match fund projects, the narrow focus of the programme or local Councils committing expenditure towards the delivery of other initiatives which are deemed ineligible under the Competitiveness Programme.

Within the proposed review DETI has put forward a proposal for local Councils to engage and establish a new LED Working Group to devise initiatives relevant to local businesses. Members were advised that the guidelines for the new LED Working Group from DETI is still fluid, however 3 nominations in total are sought - 1 Officer and 2 political representatives, comprising 1 nationalist and 1 unionist representative. Members were further informed that approval is sought for the Economic Development Manager, to be nominated as Council’s Officer representative.

It was proposed by Councillor McAleer
Seconded by Councillor McNamee and AGREED

That Councillor Clarke and the Economic Development Manager be nominated.

It was AGREED that the Unionist Representatives would agree their nomination and inform the Director of Development.

8. TOWN CENTRE REGENERATION

8.1. Town Centre Forum

8.1.1 Town Centre Masterplan

Members were advised that a Masterplan Consultation event was held in the Burnavon Arts & Cultural Centre on Thursday 21st October 2010 and subsequently a Masterplan Retail Workshop was held on Wednesday 10th November 2010. The latter event provided retailers with the opportunity to consider the key findings from the Retail Capacity Study and also to put forward any issues or solutions which they are currently facing. Members will continue to be updated regularly.

Members NOTED minutes of Cookstown Town Centre Masterplan Steering Group meeting held on 19th October 2010.

8.1.2 Town Centre Retail Development Programme

Members were advised that Council successfully delivered a Retail Development Programme in Cookstown Town last year. The programme was aimed at enhancing retailers' sales and merchandising skills etc. Approval has sought to extend the tender submitted by the previous Consultants until 31st March 2011, to deliver a Retail Development Programme in Cookstown Town. Members were further advised that monies are available and approved within this year's budget and also the tender extension has been approved by Council's Internal Auditor.

Councillor Cassidy enquired if each of the participating retailers will be required to contribute £200 or will the £200 be divided evenly between all of the retailers. Members were advised that the £200 contribution would be split evenly between the total number of participating retailers.

Councillor McCrea enquired how Council measures the feedback and outcomes of the Retail Development Programme. The Director of Development advised that the programme has been designed specifically for Cookstown Town Centre retailers and is commercially measured. Participating businesses receive a mystery shopper visit who examines the business with regard to customer service and sales etc.

Members AGREED to extend the tender submitted by Lestas Consulting (in association with Brilliant Red Consulting and Spotcheck N Ireland) until 31st March 2011, to deliver a Retail Development Programme in Cookstown Town.

8.1.2 Shop Mobility

Councillor McGarvey highlighted that the uptake for Shop Mobility is quite low. The Director of Development highlighted that the project requires promotion and assistance to secure funding. Unfortunately due to the current economic climate and the need for efficiencies there is currently no money available within the Town Centre budget to provide any additional support. Councillor McGarvey suggested that the facility should be promoted within Council's annual Outlook magazine.

AGREED.

The Director of Development advised that if this is the will of Council to assist with increasing the profile of this service, then his department will explore avenues to assist in this process.

AGREED.

Councillor McNamee informed Members that the Shop Mobility Project Co-ordinator, Mark Farquhar has included the Outlook magazine and also advertising on screens at Cookstown Leisure Centre on his agenda to explore as possible opportunities for promotion. In addition he is also co-ordinating the design and installation of new signage for the facility.

Members AGREED that Council should assist with signage and also explore funding opportunities for the Shop Mobility Programme. Councillor McNamee highlighted that should Members be aware of anyone who could avail of the service, to direct them to the Shop Mobility Co-ordinator.

Councillor Quinn noted that where possible businesses and services like Shop Mobility should source their supplies locally and requested that this be highlighted to the board of the Shop Mobility Scheme.

Members NOTED minutes of Shop Mobility Meeting held on 14th September 2010.

9. TOURISM

9.1. Tourism Innovation Fund

Members NOTED minutes of Tourism Innovation Fund Meetings held on 14th September 2010 and 12th October 2010.

9.2. Western Regional Tourism Partnership

Members NOTED minutes of Western Regional Tourism Partnership Meetings held on 14th September 2010 and 12th October 2010.

10. NORTHERN IRELAND CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

The Director of Development advised Members that the Northern Ireland Chamber of Commerce have compiled an 'Enabling Economic Excellence Manifesto,' which was officially launched last week at Stormont. The Director of Development provided Members with an executive summary of this comprehensive economic strategy.

Members NOTED the letter, from Ann McGregor, Chief Executive, NI Chamber of Commerce dated 26 October 2010, together with a copy of their 'Enabling Economic Excellence Manifesto' regarding the establishment of special opportunity zones.

11. RURAL DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME

Members received an update on this programme from the Director of Development, including the current performance of SWARD and the barriers to expenditure within the programme.

11.1. Members NOTED minutes of South West Local Action Group meetings held on 1st September 2010 and 6th October 2010.

11.2. Members NOTED minutes of Rural Development Programme Joint Council Committee meetings held on 23rd August 2010 and 20th September 2010.

12. SUBSCRIPTION

12.1. Rural Community Network

Members were advised that Council's membership with Rural Community Network is now due for renewal at a cost of £200 per annum. The membership does not provide Council with anything tangible, however the Rural Community Network does oversee a range of rural community groups such as (CSWAN) who provide an excellent service to the local community.

Councillor McCrea enquired if the cost of membership reflects the current economic climate, as efficiencies are affecting all organisations. The Director of Development advised that he would clarify the cost of renewing the membership for 2010/2011.

It was proposed by Councillor Quinn
Seconded by Councillor McCrea and AGREED

That Council renew their membership with Rural Community Network at a cost of £200, for the period October 2010 – September 2011 on the condition that the membership cost has not increased or is less than last year. Should the cost have increased then this item will be reconsidered at a future Council Meeting.

13. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

13.1. Pigeon Club

The Director of Development reminded Members that the Pigeon Club had recently approached Council to provide a suitable location for a mobile unit. A number of locations were previously considered to include Cookstown and Moneymore Civic Amenity sites and the Mid Ulster Sports Arena (MUSA). At the Sport & Leisure Meeting on 19th October 2010, it was agreed to facilitate the siting of the Pigeon Club at MUSA, at no cost to Council. The Club is however reconsidering their request to locate at MUSA. Members were advised that any proposal would be brought to a future Council Meeting for further consideration.

NOTED.

The meeting ended at 7.45pm

Chairman

Clerk/Chief Executive

Date