

COOKSTOWN DISTRICT COUNCIL

Minutes of Proceedings of a DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE MEETING held in the Council Chamber on Tuesday 15th September 2009 at 7.00 pm

Present: Councillor McGarvey (Chairman)

Councillors: Baker, Cassidy, Clarke, Lees, McAleer, McCartney, McCrea, McIvor, McNamee, Molloy, Quinn and Wilson

Officers: Adrian McCreesh Director of Development
Emma Bell Admin Officer

In Attendance: Dr Claire Cockerill WWF
Mark Horton RIPPLE

1. APOLOGIES

An apology for absence was reported on behalf of Councillor Glasgow.

2. PRESENTATION

The Chairperson welcomed Dr Claire Cockerill, WWF NI Freshwater Policy Officer and Mark Horton, Ripple Project Co-ordinator to the meeting to provide Members with an update on the RIPPLE Project and to outline the value of services provided by the Ballinderry River Catchment.

The Director of Development provided Members with a brief background to the project and highlighted the significance of the above services to the local community.

Mr Horton advised Members that the Ripple Project depicts ‘Rivers Involving People, Places & Leading by Example.’ He advised that WWF has worked in partnership with Ballinderry Fish Hatchery since the instigation of the project funded by the Heritage Lottery Fund. The RIPPLE Advisory Network consists of various Government Departments, Cookstown District Council and Non-Government Organisations. The two key aims of the project are:

- To encourage local people to reconnect with their river and act as a community to preserve and celebrate the heritage of the Ballinderry River.
- To act as a demonstration project to decision makers and government, showing that, if given the opportunity local people can make the right decisions about local issues and contribute to National and European objectives.

Mr Horton further advised that the RIPPLE project has secured community involvement, with the assistance of the Rural Community Network, by developing the views of the public to enable them to create a vision for the river. This vision then provided the basis for an action plan which consists of 115 actions prioritised by the community. At present the first 29 actions have been adopted by the community and are being developed. Mr Horton highlighted the positive support which the project has already received from Cookstown District Council and in the future they would like to secure additional support for the following priorities:

- Economic Valuation Study
- Ballinderry River Stewardship Awards
- Pollution Mitigation Signposting for businesses in the Ballinderry Catchment.

Economic Valuation Study

Dr Cockerill highlighted that the Economic Valuation Study would assist them to value the full range of services provided by the Ballinderry Catchment, whilst some services may have a market value others do not. In 2008 a Scoping Study was prepared to determine how a range of services including education, pollution assimilation, energy and industrial water abstraction were viewed in the Ballinderry River Catchment area. Dr Cockerill highlighted that with Council's support an Economic Study of the key services provided by the Ballinderry River Catchment could be carried out at an estimated cost of £10,000 which includes 15 days consultancy services, travel expenses, VAT and publication of the report.

Stewardship Awards

Mr Horton indicated the Ballinderry River Stewardship Award would recognise positive achievements within the categories of community, agriculture, business and industry. Currently similar schemes are being implemented by a number of organisations, such as Association of Rivers Trust and RSPB Nature of Farming Awards. To facilitate the awards Council is requested to:

- Host the event in partnership with BREA.
- Provide annual event awards sponsorship.
- Assist with securing sponsorship of each category.
- Assist with event promotion.
- Judging of categories.

Councillor McCrea arrived at 7.13pm

Pollution Mitigation Signposting

Mr Horton advised that Pollution Mitigation Signposting for businesses within the Ballinderry Catchment would bring together fractured information and clarify corporate responsibility of river pollution as well as achieving community ownership. Benefits available to Council are forming good community relations, highlighting environmental responsibility as well as those previously outlined.

The Chairman thanked Dr Cockerill and Mr Horton for their presentation, after which they answered a number of questions from Members.

Dr Cockerill indicated that a Terms of Reference had not yet been prepared and only those actions specific to Cookstown District Council were highlighted. Mr Horton left additional information for Council Members.

Dr Cockerill and Mr Horton left the meeting at 7.18pm.

Discussion ensued after which Members were advised that Council did not have the resources to meet this request as no budget provision had been made for the project within the 2009/10 financial year.

The Director of Development proposed that the Tourism Officer in conjunction with Operational Services consider this proposal and present a report to Members for their consideration at the next Development Committee Meeting.

Councillor Wilson arrived at 7.20pm.

AGREED.

3. COMMUNITY SERVICES

Local Community Fund

The Director of Development advised Members that the Department for Social Development have made available £18,090 to Ardboe and £16,860 to Dunamore Wards for Local Community Funding. Advertisements were placed in three local newspapers and a number of applications were received from each respective area. The applications were indicatively scored by the Community Safety Officer and checked by the Community Services Manager due to difficulties securing Members attendance within the allocated timeframe.

Copies of applications, indicative scoring sheets together with recommendations were circulated to Members of the Community/Voluntary Committee, with the exception of Councillor Baker who had a conflict of interest and was therefore represented by Councillor Quinn. The awards were subsequently approved on 25th August 2009 by the Community/Voluntary Committee, including Councillor Quinn.

The Director of Development advised that there is an underspend of £5,846 in the Ardboe ward and an overspend in Dunamore. Approval was sought from Council to transfer the balance of Ardboe's underspend to Dunamore before making a request for such from the Department for Social Development.

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

That Council approve the transfer of £5,846 from Ardboe to Dunamore Community Fund enabling permission to be sought from the Department for Social Development.

4. DAVAGH FOREST

The Director of Development advised that an update report on the Proposed Trails Development at Davagh Forest has been circulated for Members information prior to the meeting. He highlighted that Officers were requested by Council in February 2009 to research opportunities to develop recreational facilities at Davagh Forest. In March 2009, the Countryside Access Activities Network (CANN) was commissioned by Council to conduct a feasibility study on the Forest. CANN then appointed Dafydd Davis, a Trails Development Consultant to compile a Recreational Trail Development Report on Davagh Forest, which was brought before Council on 18th March 2009. Four potential routes were subsequently agreed for development should funding be secured from the Rural Development Programme, as outlined on page 8 and 9 of the update report.

Cookstown District Council representatives have met recently with Forest Service NI to discuss the key aspects of the partnership agreement including maintenance, management and liability. This information will form the basis of the 'Memorandum of Understanding' between Cookstown District Council and Forest Service NI. The Director of Development highlighted that this process has been replicated by Fermanagh District Council in conjunction with Forest Service NI. He further highlighted that the 'Memorandum of Understanding' when finalised would be circulated to Members of the Tourism Sub Committee and subsequently the Development Committee.

Members AGREED that this was the appropriate course of action.

5. LOUGH NEAGH

5.1. Lough Neagh Partnership

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

- That Council contribute £7,000 towards the core costs of Lough Neagh Partnership for the financial year 2009/10.
- That Council contribute £900 to Lough Neagh Partnership towards the management and maintenance of the Lough Neagh Cycle Trail.

- That Council defer the additional payment of £1,500 to Lough Neagh Partnership until verification is obtained that a funding application to the Rural Development Programme has been successful.

5.2. Lough Neagh & Lower Bann Advisory Committee

5.2.1 Lough Neagh & Lower Bann Management Structure

The Director of Development advised Members that the Lough Neagh Advisory Committee meets 2-3 times per year to discuss issues such as fishing and management rights. Concerns were raised by a number of agencies regarding the continued significance of the Committees and also the value in committing funding towards Lough Neagh. Subsequently a Review of Lough Neagh & Lower Bann Advisory and Management Structure was carried out in June 2009 by Graham Seymour, Director of Natural Heritage at the Northern Ireland Environment Agency. Pages 13-15 of the Review Report illustrates the various options for future roles and structures of Lough Neagh Advisory Committee and Lough Neagh Management Committee. The Director further advised that item 5.2.3 on the Development Committee Agenda highlights the outcome of the Special Meeting on 10th August 2009 to discuss the Review of Lough Neagh & Lower Bann Advisory and Management Structure.

5.2.2 Lough Neagh & Lower Bann Management Committee

Members NOTED minutes of Lough Neagh & Lower Bann Management Committee meeting held on 10th August 2009.

5.2.3 Lough Neagh & Lower Bann Advisory Committee

The Director of Development advised Members that following Lough Neagh & Lower Bann Advisory Committee's recent request to Council seeking a financial contribution for the 2009/10 and 2010/11 financial years, information was sought from the seven other Councils surrounding Lough Neagh to determine their financial commitment to the organisation.

The information received from the other Councils reveals that varying levels of commitment have been made to Lough Neagh & Lower Bann Advisory Committee, following which the Director of Development proposed that Council agree to provide a contribution of £5,000 for the financial year 2009/10 on the conditions that (i) all other Councils provide funding at the same level and (ii) all requested documentation is received.

AGREED.

6. LOCAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

6.1. Multi-Sectoral Tendering Programme

Members NOTED letter from Paul Carr, Head of European Programmes Branch, Department of Enterprise, Trade and Investment, advising that Council's application to develop a Multi-Sectoral Tendering Programme has been recommended for approval, subject to a positive economic appraisal being conducted on the Project.

Councillor Wilson congratulated the Director of Development and the Officers of the Economic Development Section for the successful progression of the 'Multi Sectoral Tendering Programme.'

6.2. Engineering Innovation Programme

Members were advised that Mrs Arlene Foster, MLA, Minister for Enterprise, Trade and Investment will be visiting Cookstown Enterprise Centre on 17th September 2009 regarding Council's new Engineering Innovation Programme.

The Director of Development highlighted that Council will be represented by Councillor Tony Quinn, Chairman. Councillor Cassidy advised Members that the event will commence at 4pm on the aforementioned date.

NOTED.

6.3. Tradable Services Project

6.3.1 Members NOTED the revised Terms of Reference submitted to SEUPB regarding a joint Interreg IV project involving Cookstown District Council and Cavan County Enterprise Board with regard to the 'Preparation of a Comprehensive Feasibility Study towards Developing the Tradable Services Sector in Cookstown/Mid Ulster and Cavan.

6.3.2 The Director of Development advised that Council permission is sought to place an advertisement in the appropriate newspapers (north and south) to recruit a suitably qualified organisation(s) to 'Prepare a Comprehensive Feasibility Study towards Developing the Tradable Services Sector in Cookstown/Mid Ulster and Cavan,' subject to SEUPB approving the Terms of Reference.

AGREED.

6.4 Wireless Broadband

Members NOTED update, dated 7th September 2009, on the rollout of wireless broadband in Cookstown District.

The Director of Development highlighted that Mr Scott McClelland, North West Electronics (NWE) Wireless Networks, has been invited to provide a comprehensive update to Members at a future meeting.

6.5 Invest Northern Ireland Social Entrepreneurship Programme

Members NOTED information provided by Invest Northern Ireland regarding their new Social Entrepreneurship Programme.

7. IRISH CROSS BORDER AREA NETWORK

Members were reminded that Council earlier agreed to provide ICBAN with a financial contribution of £12,500 for the financial year 2009/10.

The Director of Development referred Members to the ICBAN Progress Report previously circulated and in particular to pages 3 to 12 highlighting the Interreg IIIA Programme, and pages 13 to 16 relating to the Interreg IVA Programme which Council is focusing on at present. He further indicated that the two key projects on which Council is leading are Traded Services and Settlement Regeneration.

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

That Council now release the financial contribution to ICBAN of £12,500 for the financial year 2009/10.

8. TOWN CENTRE REGENERATION

8.1. Burn Road Environmental Improvement Scheme

8.1.1. Burn Road EI Scheme Management Meeting

Members NOTED minutes of Burn Road EI Scheme Management meeting held on 9th June 2009.

8.1.2. Burn Road EI Scheme Steering Group Meeting

Members NOTED minutes of Burn Road EI Scheme Steering Group meeting held on 19th August 2009.

8.1.3. Burn Road EI Scheme Update

Members NOTED the Town Strategy Manager's update, dated 4th September 2009, regarding the Burn Road Environmental Improvement Scheme.

8.2. Town Centre Regeneration Projects

Members were advised that Council approval is sought to place an advert in the press to commission suitability qualified organisation(s) to deliver the following three projects:

- Retail Training and Development Programme
- Town Centre Pocket Map combined with a Town Centre Car Parking Guide
- High Profile Marketing and Promotional Campaign for Christmas 2009

The Director of Development advised that due to the current economic downturn the projects have been developed to increase trade within Cookstown town centre and fit well within the Town Centre Regeneration Strategy's Action Plan. The budget required to rollout and deliver these projects has already been agreed within Council's 2009/10 financial budget.

It as proposed by Councillor Quinn
Seconded by Councillor Cassidy and AGREED

That an advert is placed in the press to commission suitability qualified organisation(s) to deliver each of the following projects to assist Cookstown's retail sector:

| | Town Centre Regeneration Initiative | Budget (Excluding VAT) |
|-----------------------------|---|---|
| (i) | Development of a Town Centre Retail Training and Development Programme | £11,173 Excluding other private sector contributions |
| (ii) | Design, Print and Supply of a new Retail Pocket Map and Car Parking Guide for Cookstown Town Centre | £4,500 |
| (iii) | Town Centre Marketing and Promotional Campaign | £20,000 |
| TOTAL COUNCIL BUDGET | | £35,673 |

8.3. Cookstown Town Centre Evening/Night-Time Economy Forum

The Director of Development apologised to Members regarding the delay in circulating the minutes of Cookstown Town Centre Evening/Night-Time Economy meeting held on 29th May 2009. He highlighted that concerns had been raised by Forum Members regarding the proposals made within the Draft Final Evening and Night-Time Economy Strategy and Action Plan for Cookstown Town Centre. Officers and Forum Members are currently exploring new ideas to resolve issues raised within the aforementioned minutes.

Councillor Wilson advised Members that the Draft Final Evening and Night-Time Economy Strategy and Action Plan for Cookstown Town Centre did not sufficiently highlight any new ideas towards developing our evening economy.

Members NOTED minutes of Cookstown Town Centre Evening/Night-Time Economy Forum meeting held on 29th May 2009.

8.4 Shop Mobility

Members NOTED the minutes of Shop Mobility meeting held on 6th May 2009.

9. RURAL DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME

The Director of Development advised that as Cookstown District Council is the Lead Council for the successful implementation of the Rural Development Programme it is important for Members to be kept up to date with regard to how the Programme is progressing.

9.1 Members NOTED minutes of the Rural Development Programme Joint Committee Meeting held on 15th June 2009.

9.2 Members NOTED minutes of South West Local Action Group Meetings held on 3rd June 2009 and 1st July 2009.

9.3 Members NOTED the Contract between DARD and SWARD Joint Committee, dated 30th June 2009.

10. COMMUNITY SUPPORT PROGRAMME

Members were advised that a letter dated 30th April 2009 was received from the Department for Social Development regarding the forthcoming Volunteering Strategy for Northern Ireland, following which the Community Services Manager subsequently compiled a Memorandum to brief Members. The Director of Development further advised that an evaluation of the Volunteer Bureaux Initiative was conducted by the Department of Finance and Personnel. The evaluation identified five objectives for volunteering which are outlined below:

1. Recognising the Value and Promoting the Benefits
2. Enhancing Accessibility and Diversity
3. Improving the Experience
4. Supporting and Stretching the Infrastructure
5. Delivery of the Strategy

Members were informed that a response to the Evaluation will be prepared by Council and circulated to Members prior to 9th October 2009 for consideration.

AGREED.

11. BURNAVON

11.1. Arts & Culture

Members NOTED minutes of Arts & Cultural Sub Committee held on 1st July 2009.

11.2. Civic Awards

Members NOTED minutes of Civic Awards Sub Committee meeting held on 26th August 2009.

12. TOURISM

12.1. Western Regional Tourism Partnership

Members NOTED minutes of WRTP meetings held on 23rd April 2009 and 4th August 2009.

12.2. WRTP IFI Sub Group Meeting

Members NOTED minutes of the WRTP IFI Sub Group meeting held on 23rd April 2009.

12.3. WRTP Tourism Innovation Fund

Members NOTED minutes of WRTP Tourism Innovation Fund meeting held on 4th August 2009.

13. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

13.1. Utility Regulator Information Event on Price Control 2010 to 2013 Draft Determination for NI Water

The Director of Development advised that the Chief Executive has asked for the Utility Regulator Information Event to be highlighted to Members. An Information Event has been organised for 25th, 29th and 30th September 2009. Further information will be circulated to all Members following the meeting.

13.2. Cookstown Tourist Information Centre

Members were advised that Cookstown Tourist Information Centre has received official notification that they are 1 of 5 Tourist Information Centres shortlisted for the Best Northern Ireland Tourist Information Centre. The awards ceremony will take place on Friday 16th October 2009 in the Slieve Donard Hotel, Newcastle. The Director of Development proposed that the Council Chairman should attend this event with the Tourism Officer and a staff member.

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

That Councillor McGarvey, Development Committee Chairman and two Tourism staff attend the Best Northern Ireland Tourist Information Centre Awards on Friday 16th October 2009 in the Slieve Donard Hotel, Newcastle.

13.3. Peace III Partnership Agreement

The Director of Development asked the Members of the Peace III Partnership Committee to remain behind after the meeting to sign the South West Peace III Partnership Agreement.

The meeting ended at 7.52pm.

Chairman

Clerk/Chief Executive

Date

TABLED FOR INFORMATION

1. ICBAN Region Multi Annual Plan INTERREG IVA Project Summaries, Revised May 2009