

COOKSTOWN DISTRICT COUNCIL

Minutes of Proceedings of a DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE MEETING held in the Council Chamber on Tuesday 20th January 2009 at 7.00 pm

Present: Councillor Baker (Chairperson)

Councillors: Cassidy, Clarke, Glasgow, Lees, McAleer, McCartney, McGarvey, McNamee, Molloy, Quinn and Wilson

Officers: Adrian McCreesh Director of Development
Fiona McKeown Economic Development Manager
Emma Bell Development Admin Officer

1. APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were reported on behalf of Councillor Greer, McCrea, McIvor and M J McGuckin.

2. TELECOMS

2.1 Introduction of Wireless Broadband

The Director of Development advised Members that a letter was received from Telecoms Policy Branch, Department of Enterprise, Trade and Investment, dated 27 November 2008, indicating that North West Electronics had been successful in their bid to DETI to provide a wireless broadband solution to the following locations within the Cookstown District; Drum Manor, Coagh, Ballyronan, Broughderg, Tullyard, Battery, Killycanavan and Sandholes. He further advised that this service should provide good broadband coverage, especially across rural areas, and fulfil many residential and business users' requirements.

NOTED

2.2 Minutes of Wireless Broadband Meeting

Members NOTED minutes of Wireless Broadband Meeting held on 7th January 2009.

2.3 Draft Response to DETI's Draft Equality Impact Assessment for Telecommunications Projects

The Director of Development advised Members that a copy of Council's response to the Department of Enterprise, Trade and Investment's Draft Equality Impact Assessment for Telecommunications Projects on 26 November 2008, had been circulated for their information.

NOTED

3. PRESENTATION FROM NORTH WEST ELECTRONICS

The Chairperson welcomed Mr Scott McClelland from North West Electronics (NWE), to the meeting to provide Members with an update on the company's proposals to provide a wireless broadband solution to the Cookstown District.

The Director of Development reminded Members of the background to the project, and highlighted the need and importance of improving broadband provision in both Cookstown and the West. He outlined that the Department of Enterprise, Trade and Investment (DETI) has recently appointed North West Electronics to bring a new and innovative wireless broadband solution to Cookstown and stated that as a minimum, the following areas would benefit from access to such; Drum Manor, Coagh, Ballyronan, Broughderg, Tullyard, Battery, Killycanavan and Sandholes.

Mr McClelland advised that NWE has extensive experience in the telecommunications field and highlighted that to date the company's focus has primarily been on providing solutions to rural areas with dispersed populations. He advised that wireless broadband would be provided extensively across the Cookstown District and evidence of such was illustrated on a map circulated to Members. Mr McClelland indicated that in order to operate the service, a approximately 5-6 high sites had been identified in the District, and on which NWE propose to erect wooden poles with wireless antenna to transmit signals circ. a 15km radius. Mr McClelland advised that he is currently preparing planning applications for these sites, and requested a letter of support from Council to submit to Planning Service with the planning applications. It is expected that wireless broadband should be available towards the end of 2009. Mr McClelland gave further assurances that NWE's wireless broadband provision will have access to the high speed network, provided by Project Kelvin.

In conclusion, Mr McClelland advised that DETI has also engaged North West Electronics to develop a fibre ring at Kilcronagh Business Park and to deliver a 50Mbps backhaul service which is scalable should demand for higher bandwidth at the Business Park increase.

The Chairman thanked Mr McClelland for his presentation, after which he answered a number of questions from Members.

Members were also reminded that five years ago BT won a DETI contract to provide broadband satellite services across Northern Ireland. As of 31 March 2009, this broadband satellite service would come to an end and if customers wish to continue with their satellite broadband service, they must complete a transfer form, available from DETI Telecoms Policy Branch, to move to the new supplier, Avanti. Council's Economic Development Manager, advised that on receipt of this information from DETI, Council issued a press release to the local newspapers to make business and residential customers aware of this. Following discussion, Councillor McGarvey asked that the Economic Development Manager liaise with him regarding this matter.

Mr McClelland left the meeting at 7.32pm.

Discussion ensued amongst Members, after which the Director of Development advised that Mr McClelland is available to speak to Members individually, if required.

4. LOCAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

4.1 Engineering Innovation Programme and Office Accommodation Project

The Director of Development advised Members that Council had received responses from Mr Ian Kidd, Department of Enterprise, Trade and Investment, dated 21st November 2008, advising that Council's applications to the EU Competitiveness Programme for the Engineering Innovation Programme and Office Accommodation had been approved, subject to independent economic appraisals being completed on both projects.

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

That both projects proceed as soon as possible, once the independent economic appraisals are completed by KPMG.

4.2 Second Call – EU Competitiveness Programme

Members NOTED letter from Mr Ian Kidd, Department of Enterprise, Trade and Investment, dated 18th December 2008, indicating that the second call for applications to the EU Competitiveness Programme is now open and will close on 30th January 2009.

4.3 New Applications to EU Competitiveness Programme

The Director of Development advised Members that since the issue of the agenda papers, some developments had taken place which would impact upon Council's applications to the next round of the EU Competitiveness Programme. He outlined that Council now propose to submit one large application to the EU Competitiveness Programme relating to the construction of Desertcreat College. The Director of Development, further indicated that Council's Economic Development Manager had secured agreement from DETI for Council to submit an application in February/March 2009 and sought agreement to work up an application which would consist of:-

- a. A 'Meet the Buyer/Trade Show' type event in March 2009 to showcase the business product offerings for Cookstown and Mid Ulster to the newly appointed Design Team from New York.
- b. The development of a unique 'Desertcreat Supplier Model' to assist businesses gear-up and obtain work emanating from the College.
- c. A specific and tailored 'Contract Buying Programme' to improve the effectiveness of micro/small businesses to win public/private sector contracts.

The Director of Development highlighted that an initial meeting had taken place regarding the Supplier Model on 12 January 2009 and a follow up meeting was scheduled for 26 January 2009. He advised that Members will be updated accordingly and formal approval sought for such a project at a future Council Meeting.

AGREED.

5. POMEROY BUSINESS PARK

5.1 Election of Two Board Members to Serve on Pomeroy Business Park

The Director of Development advised that a minimum of two Members are required to serve on the Board of Pomeroy Development Projects, following Council's decision to fund Pomeroy Business Park, up to £60,000, over a two year period.

Nominations were sought for two elected Members to serve on the Board.

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

That Councillor Molloy be nominated.

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

That Councillor Glasgow be nominated.

There being no further proposals, Councillors Molloy and Glasgow were duly elected to serve on the Board of Pomeroy Development Projects for a two year period, or until the obligations set out in Council's letter of offer and service level agreement are met. It was further RECOMMENDED that the relevant company information for Pomeroy Development Projects be circulated to all Members for information, before the two elected Members take up post.

5.2 Pomeroy Business Park

The Director of Development advised Members that Pomeroy Business Park is not fully completed and fitted out and that an invitation to view the Park will be extended to them upon completion.

NOTED.

6. COAGH SPORTS CENTRE

The Director of Development advised that a letter had been received from Coagh Sports Centre seeking part funding for phase four of their new development project. The sports facility in Coagh is exemplary and the team has been a success achieving the highest level in the District.

He further advised that if Council agreed to the contribution then it would set a precedent for numerous other requests for Capital Support Schemes from clubs throughout the District. The Director of Development highlighted that whilst Council had agreed to fund hockey provision in Cookstown this was agreed as part of the overall development of MUSA in 2004 and was in recognition that hockey was not provided for at MUSA.

Discussion ensued among Members.

It was decided by Members to DECLINE the proposal.

Councillor Wilson proposed that Council meet with representatives from Coagh Sports Centre to explain Council's decision not to provide funding, instead of sending a letter of rejection.

It was proposed by Councillor Wilson
Seconded by Councillor McGarvey

Councillors' Baker, Cassidy, Glasgow, Lees, Quinn and Wilson would like to attend the proposed meeting with Coagh Sports Centre representatives, under the heading of Sport and Leisure.

7. LOUGH NEAGH PARTNERSHIP

The Director of Development advised that a letter had been received from Gerry Darby, Lough Neagh Partnership requesting additional funding of £1,500. Council currently contributes £7,000 per year and this extra funding would be used to further development Lough Neagh Partnership's role. This additional support would be given only if Lough Neagh Partnership successfully secures funding from the Rural Development Project. Antrim Borough Council has also been approached to provide additional funding and their feedback has been very positive.

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

That Council make an additional contribution of £1,500 to Lough Neagh Partnership for the 2009/2010 financial year.

8. COOKSTOWN HOCKEY CLUB - FUNDING FOR NEW PITCH

The Director of Development reminded Members that at a previous Development Committee on 20 May 2008, a presentation was received from Mr Stephen Cuddy (vice-chair, Cookstown Hockey Club) on the proposed installation of a new water based hockey pitch at the High School grounds in Cookstown. Mr Cuddy had advised that £500K of funding had been secured from the Department of Culture, Arts & Leisure (Sport Northern Ireland) and was subject to expenditure before 31 March 2009. This funding was based on an estimated overall cost of £800K + VAT to install a water-based pitch, leaving a shortfall of approximately £350K. Mr Cuddy advised it was envisaged that this will be made up of a financial contribution from Cookstown District Council with the remainder being provided by Cookstown Hockey Club. In 2004, an agreement had been made in principle for Council to provide financial support of up to £80K for Cookstown Hockey Club to develop its own pitch and Council to move forward with its planned investment for soccer, gaelic and rugby at the Mid Ulster Sports Arena. Following Mr Cuddy's presentation to the Development Committee meeting on 20 May 2008, Members agreed in principle, that Council would contribute up to £90,000 towards the project.

Since May 2008, as required by Sport NI, Cookstown Hockey Club has been working with consultants, McClure Watters, to prepare a business case. Project consultants and a contractor have now been appointed and a revised cost for the work has been identified as follows:

Funder	Contribution	%
Sport NI *	£ 668,052.62	85.00
Cookstown District Council	£ 90,000.00	11.45
Cookstown Hockey Club	£ 27,891.64	3.55
Total	£ 785,944.26	100%

Sport NI has confirmed funding of 85% of total project costs, up to a maximum of £668,052.62.

Cost breakdown

Item	Cost
Tender price (net)	£717,613.75
Fees	£41,019.71
Unrecoverable VAT (24% of 15%)	£27,310.80
Total project cost	£785,944.26

Discussion ensued among Members after which

It was proposed by Councillor Wilson
Seconded by Councillor McGarvey and AGREED,

That Council issue a Letter of Offer to Cookstown Hockey Club, offering a contribution of up to £90K, to be paid over two financial years, subject to the provision of documentation requested and compliance with Council's Terms and Conditions of funding and also;

That Council provide an interim letter of support to the Hockey Club confirming Council's intention to fund this project to facilitate the release of Sport NI's Contract and also;

That Council meet with representatives of Cookstown Hockey Club to negotiate a suitable advertising package, whereby Council is allocated free advertising space around the perimeter of the new pitch.

The Director of Development proposed that the meeting continue with Items 12.2 and 13.

Councillor Wilson left the meeting at 8.05pm.

9. TOURISM

9.1 Sperrins Tourism Ltd

9.1.2 It was proposed by Councillor Cassidy
Seconded by Councillor Glasgow and AGREED

That Council maintain the current level of funding towards Sperrin Tourism Ltd of up to £21,500 for the financial year 2009/2010, to be paid in two six monthly instalments.

9.1.2 Members NOTED cash flow projections for period April 2009 to March 2010 and 2009 Marketing Plan prepared by Sperrins Tourism Ltd.

9.2 Tourism Sub Committee

Members NOTED Tourism Sub Committee minutes held on 17th December 2008.

The Director of Development updated Members on Davagh Forest which is a wonderful and under utilised resource. At present a product proposal is being developed to assist with a bid to the Rural Development Programme and which will also be presented to Mr O'Boyle from the Forestry Service. He further highlighted that if this bid is successful then the Council may have to commit to annual maintenance arrangements. The Countryside Access Network has been approached to undertake this consultation as they have a renowned expertise in the recreational use of Forest Parks. Approval is sought for the commissioning of The Countryside Access Network to undertake this assignment given their expertise and the limited timescale available to complete this task in advance of the next Rural Development Programme call for application (3 weeks).

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

That Council commission The Countryside Access Network to prepare a project development proposal up to a maximum value of £5,000.

9.3 Western Regional Tourism Partnership

Members NOTED minutes of WRTP meeting held on 30th October 2008.

9.4 WRTP IFI Sub Group Meeting

Members NOTED minutes of the IFI Sub Group meeting held on 30th October 2008.

10. BURNAVON

10.1 Town Twinning

Members NOTED minutes of the Town Twinning meetings held 8th July 2008, 7th October 2008 and 2nd December 2008.

Councillor Wilson advised Members of a letter received from the Mayor of Wronki which highlighted that the Town Twinning draft agreement is due for renewal in May 2009.

It was AGREED that the letter is referred to the Town Twinning Committee for their consideration.

11. TOWN CENTRE REGENERATION STRATEGY

11.1 Town Centre Forum

Members NOTED minutes of Town Centre Forum meeting held 21st November 2008.

11.2 Town Centre Living Initiative Sub Committee

Members NOTED minutes of Town Centre Living Initiative Sub Committee meeting held on 9th January 2009.

11.3 Burn Road Environmental Improvement Scheme

11.3.1 Burn Road EI Steering Group Committee

Members NOTED minutes of Burn Road EI Scheme meeting held on 25th November 2008.

11.3.2 Burn Road EI Scheme

Members NOTED update from Town Strategy Manager regarding the Burn Road Environmental Improvement Scheme.

12. COMMUNITY SERVICES

12.1 Citizens Advice Bureau

The Director of Development advised Members that the CAB Service Level Agreement is a legal contract extending to the end of March 2009. Members will be kept up to date with CAB progress and their Service Level Agreement reviewed when the current contract lapses, for Council to consider its renewal.

12.2 District Partnership/Local Strategy Partnership

The Director of Development advised that as previously requested by Council the District Partnership/LSP recognition event will be held on Friday 20th February 2009. Past Board Members and staff from 1996 to date will be invited to attend a meal and presentation in the Glenavon House Hotel. Some 50-60 past board members and Councillors are expected to attend the event were a small corporate gift will be presented, to acknowledge the role of the District Partnership and the LSP in attracting and spending in excess of £5 million throughout the District. An estimated budget of up to £3,000 has been made available to cover venue hire, catering, promotion and corporate acknowledgements.

13. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

13.1. Invest NI Credit Crunch Event

The Director of Development highlighted that Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment has asked her staff to organise a Credit Crunch Seminar in Mid Ulster. The event will take place in Cookstown on the morning of Tuesday 17th February 2009 and will be focused on non Invest NI client businesses.

Members were of the view that as Invest NI is unable to directly support businesses who are non-Invest NI client companies, it is important that the event is promoted as an 'Information Event'.

The Director of Development agreed to liaise with his colleagues in the neighbouring Councils and Enterprise Agencies of Magherafelt and Dungannon, with a view to organising a meeting with Invest NI to consider the best approach towards organising the event.

Members AGREED to proceed with this approach.

13.2. Good Relations Event

The Director of Development highlighted that Council will be holding a Good Relations Event in Cookstown Leisure Centre on Saturday 28th February 2009 and Members are invited to attend. Approximately 500 people are expected to attend with budget expenditure to be £6,000 as previously agreed at the Good Relations Sub Committee. Any interested Members should contact the Director of Development for further information.

Councillor Quinn enquired if media coverage had been secured for the event. The Director of Development advised that local media would be contacted.

13.3 Wireless Broadband

Following the presentation from NWE earlier in the meeting, Members RECOMMENDED that Council issue Mr Scott McClelland with a letter of support for the Wireless Broadband Project as requested to assist with NWE's planning application process.

The meeting ended at 8.15pm.

Chairman

Clerk/Chief Executive

Date