

COOKSTOWN DISTRICT COUNCIL

Minutes of Proceedings of a DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE MEETING held in the Council Chamber on Tuesday 15th November 2011 at 7.00 pm

Present: Councillor Glasgow (Vice-Chairman)

Councillors: Clarke, Kelly, Mayo, McCartney, McCrea, McElhone, McFlynn, McGarvey, McNamee, Quinn and Wilson

Officers: Adrian McCreesh Chief Executive (Acting)
Emma Bell Administrative Officer

Councillor Clarke extended his sympathies to Councillor Mallaghan on the death of his uncle.

Councillor Wilson acknowledged the recent death of Councillor Glasgow's brother in law and extended his condolences to his family.

1. APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were reported on behalf of Councillors McAleer, Lees, Mallaghan and McIvor.

2. LOCAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

2.1. Cookstown Engineering Innovation Programme Presentation

Councillor Wilson declared an interest in the matter.

The Chief Executive (Acting) reminded Members of the background to Cookstown Engineering Innovation Programme and he advised that Dr Jill Cush (South West College, InnoTech Centre) was unable to attend this evening's presentation as she had been called away to attend another important engagement.

Councillor Glasgow welcomed Mr Ciaran Higgins, Manager, Cookstown Enterprise Centre to the meeting to provide Members with an overview of the Final Evaluation of Cookstown's Engineering Innovation Programme, completed in July 2011.

Mr Higgins thanked Members for the opportunity to present. He advised that the presentation would provide a brief outline of the structure, design and outputs of the programme whilst providing relevant examples of businesses supported. Mr Higgins indicated that Cookstown Engineering Innovation Programme was funded by Cookstown District Council and the European Regional Development Fund under the European Sustainable Competitiveness Programme for Northern Ireland (2007-2013). He advised that following the tender process, Cookstown Enterprise Centre and the InnoTech Centre were appointed to deliver Cookstown's Engineering Innovation Programme. He highlighted that the partnership between Cookstown Enterprise Centre and the InnoTech Centre was a very successful combination, as the InnoTech Centre provided a wealth of expertise and technical support for product development, whereas Cookstown Enterprise Centre had an abundance of experience in delivering business advice, planning and support measures.

Mr Higgins advised that prospective businesses applying to participate on the Engineering Innovation Programme must have been established at least 6 months prior to applying to participate on the programme and also they must be a non or non-active Invest NI Client Company. Each business could avail of 8 days consultancy support to assist them to focus on developing new products and/or improving existing products, in addition to enhancing their process development and business improvement techniques. Furthermore the programme offered a business health check and also support to develop a business plan, valued at approximately £2,500, in addition to specialist innovation consultancy support.

A total of twelve engineering businesses were recruited over a 2 year period, as outlined below:

- Slate Forge Engineering
- PD Electrics
- Dev Engineering
- Bladehold Ltd
- Cardwell Bros Engineering
- Essener Equipment

- LJM Glass Fibre
- Irony Products Ltd
- East Sperrin Fabrications
- Arcmet Fencing and Metalwork
- RTC Engineering
- Sperrin Engineering

The following programme targets were identified for achievement:

- 12 businesses to achieve increased sales by an average 10%.
- 12 businesses to achieve an average of 5% efficiency savings.
- Sustain a minimum of 20 existing jobs.
- Create a minimum of 5 new jobs.
- Minimum of 5 businesses to develop new products or adapt existing products.
- Minimum of 2 companies to become Invest NI client companies.

The Engineering Innovation Programme was officially launched by the Minister for Enterprise, Trade and Investment, Mrs Arlene Foster, MLA on 17th September 2009.

Mr Higgins provided Members with an update on the programme achievements recorded at the programme end in July 2011 and gave examples (as detailed below) regarding the types of support provided to businesses to develop innovative products/services.

- Cardwell Bros Engineering has designed and developed a new ‘tyre shredding machine’ which may also be used to shred plastic and paper. In addition Cardwell Bros Engineering received a comprehensive business plan and they have used this to submit an application to South West Action for Rural Development (SWARD) for capital grants to further develop their products. At present Cardwell Bros Engineering in conjunction with Invest NI is working towards patenting their ‘tyre shredding machine.’
- PD Electrics were assisted to design a ‘photovoltaic energy resource system’ which is a portable system that can be used to provide electricity to remote locations such as concerts. PD Electrics also received a business plan.

- Essener Equipment has developed a ‘tar spreading box’ which eliminates the need for a lorry, as the tar is spread when the machine is driven. This product has been exhibited at numerous trade shows and received a lot of positive interest, as a result orders have been received from England, Northern Ireland and Southern Ireland.
- Sperrin Engineering was supported to design and build a ‘turf cutting machine’ which can be manufactured in either a large or small size depending on the customers’ requirements. To date they have sold the machine to businesses located in County Clare and County Donegal. Sperrin Engineering will be submitting an application to Invest NI to become an Invest NI Client Company.
- Dev Engineering fabricated a bagging machine for use with sand and gravel which they have modified to include other products, initially this machine filled 6 bags per minute, however this has been further enhanced to fill 12 bags per minute.
- East Sperrin Fabrications have developed a ‘turnstile pod’ which can be manufactured and transported already built to the specified location as a permanent fixture or alternatively it can be built on site for short-term rental. This business has received additional assistance through the Invest NI Growth Pipeline Programme and their product has been marketed throughout England, Northern Ireland and Southern Ireland.

Councillor Clarke highlighted that the ‘turnstile pod’ incorporates an electronic counting facility already built into the pod for the convenience of the end user.

Mr Higgins advised that all the aforementioned businesses have designed, built and taken their products to market or are in the process of doing so, which has resulted in the further development of each business.

Councillor Clarke highlighted that he had an amazing opportunity to visit many of these businesses and had seen their products first hand. He said it was marvellous Council was able to support the development of such innovative products and offer assistance to local engineering businesses. Councillor Clarke advised that Council should profile the successful achievements accomplished by businesses participating on Cookstown Engineering Innovation Programme and this may then encourage more

innovation from businesses, resulting in increased business growth and employment within the district.

Mr Higgins highlighted that 2 Engineering Innovation Seminars were also held as outlined below:

- Seminar 1 ~ Engineering Sustainability Through Innovation held on 29th January 2010 at the InnoTech Centre, South West College, Cookstown.
- Seminar 2 ~ Engineering – Growth Through Innovation held on 5th November 2010 at Copeland Ltd, Ballyreagh Industrial Estate, Cookstown.

Mr Higgins advised that the second seminar ‘Engineering – Growth Through Innovation’ was highly innovative as it was held in the premises of a real business. It provided an opportunity for smaller business to view a larger business and observe how it operates first hand especially within the current economic climate. He highlighted that the programme has benefited significantly from good publicity in both the local and regional newspapers.

Mr Higgins advised that the following programme outputs were achieved:-

Targets	Actual Achievements
Sales increase by an average of 10%	Sales increase by an average of 8%
5% Average increase in efficiency Savings	6% Average increase in efficiency savings
Sustain 20 jobs	42 Jobs sustained
Create 5 jobs	10 jobs created (9 full-time and 1 part-time)
5 businesses to develop or adapt new products	7 businesses developed new products/processes
2 Businesses to become Invest NI Client Companies	3 businesses have become Invest NI Clients Companies

Mr Higgins advised that current sales of these businesses totalled £200,000 however this is expected to increase to approximately £700,000 in the next few months. He further advised that it is exceptionally difficult for a small engineering business to become an Invest NI client due to the very stringent criteria. He highlighted that the programme achievements to date are superb considering the current economic climate.

Mr Higgins advised that Cookstown Enterprise Centre and the InnoTech Centre believe that their joint delivery of Cookstown Engineering Innovation Programme was very successful, and the guidance received from Cookstown District Council was exemplary. Feedback received from programme participants has been very positive.

Mr Higgins answered a number of questions from Members after which Councillor Glasgow thanked him for his informative presentation.

Councillor Wilson highlighted that Invest NI recently returned £25 million of underspend and in his opinion this is due to the very stringent funding criteria which businesses are unable to meet to secure funding i.e. applicants must have a business turnover of at least £100,000. He further highlighted the need for Invest NI to review their funding criteria especially in respect of the current economic downturn.

It was proposed by Councillor McCrea MLA
Seconded by Councillor Wilson and AGREED

That Council write to the Minister for Enterprise, Trade and Investment, to raise concerns with regard to the underspend returned by Invest NI to the Department of Enterprise, Trade and Investment (DETI), and also highlighting the difficulty for non-Invest NI Client Companies to receive support for developing their business.

Mr Higgins left at 7.22pm.

2.2 Update On Existing Projects and Request to Develop New Projects

The Chief Executive (Acting) reminded Members that Council had made applications to Invest NI for match funding to deliver 2 new local economic development programmes, namely a Business Elevate Programme and a Resource Efficiency Programme. He advised that Council had received an email from Invest NI on 3rd November 2011 to confirm that match funding for both projects were approved and could be progressed following receipt and acceptance of formal letters of offer.

Furthermore, the Chief Executive (Acting) reported that Mrs Arlene Foster, MLA, Minister for Enterprise, Trade and Investment had written to all Councils on 8 September 2011, requesting that any further local economic development project proposals to be delivered up to 2013 must be submitted to Invest NI by 31 October 2011. As a result, Council submitted 2 broad outline proposals to deliver a further 2 programmes, namely a Desertcreat Supply Programme and a Margin Management Programme.

The Chief Executive (Acting) advised that the Desertcreat Supply Programme will provide bespoke mentoring support to up to 50 non/non-active Invest NI businesses within the Cookstown District to ensure they are equipped to maximise the forthcoming tender opportunities arising from the new Desertcreat Joint Public Services College and indeed other relevant public/private sector contracts. This programme is very timely as it is scheduled to start when the Multi-Sectoral Tendering Programme will end. The proposed costs for delivering the Desertcreat Supply Programme is £157,726 of which 75% funding will be sought from DETI/ERDF and Invest NI as set out below:-

Proposed Total Costs for Desertcreat Supply Programme (Per Funder)

	TOTAL	DETI/ERDF	INVEST NI	COUNCIL
50 BUSINESSES	£157,726	£78,863	£39,431	£39,431

The Chief Executive (Acting) further outlined that the Margin Management Programme will provide tailored mentoring support to 40 non/non-active Invest NI businesses within the Cookstown District to assist them with 4 strategic areas in their business; price, product, performance and sales, in order to increase business productivity and profit margins. The proposed costs for delivering the Margin Management Programme is £122,076 of which 75% funding will be sought from DETI/ERDF and Invest NI as set out below:-

Proposed Total Costs for Margin Management Programme (Per Funder)

	TOTAL	DETI/ERDF	INVEST NI	COUNCIL
40 BUSINESSES	£122,076	£61,038	£30,519	£30,519

After discussion,

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

That Council provides match funding for the Desertcreat Supply Programme of £39,431 and Margin Management Programme of £30,519 and that detailed project applications be worked up and submitted to Invest NI, seeking match funding of 50% from DETI/ERDF and 25% from Invest NI to deliver both programmes.

3. TENDER FOR THE SUPPLY AND DELIVERY OF 1 NO. 26 TONNE REFUSE COLLECTION VEHICLE

Members were advised that following public advertisement in the Belfast Telegraph on 7th October 2011, 2 firms' submitted tenders for the supply and delivery of 1 No. 26 Tonne Refuse Collection Vehicle by the closing date of 28th October 2011. The tenders were opened and initialled by the Council Chairman, Councillor Sean Clarke, the Director of Operational Services and Council's Finance Officer on 31st October 2011. Details of tenders received are outlined below:

FIRM	VEHICLE DESCRIPTION	COST (EXC. VAT)	OPTIONAL EXTRAS
Manvik Plant & Hire Ltd, Unit 3 Clifton Industrial Park, 161 Dargan Crescent, Belfast	Dennis Olympus OL-23W c/w Terberg or Zoeller Automatic Lift	£129,750.00	Heated windscreen £375
Castlereagh Motors Ltd, Cedarhurst Works Off Beechill Road, Newtownbreda, Belfast	Mercedes-Benz Econic 2633LL with TISM Farid body and Zoeller Delta Automatic Lift.	£136,895.00	Body autolube - £500

The Chief Executive (Acting) advised that the lowest tender from Manvik Plant & Hire Ltd cannot be recommended for acceptance as the vehicle does not fulfil the tender specification i.e. 300 BHP engine compared to 330 BHP (minimum). Therefore it is recommended that an order be placed with Castlereagh Motors for the supply and delivery of 1 No Mercedes-Benz with Farid TISM body (including autolube) and Zoeller Delta bin lifter at a total cost of £137,395.00+VAT.

It was proposed by Councillor McNamee
Seconded by Councillor McCrea MLA and AGREED

That Council submit an order to Castlereagh Motors for the supply and delivery of 1 No. Mercedes-Benz Econic with Farid TISM body (including autolube) and Zoeller Delta bin lifter at a total cost of £137,395+VAT.

4. RURAL DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME

4.1. Village Renewal Programme

The Chief Executive (Acting) advised Members that 6 Village Plans are nearing completion following the public consultation process undertaken by the Rural Development Council (RDC) in each of the villages. He further advised that up to £300,000 (£50,000 per village) may be secured through a successful application process. He informed Members that the total amount of funding secured from the RDP was disappointing and he reminded Members that it is envisaged Council will be required to provide 25% match funding (i.e. £12,500 per village) against the £50,000 indicatively allocated by RDP to each of the 6 villages. This would result in a cumulative cost to Council of £75,000 to match fund specific actions within each of the 6 Village Plans, where Council is required to act as the Project Lead.

Councillor McGarvey stated that whilst RDC will prepare very impressive plans, he is concerned that there may not be enough funding to implement actions within the Plans. The Chief Executive (Acting) advised that RDP is unable to provide funding from other measures. He indicated that he is aware that there may be huge expectations from the public and the £300,000 allocation may not be sufficient to deliver actions across the 6 villages, but said Council will endeavour to secure as much funding as possible from other sources to ensure the successful realisation of the Plans.

Councillor Wilson highlighted that the Village Plans will provide rural villages with an excellent opportunity to secure investment for regeneration. He sought approval for South West Action for Rural Development (SWARD) to provide Members with a ten minute update at the PR&S Meeting scheduled for Tuesday 22nd November 2011.

AGREED.

The Chief Executive (Acting) concluded that the draft Village Plans will be circulated to Members for consideration in the very near future.

4.2. South West Local Action Group

The Chief Executive (Acting) advised Members that the minutes of the South West Local Action Group Meeting held on 7th September 2011 relate to item 4.1 which have already been previously discussed.

Councillor McCrea MLA highlighted that item 5 of the aforementioned minutes refers to the purchase of laptops for LAG Members and he sought clarification upon the need and proposed costs involved. It was AGREED to forward Councillor McCrea's views to the SWARD Programme Manager.

Members NOTED minutes of South West Local Action Group Meeting held on 7th September 2011.

4.3. Rural Development Programme Joint Council Committee

Members NOTED minutes of Rural Development Programme Joint Council Committee Meeting held on 12th September 2011.

5. COMMUNITY SERVICES

5.1. Policing and Community Safety Partnerships

The Chief Executive (Acting) highlighted that most of the Members were already aware of the Policing and Community Safety Partnerships Proposed Budget for 2012-2013 and he advised that the Director of Corporate Services is currently drafting a budget proposal for the Policing and Community Safety Partnerships.

Councillor Kelly informed Members that the District Policing Partnership and Community Safety Partnership have carried out positive work in the Moneymore area and it is essential that such work continues.

Councillor McCrea MLA highlighted that Castlereagh Borough Council is currently piloting their Policing and Community Safety Partnership initiative, however some issues have arisen which they are seeking to resolve.

Members NOTED the letter, dated 28th October 2011, from Mr Peter May and Mr Gerry Kelly, MLA, Joint Chairs for the Northern Ireland Policing Board with regard to the 'Policing and Community Safety Partnerships Proposed Budget for 2012-2013.'

6. CONSULTATION ON THE DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT'S ESTATE MANAGEMENT STRATEGY 2011-2021

The Chief Executive (Acting) highlighted the importance of Council's response to the Department of Agriculture and Rural Development's Estate Management Strategy 2011-2021 Consultation. Councillor McGarvey concurred with the Chief Executive (Acting) remarks.

Councillor Wilson advised in reference to the final paragraph of Council's response letter, dated 3rd November 2011, that in his opinion it is not necessary for Council to '*thank the Department for the opportunity to comment on the Estates Management Strategy 2011-2021*' as the Department sought a response from Council with regard to their Consultation Document.

Members NOTED Council's response to the Department of Agriculture and Rural Development's Estate Management Strategy 2011-2021 Consultation.

7. IRISH CENTRAL BORDER AREA NETWORK (ICBAN)

7.1. ICBAN/INTERREG IVA Project Update

The Chief Executive (Acting) advised that an update report was received from Mr Colin McKenna, Development Manager, ICBAN in reference to future ICBAN/INTERREG IVA calls for funding. He further advised that the report is very broad based and focuses on ICBAN and their future strategic projects. In addition the report provides a brief update on 3 Spatial Planning Initiative Projects, namely Telecommunications Study, Roads Study and the Regional Vision Plan.

Members NOTED the email, dated 7th October 2011, from Mr Colin McKenna, Development Manager, ICBAN regarding future ICBAN/INTERREG IVA calls for funding.

7.2. ICBAN/INTERREG IVA Enterprise Projects

The Chief Executive (Acting) advised that an email had been forwarded to Council by ICBAN from Mr Michael Denny, Programme Manager (Acting), Special EU Programmes Body, dated 20th October 2011, providing an update on the outcome of ICBAN/INTERREG IVA Enterprise Projects submitted for funding. The email illustrates that not all project applications were successful much to the disappointment of Council and the efforts made by the Officers concerned. He further advised that Council works rigorously with their partners to ensure that comprehensive project applications are submitted.

Councillor Wilson enquired if feedback is sought in the event of a rejection of a project application. The Chief Executive (Acting) confirmed that feedback is sought by the Lead Partner from the Special EU Programmes Body (SEUPB). He advised that an appeal has been submitted for each of the 3 rejected projects which will provide the Lead Partner with the opportunity to attend a meeting with INTERREG IVA Officials.

8. LOUGH NEAGH PARTNERSHIP

Members were advised that a Lough Neagh Partnership Progress Report/Activity Plan was received for the period July to September 2011. The report provides Members with an update on achievements to date, work planned and current work in progress. Lough Neagh Partnership is seeking to submit an application to the Rural Development Programme (RDP) to secure funding for the Lough Neagh Co-operation Project.

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

That Council release the first stage payment to the Lough Neagh Partnership for the financial period 2011-2012, subject to the relevant documentation being submitted to Council.

9. SPERRINS TOURISM LIMITED

Members were advised that a copy of Sperrins Tourism Limited Progress Report for the period April to September 2011 was received. The report is comprehensive and outlines funding opportunities, marketing activities undertaken and issues encountered by Sperrins Tourism Limited.

The Chief Executive (Acting) advised that the Northern Ireland Tourist Board (NITB) is working in conjunction with Sperrins Tourism Ltd to develop a Tourism Strategy for the Sperrins region. He further advised that Council Officers liaise closely with Sperrins Tourism Officials to strategically develop and promote tourism within the district.

It was proposed by Councillor McCrea MLA
Seconded by Councillor Wilson and AGREED.

That Council release its second and final payment of £8,600 to Sperrins Tourism Ltd for the financial period 2011-2012, subject to receipt of the relevant documentation.

10. TOURISM

10.1. Tourism Sub Group

The Chief Executive (Acting) advised that the minutes from Tourism Sub Group Meeting held on 17th October 2011 provides Members with a comprehensive update on Council's numerous capital projects. He further advised that an update regarding the Davagh Forest development would be delivered to Members at a future meeting.

The Chief Executive (Acting) advised that Mr Michael Coulter, Director of Built Heritage and Dr John O'Keeffe, Assistant Director of Built Heritage, Northern Ireland Environment Agency (NIEA) attended the Tourism Sub Group Meeting on 17th October 2011 to provide Sub Group Members with an update in reference to Tullaghoge Fort. At this meeting it was agreed that NIEA would liaise with the Northern Ireland Tourist Board (NITB) and the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) to arrange a meeting with Council representatives, NIEA, HLF and NITB in Cookstown Council Offices to further progress the project.

Councillor McCrea MLA highlighted that he received an email from a constituent with regard to a recent meeting held in Stewartstown with Minister Michelle O'Neill, MLA, Minister for Agriculture and Rural Development in reference to the 'Drumcairne Mountain Trail Bike Pocket Park Pilot' and he enquired if any Member was aware of the meeting or circumstances surrounding it. It was AGREED that Councillor McCrea MLA would forward the email to the Chief Executive (Acting) for further clarification.

Members NOTED the minutes of Tourism Sub Group Meeting held on 17th October 2011.

11. BURNAVON

11.1. Arts & Cultural Committee

Members NOTED minutes of Arts & Cultural Committee Meeting held on 2nd November 2011.

12. TOWN CENTRE FORUM

12.1. Shop Improvement Scheme Sub Committee

Members NOTED minutes of Shop Improvement Scheme Sub Committee Meetings held on 23rd September 2011 and 19th October 2011.

12.2. Shopmobility

Members NOTED minutes of Shopmobility Meeting held on 16th August 2011.

13. SUBSCRIPTION

13.1. Rural Community Network

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

That Council renew its membership with Rural Community Network for the period October 2011 to September 2012, at a cost of £200 per annum.

14. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

14.1. Lough Neagh Rescue

Councillor McFlynn advised that she has recently received a letter from Lough Neagh Rescue highlighting the vital emergency service which they provide on a daily basis to rescue people from Lough Neagh. She enquired if Council has progressed the matter of providing a financial contribution to Lough Neagh Rescue. The Chief Executive (Acting) advised that Council is currently identifying the level of funding provided by other Councils. Councillor McFlynn advised that Craigavon Borough Council have consented to Lough Neagh Rescue using their Leisure Centre as a training facility.

14.2 Northern Ireland Housing Executive

Councillor Wilson highlighted that Northern Ireland Housing Executive (NIHE) is currently celebrating their 40th Anniversary, therefore he proposed that Council invite representatives from the Cookstown branch to attend a future Council Meeting as a mark of appreciation in recognition of their hard work over the years.

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

That Council invite representatives from the Cookstown branch of the Northern Ireland Housing Executive (NIHE) to a future Council Meeting in recognition of their 40th anniversary.

The meeting ended at 7.53pm.

Chairman

Clerk/Chief Executive

Date