

COOKSTOWN DISTRICT COUNCIL

Minutes of Proceedings of a DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE MEETING held in the Council Chamber on Tuesday 17th January 2012 at 7.00 pm

Present: Councillor McAleer (Chairman)

Councillors: Clarke, Glasgow, Kelly, Lees, Mallaghan, McCartney, McCrea, McElhone, McFlynn, McGarvey, Quinn and Wilson

Officers: Adrian McCreesh Chief Executive (Acting)
Maggie Bryson Community Services Manager
Emma Bell Administrative Officer

Councillor McAleer extended his sympathies to Councillor McNamee on the death of his nephew and requested that all Members stand for a one minute silence. DUP Members abstained. Following the one minute silence Councillor McAleer highlighted his disappointment that the DUP Members present failed to stand for the mark of respect.

Councillor McElhone indicated that although he can understand the political differences which Members may have, Councillor McNamee's nephew was a young man who passed away in the prime of his life and he shared Councillor McAleer's disappointment.

1. APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were reported on behalf of Councillors Mayo, McIvor and McNamee.

2. COMMUNITY SERVICES

2.1. Cookstown Citizens Advice Bureau Presentation

Councillors McElhone and Quinn declared an interest.

The Chief Executive (Acting) advised Members that Ms Sharon Dillon, Manager, Cookstown Citizens Advice Bureau (CAB) will provide them with an update on service provision and targets achieved for the 2011-2012 financial year.

Councillor McAleer welcomed Ms Sharon Dillon and Council's Community Services Manager to the meeting at 7.03pm.

Ms Dillon thanked Members on behalf of Cookstown and Dungannon Citizens Advice Bureau (CAB) for the opportunity to present and she advised that their remit extends into the Mid Ulster area, as they offer an advice service from within the Mid Ulster Hospital. Cookstown CAB is located at Cookstown Enterprise Centre and although the location is not ideal and a more central location would be advantageous, clients value their anonymity and parking is at a premium in Cookstown town centre.

Councillor McCrea arrived 7.05pm.

Ms Dillon advised that Cookstown CAB offers a range of services which include telephone advice, triage, appointments, email, outreach and home visits to their clients, and they will consider additional services if there is sufficient demand for them. A range of advice, information, advocacy and representation is available on the following issues:

- Employment
- Social Security Benefits and Tax Credits
- Housing
- Debt
- Consumer Rights
- Immigration and Nationality
- Tax
- Legal Problems
- Discrimination
- Family and Personal Issues

Cookstown CAB is proficient in providing advice on employment matters and provides representation for clients at employment tribunals. Increasingly advisors are delivering more debt advice to clients due to the downturn in the economy. During the period January 2011 to December 2011 the CAB have amassed 3,400 client contacts, 3,213 enquires and have dealt with 5,930 issues. Cookstown CAB is the only Citizens Advice Bureau to have acquired the 'Single High Security Broadband Network External Accreditation BS7799' for support services, which is very important in terms of data protection for clients, for example if a laptop or computer was stolen from the CAB office at Cookstown the security mechanism would prevent clients personal data from being accessed and extracted from the hard drive. The bureau participates on a Quality Assurance Scheme via Membership agreement which addresses a number of areas and requires a tri-annual audit. In July 2011 Cookstown CAB was audited and achieved a full quality assurance pass, which is only achieved by 16% of the bureau.

Ms Dillon advised that Cookstown CAB is very focused on training and all advisors must acquire their NVQ Level III prior to delivering generalist advice to clients. Specialist training is provided for advisors in relation to debt and housing matters. A holistic approach is adopted by all advisors when delivering advice to clients, this means that if a client presents with an issue and it becomes apparent that they require advice in other areas then the advisor will advise or refer accordingly. Ms Dillon provided Members with five case study examples and the relevant outcomes indicative of the holistic approach.

Ms Dillon advised that Cookstown CAB will be submitting an application to the Rural Development Programme to obtain funding to further develop telephone advice and rural outreach. In addition Cookstown CAB aims to participate on the Public Health Agency's Advice-4-Health Programme and also the Department for Social Development's Benefit Up-Take campaign depending on funding being secured.

Ms Dillon highlighted the challenges faced by Cookstown CAB, which range from the prevailing economic conditions and funding cuts to the Review of Public Administration (RPA) and demographic changes.

Ms Dillon thanked Members for the opportunity to deliver this presentation and highlighted the appreciation of Dungannon and Cookstown CAB Management Committee and staff for Council's continued financial support. Cookstown CAB has a very open and transparent relationship with Council and it is hoped that it continues through RPA.

Councillor McAleer thanked Ms Dillon for her very informative presentation.

Councillor Mallaghan commended Cookstown CAB for the excellent work which they carry out, especially within Pomeroy and The Rock. He highlighted that debt is a huge issue for many people and the assistance which Cookstown CAB provides to clients is superb.

Councillor Wilson also praised Cookstown CAB for the very valuable assistance they provide to clients. He advised that Council is concerned with the provision of outreach services, however Ms Dillon has addressed this within her presentation. He highlighted that debt is an ever increasing issue for many people and he wished Cookstown CAB every success for the future.

Councillor McCrea congratulated Cookstown CAB on the outstanding service which they provide. He enquired if the CAB has a mechanism in place which enables them to compare the volume of client contacts and presenting issues against those encountered by other bureaus. Ms Dillon advised that Cookstown CAB does capture and monitor this data, however she is not aware of how other bureaus record such information. Councillor McCrea enquired if she could forward information on the number of client contacts for each service. Ms Dillon advised that Cookstown CAB operates a 'policy code' therefore this information can be provided to Council.

Councillor Quinn commended Cookstown CAB for their hard work, especially in recommending the Cookstown Oil Stamp Scheme and St Vincent de Paul to their clients. He advised that the SDLP carries out extensive work with St Vincent de Paul. The case studies presented by the CAB were very interesting, however he enquired if the CAB could provide Members with the number of people from ethnic minority backgrounds who avail of the CAB service and also the issues which they present with. Ms Dillon advised that the CAB uses a case recording system which is exceptionally large, therefore Members are welcome to

view the system located at their premises in Cookstown Enterprise Centre.

Councillor Clarke congratulated Cookstown CAB on the vital work which they carryout and he highlighted the importance of the rural community obtaining access to outreach centres, which he hopes the CAB continue to address.

Ms Dillon left the meeting at 7.24pm.

2.2. Good Relations

2.2.1 Good Relations Small Grants

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

That Council accept the recommendations outlined within the Memorandum, dated 4th January 2012, from the Community Services Manager with regard to Good Relations Small Grants and Christmas Meals 2011.

2.2.2 Good Relations Committee Meeting

Members NOTED minutes of Good Relations Committee Meeting held on 23rd November 2011.

2.2.3 Flags & Emblems Sub Committee Meeting

Members NOTED minutes of Flags & Emblems Sub Committee Meeting held on 23rd November 2011.

Councillor Quinn highlighted that there are difficulties acquiring the removal of flags located on Church Street and Killymoon Street and he advised that at the Flags & Emblems Sub Committee Meeting held on 23rd November 2011 Roads Service representatives agreed that these flags should be removed, however this has not been completed. He highlighted that 2-3 flags have been removed from the centre of Cookstown which is very positive, however all parties should use their influence to ensure that flags are flown for the least amount of time possible.

Councillor McGarvey proposed that the Chief Executive (Acting) liaise with Roads Service to resolve this matter. The Chief Executive (Acting) advised that the most appropriate course of action is for Roads Service representatives to be invited to attend a meeting of the Flags & Emblems Sub Committee.

It was AGREED that the Chief Executive (Acting) would convene a meeting of the Flags & Emblem Sub Committee and an invitation to attend will be extended to representatives from Roads Service.

Councillor Wilson advised that it takes time for the removal of flags and progress can be very slow. He encouraged any Member to use their influence regarding the removal of flags in the vicinity of Cookstown grave yard, as there are numerous flags on display and there is a heavy volume of funeral processions which pass through the area. Councillor Quinn agreed but stated at the Flags & Emblems Sub Committee Meeting held on 23rd November 2011 it was agreed that attention should focus upon obtaining the removal of longstanding flags on the main thoroughfare.

3. PEACE III

The Chief Executive (Acting) advised that the Peace III – Phase 2 District Steering Committee report provides Members with an overview of the programme established by the Community Services Manager. There are three different parts which specifically affect the Cookstown District. The following areas have been identified as the main priority areas and are currently being proofed:

- Moneymore
- Pomeroy
- Coagh
- Milburn/Monrush
- Gortalowry Park
- Greenvale/Ratheen/Sullenboy
- Stewart Avenue/Killymoon

The Chief Executive (Acting) advised that other areas may be added. He further advised that the Community Services Manager is seeking 4 nominations, 1 from each party, to sit on the Peace III – Phase 2 District Steering Committee.

It was proposed by Councillor McGarvey
Seconded by Councillor McFlynn

That Councillor Quinn be nominated.

It was proposed by Councillor Wilson
Seconded by Councillor McCrea

That Councillor Kelly be nominated.

It was proposed by Councillor Clarke
Seconded by Councillor McElhone

That Councillor Mallaghan be nominated.

It was proposed by Councillor Wilson
Seconded by Councillor McCartney

That Councillor McCrea be nominated.

4. RURAL DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME

4.1. SWARD/Village Renewal

The Chief Executive (Acting) advised that Members will be aware of the background to this request. He highlighted that in most areas there is no definitive group with the necessary capacity to submit their own application and deliver upon its actions, therefore approval is sought for Council to apply to SWARD on behalf of the villages/clusters outlined below and where necessary implement accordingly:

- Coagh
- Moneymore
- Pomeroy and The Rock
- Stewartstown
- Loughshore Cluster
- Dunamore Cluster

He further advised that the application must be submitted to SWARD by 3rd February 2012 and should the application be successful then Council will spearhead the Village Renewal Programme in a similar fashion to the play parks project.

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

That Council submit an application for Village Renewal to SWARD on behalf of the villages/clusters outlined above.

4.2. RDP Strategic Projects

The Chief Executive (Acting) advised that Ms Michelle O'Neill, MLA, Minister for Agriculture and Rural Development convened a meeting with the Chairperson and Members of the Joint Council Committee (JCC), in addition to representatives from other agencies to discuss actions to achieve increased spend within the Rural Development Programme (RDP). Accordingly Local Authorities have been asked to put forward Strategic Project proposals which can be realistically developed and completed within a short timescale, however such projects must obtain approval from each clusters own Local Action Group (LAG) and JCC. He further advised that the SWARD Programme Manager will present the project proposals to the JCC and LAG at a joint meeting on Thursday 26 January 2012.

The Chief Executive (Acting) advised that Cookstown District Council convened a meeting on Friday 13 January 2012 with Officers from the 3 other Councils within the SWARD Cluster to convey this information and also to secure the best way forward. As a potential underspend of £2million may become available in the latter part of 2012 each Council has been asked to propose and cost its strategic projects at their own risk. He recommended that Council select Moneymore Recreation Centre for further development. The need for this redevelopment was demonstrated extensively by the local community within the recently prepared Moneymore Village Plan. The second project recommended is the development of additional changing rooms/indoor training area at Mid Ulster Sports Arena (MUSA). The Chief Executive (Acting) advised Members that if funding from SWARD is secured then the size/number of proposed changing rooms could be enhanced together with an indoor training/warm up area.

Councillor Wilson advised that he is supportive of both projects and therefore is happy to propose agreement for them, however he informed Members that the DARD Minister, Ms Michelle O'Neill, MLA made clear at the meeting that the decision does not rest entirely with SWARD. She also indicated that she is keen to improve broadband in rural areas and therefore may transfer funding to the Department of Enterprise Trade and Investment (DETI) for this purpose.

Councillor McGarvey highlighted that the additional facility at MUSA will be most welcome and the proposal to enhance Moneymore Recreation Centre will be very beneficial to the Moneymore community.

The Chief Executive (Acting) reminded Members that there is no guarantee that the funding application will be approved by the LAG and JCC or that the funding will be approved, and he advised that should it be progressed then it will result in the original changing rooms at MUSA being significantly delayed.

Councillor Wilson advised that the Joint meeting of the LAG and JCC will be held on Thursday 26 January 2012 at the new time of 5pm to 6.30pm.

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

That Council submit a cluster application to SWARD for the enhancement of Moneymore Recreation Centre and also the development of a new enhanced facility at MUSA.

The Community Services Manager left the meeting at 7.35pm.

4.3. South West Local Action Group

Members NOTED minutes of South West Local Action Group Meetings held on 5th October 2011 and 2nd November 2011.

4.4. Rural Development Programme Joint Council Committee

Members NOTED minutes of Rural Development Programme Joint Council Committee Meetings held on 10th October 2011 and 14th November 2011.

5. LOCAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

The Chief Executive (Acting) advised that approval is sought for Council to accept two Letters of Offer for two new Local Economic Development Programmes, namely Business Elevate Programme and SME Resource Efficiency Programme.

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

That Council accept two Letters of Offer, dated 30th December 2011, from Invest NI for the Business Elevate Programme and SME Resource Efficiency Programme, offering 75% grant aid towards each. It was further AGREED to publicly procure (a) suitably qualified organisation(s) to deliver each programme and (b) suitably qualified organisation(s) to independently evaluate each programme.

Councillor Wilson congratulated the Economic Development Manager and her team for their efforts in securing both Letters of Offer.

6. IRISH CENTRAL BORDER AREA NETWORK

6.1. ICBAN

The Chief Executive (Acting) advised that ICBAN' s Progress Report was received for the period 1st April 2011 to 31st December 2011 which also outlines their future plans. ICBAN now fulfils a dual role which encompasses strategic planning and transport, which is most effective. He reminded Members that last year Council agreed to make a reduced contribution to ICBAN lower than its other members, however consideration is being given towards examining how additional services can be secured from ICBAN for the value of £400. In the event that the services provided by ICBAN increases then Council may consider increasing their contribution.

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

That Council make their second and final payment of £6,250 to ICBAN for the financial period 2011-2012.

6.2. ICBAN/INTERREG IVA Spatial Planning Initiative

Members NOTED the ICBAN/INTERREG IVA progress report on Spatial Planning Initiative, dated December 2011.

7. SPERRINS TOURISM LTD

7.1. Members NOTED the Sperrins Tourism Ltd (STL) Progress Report for the period 1st April 2011 to 31st December 2011.

7.2. The Chief Executive (Acting) advised that a letter, dated 16th December 2011, was received from Sperrins Tourism Ltd (STL) requesting an increased contribution of £21,500 for the financial year 2012-2013. STL has successfully achieved all of their objectives to date as detailed within their Action Plan, nonetheless it is recommended that Council maintain their current level of funding for the 2012-2013 financial year, however in the event that other Councils decide not to maintain their financial contributions to STL for the financial period 2012-2013 then this recommendation will be reconsidered.

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

That Council maintain their current level of funding of £17,200 to Sperrins Tourism Ltd for the financial year 2012-2013 subject to satisfaction regarding the on-going economic viability of the organisation.

8. LOUGH NEAGH PARTNERSHIP

The Chief Executive (Acting) advised that Lough Neagh Partnership is currently in a similar position to Sperrins Tourism Ltd. They have conducted a 6 monthly review for the period up to December 2011, as outlined within their Activity Report circulated to Members. Each of the 7 Councils located around Lough Neagh are currently considering whether they will provide a financial contribution to Lough Neagh Partnership for the next financial year.

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

That Council will make its second and final payment of £2,016 to Lough Neagh Partnership for the financial year 2011-2012.

9. REVISED EQUALITY SCHEME FOR COOKSTOWN DISTRICT COUNCIL 2011-2015

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

That Council adopt with immediate effect, the Revised Equality Scheme for Cookstown District Council 2011-2015 and also the Report on the Consultation of Cookstown District Council's Revised Equality Scheme, dated 29th December 2011.

10. IMPROVEMENT, COLLABORATION & EFFICIENCY

Members NOTED minutes of Regional Governance Group Induction Meeting held on 23rd November 2011.

11. NORTHERN IRELAND PENSIONERS PARLIAMENT

Members NOTED the letter, dated 4th November 2011, from Mr Eddie Lynch, Chief Executive Officer, Northern Ireland Pensioners Parliament with regard seeking Council's support for Cookstown to be considered as the host town for the 2012 County Tyrone Pensioners' Parliament, by way of providing £3,000 sponsorship to cover venue hire, catering and delegate packs, in addition to pensioners attendance at the regional 2 day event in Belfast on 8th and 9th June 2012.

12. TOURISM

12.1. Tourism Sub Group

The Chief Executive (Acting) reminded Members that Council's Tourism Officer delivered a presentation on the Davagh Forest Project at the Statutory Meeting on Tuesday 10th January 2012.

Members NOTED minutes of Tourism Sub Group Meeting held on 19th December 2011.

13. TOWN CENTRE FORUM

13.1. Rating of Commercial Properties

Members NOTED letter, dated 15th December 2011, from Mr Brian McClure, Rating Policy Division, Department of Finance and Personnel regarding the ‘Way Forward on the Rating of Commercial Properties: Small Businesses, Large Retail Properties and Empty Retail Premises.’

13.2. Town Centre Forum

Members NOTED minutes of Town Centre Forum Meeting held on 8th November 2011 (copy attached).

13.3. Shopmobility

Members NOTED minutes of Shopmobility Meetings held on 16th August 2011 and 17th October 2011 (copies attached).

14. FINANCE ACT & PRUDENTIAL CODE TRAINING

The Chief Executive (Acting) reminded Members that the Finance Act & Prudential Code training will be held on Tuesday 24th January 2012 at 5.30pm in the Chamber for all Elected Members.

15. SUBSCRIPTION

15.1. Association of Town Centre Management

The Chief Executive (Acting) advised that Council's annual subscription with the Association of Town Centre Management is due for renewal. The subscription provides Officers with valuable information and ideas for future development of Cookstown town centre.

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

That Council renew its annual subscription with the Association of Town Centre Management for the period 1st January 2012 to 31st December 2012, at a cost of £495 plus VAT.

16. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

16.1. Belfast Telegraph Sports Awards

Councillor McGarvey enquired if Council had received an invitation for Members to attend the annual Belfast Telegraph Sports Awards which were held on Monday 16th January 2012. The Chief Executive (Acting) advised that he would look into the matter.

AGREED.

16.2. Premier League

Councillor Wilson reminded Members that at the Sport and Leisure Meeting held on 20th December 2011 it was agreed that the Premier League could use the facilities at Mid Ulster Sports Arena (MUSA) to provide training. He advised that the Premier League will be hosting a buffet meal in the Glenavon House Hotel on Thursday 16th February 2012 and representatives from Manchester City Football Club will be in attendance with the FA Cup should Members wish to avail of a photo opportunity. Furthermore Manchester City will be holding football training sessions on Friday 17th February 2012 at MUSA.

The Chief Executive (Acting) advised that this event has been organised by the Premier League in conjunction with Manchester City, however Members will be invited to attend the buffet meal on Thursday 16th February 2012 in the Glenavon House Hotel. Children from all over Northern Ireland will be able to avail of the training sessions at MUSA on Friday 17th February 2012.

NOTED.

The meeting ended at 7.50pm.

Chairman

Clerk/Chief Executive (Acting)

Date