

COOKSTOWN DISTRICT COUNCIL

Minutes of Proceedings of a DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE MEETING held in the Council Chamber on Tuesday 20th September 2011 at 7.00 pm

Present: Councillor McAleer (Chairman)

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

Officers: Adrian McCreesh Director of Development
Emma Bell Administrative Officer

1. APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were reported on behalf of Councillor Lees and Councillor McIvor.

Councillor McAleer proposed that the Development Committee Meeting is concluded by 7.45pm, as representatives from SWAMP will be in attendance to present to Members at the PR&S Meeting following this meeting.

Councillor Wilson proposed that Members receive a five minute interval between the Development Committee Meeting and the PR&S Meeting.

AGREED.

The Director of Development proposed that the meeting commence with Agenda Item 21.1 Any other business.

AGREED.

2. DESERTCREAT COLLEGE PRESENTATION

The Director of Development advised that the Desertcreat College presentation has been postponed due to the limited timeframe and advised it will be reconvened at a future meeting. He further advised that it is anticipated the Strategic Investment Board (SIB) will request Council's assistance with regard to local communications and co-ordination of a public meeting.

3. COMMUNITY SERVICES

3.1. Community Services Annual Report

The Director of Development proposed that the Community Services Annual Report for 2010-2011, as prepared by the Community Services Manager, be taken as read and understood. He advised that the Community Services Unit has delivered £782,514 of funding through a range of Community Sector Programmes, excluding SWARD, which the Community Services Unit is responsible for, as outlined below:

PROGRAMME	AMOUNT OF FUNDING DELIVERED
Community Services	£177,533
Good Relations	£117,992
Community Festivals	£ 18,000
Community Safety	£100,150
Peace III Phase 1	£368,839
Total	£782,514

The Director of Development advised that £82,575 is received by Council from the Department for Social Development (DSD) for community support during this financial year, however to secure this amount Council must match fund it. Therefore a total of £648,000 was secured from external agencies to provide funding support within the Cookstown District. He further advised that the Community Services Annual Report details the funding allocated to each Community Group and he reminded Members that all funding applications were monitored and followed up accordingly. Pages 7-32 of the Community Services Annual Report relate exclusively to the Cookstown Citizens Advice Bureau and are inclusive of a report prepared by Venturei Network, namely "A

Review of the Delivery of Citizens' Advice in Cookstown, dated May 2011.

Councillor Wilson highlighted that the Community Services Annual Report for 2010-2011 is very comprehensive and whilst £782,514 is a massive amount of funding to have delivered, it must be acknowledged that the Community Services Unit is also responsible for the SWARD Programme which is very significant. He congratulated the Community Services Manager and her team on the effort and commitment which they have made in the delivery of their projects and proposed the adoption of the Community Services Annual Report 2010-2011.

Councillor McGarvey enquired about the level of outreach provision provided by Cookstown Citizens Advice Bureau. The Director of Development agreed to provide Members with an outreach report from Cookstown Citizens Advice Bureau.

Councillor McCrea advised Members that he has discussed the provision of Citizens' Advice with the Director of Development and in his opinion he believes that the service could be enhanced and suggested benchmarking with such provision in other areas. The Director of Development advised Members that Council signed a Service Level Agreement with Dungannon and District Citizens Advice Bureau in April 2010 and explicit targets are set for Cookstown Citizens Advice Bureau to achieve. He highlighted the importance of Council working effectively with Cookstown Citizens Advice Bureau and he advised that in the event that Members identify a definite deficiency in the Cookstown service then he would arrange for Officials from Cookstown Citizens Advice Bureau to attend a future Council meeting to address such issues at the request of Members.

Councillor McCrea advised that he is keen that Cookstown Citizens Advice service provides a high quality service to meet the needs of users within the Cookstown District.

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

That Council invite Cookstown Citizen's Advice Bureau Officials to a future Council meeting to address outstanding issues with a view to further enhancing the services provided to the public.

Members NOTED the Community Services Annual Report for the period 2010-2011.

3.2. A Review of the Delivery of Citizens' Advice in Cookstown District

The Director of Development advised that this item was incorporated within the Community Services Annual report for 2010-2011.

3.3. Peace III

The Director of Development advised Members that approval is sought for Phase II of the Peace III Programme to provide support for the 6 existing priority areas, as outlined below:

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

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

That Council should provide support under Phase II of the Peace III Programme to the 6 existing priority areas as indicated above.

4. LOCAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

4.1. Telecommunications Update

The Director of Development advised that items 4.1.1 and 4.1.2 have been included for Members information.

4.1.1 Members NOTED Council's consultation response to the Department of Enterprise Trade and Investment's (DETI) Telecommunications Action Plan 2011-2015, prepared in May 2011.

4.1.2 The Director of Development advised that a delegation of Members, Council Officers and representatives from three local businesses attended a meeting on Monday 5th September 2011 with Ms Arlene Foster, MLA, Minister for Enterprise, Trade and Investment (DETI) to lobby for improved telecoms provision in the Cookstown District. He further advised that the Economic Development Manager prepared a Position Paper namely “Addressing the Gaps in Telecoms Provision in the Cookstown District” which was presented to Minister Foster, MLA and DETI Officials. The Director of Development advised Members that the meeting provided an opportunity for attendees to present a strong case evidencing the need for improved telecoms services in the Cookstown District. He added that whilst the meeting was productive, yet challenging, the Minister agreed to respond formally to Council on each of the issues identified within the ‘Position Paper.’

Councillor McCrea highlighted that there are on-going issues with the broadband provision provided by British Telecom (BT) and he proposed that BT, Ofcom and the Consumer Council are invited to a future Council meeting to address telecoms issues. The Director of Development advised that Council is awaiting a response from DETI with reference to Council’s Position Paper on telecoms provision, after which BT, Ofcom and the Consumer Council can be invited to a future Council Meeting to meet Members.

Members NOTED Council’s Position Paper “Addressing the Gaps in Telecoms Provision in the Cookstown District.”

4.2. European Union (EU) Competitiveness Programme

4.2.1 Mid-Term Review of Priority 2.2 (Local Economic Development) of the European Sustainable Competitiveness Programme

Members NOTED Council’s response to the Department of Enterprise Trade and Investment’s (DETI) Mid-Term Independent Review of Priority 2.2 (Local Economic Development) of the EU Sustainable Competitiveness Programme, prepared May 2011.

4.2.2 EU Competitiveness Programme – Local Economic Development (LED) Measure

Members NOTED the letter received from Minister Arlene Foster, MLA, Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment (DETI), received on 16th August 2011, regarding changes to the administrative arrangement for the Local Economic Development Measure of the EU Competitiveness Programme and deadlines for future applications.

4.3. Planned Relocation of DARD Head quarters

Members NOTED Council's submission to the Department of Agriculture and Rural Development (DARD), lobbying for the planned relocation of DARD's headquarters to Cookstown, prepared May 2011.

4.4. Update on New Sub-Regional Small Business Export Programme

Members NOTED report providing an update on progress and proposed indicative costs for the new collaborative Sub-Regional Small Business Export Programme being developed between Cookstown, Dungannon, Magherafelt, Omagh and Fermanagh Councils.

4.5. Traded Services Feasibility Study

The Director of Development advised Members that this is the final Traded Services Feasibility Study Report for Cookstown/Mid-Ulster and Cavan which was fully funded by SEUPB through the ICBAN Multi-Annual Plan. The report is very comprehensive and comprises of a ten-point action plan to progress the Traded Services Sector in Cookstown/Mid-Ulster and Cavan areas.

Members NOTED the final Feasibility Study Report in reference to developing the Traded Services Sector in Cookstown/Mid-Ulster and Cavan, dated June 2011.

5. IRISH CENTRAL BORDER AREA NETWORK (ICBAN)

Members were advised that ICBAN have requested a continuation of Council's annual contribution of £12,500 for the 2011-2012 financial year. The Director of Development reminded Members that this contribution is paid in two six monthly payments and subject to receipt of all relevant documentation.

The Director of Development advised that ICBAN is currently co-ordinating a Sub-Regional Spatial Planning Programme which focuses on both planning issues and opportunities across both Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland.

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

That Council maintain their current level of funding towards ICBAN of up to £12,500 for the financial period 2011-2012, to be paid in two six monthly instalments subject to receipt of all relevant documentation.

6. LOUGH NEAGH PARTNERSHIP

Members were advised that a letter was received from Mr Shane O'Neill, Lough Neagh Partnership, dated 10th June 2011, requesting a continuation of Council's annual contribution at the reduced rate of £7,275. The Director of Development advised Members that it was agreed at the Development Committee Meeting on 18th January 2011 that Council make a reduced contribution of £6,720 to Lough Neagh Partnership for the financial period 2011-2012.

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

That Council makes its annual contribution at the reduced rate of £6,720 to Lough Neagh Partnership for the financial period of 2011-2012, to be paid in two instalments and subject to submission of all relevant documentation. It was further AGREED to release the first payment when all documentation has been received.

7. THE DEPARTMENT OF ENTERPRISE, TRADE AND INVESTMENT'S (DETI) ENERGY CONSULTATION ON THE POTENTIAL FOR EXTENDING THE NATURAL GAS NETWORK IN NORTHERN IRELAND

The Director of Development reminded Members that Council has lobbied through the "Gas To The West" campaign since 2005 for natural gas to be extended to the West of Northern Ireland, thereby providing such areas with equal access. As a result the natural gas network was extended to include a number of areas, however the infrastructure was not extended to include Cookstown.

Members AGREED that Council submit a response to the Department of Enterprise, Trade and Investment's (DETI) Energy Consultation on the potential for extending the natural gas network in Northern Ireland by 30th September 2011.

8. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT (DARD) – ESTATE MANAGEMENT STRATEGY 2011-2012 CONSULTATION

Members were advised that the Department of Agriculture and Rural Development (DARD) is seeking responses on their Estate Management Strategy 2011-2021 consultation documents.

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

That Council submit a response on the Department of Agriculture and Rural Development's (DARD) Estate Management Strategy 2011-2021 consultation documents by 7th November 2011.

9. NORTHERN IRELAND LOCAL GOVERNMENT ASSOCIATION (NILGA)

9.1. NILGA

Members NOTED the NILGA Paper "Where we want to be and the tools to do the job," dated June 2011.

9.2. Improvement Collaboration and Efficiency (ICE) Programme Consultation

Members NOTED the letter and report received from Councillor Evelyne Robinson, President of the Northern Ireland Local Government Association (NILGA) and Mr Ashley Boreland, Chair of SOLACE with regard to the Improvement, Collaboration and Efficiency (ICE) Consultation Final Report, dated July 2011.

10. RATING OF COMMERCIAL PROPERTIES PUBLIC CONSULTATION

The Director of Development advised that the Department of Finance and Personnel (DFP) is seeking responses on their “Rating of Commercial Properties: small businesses, large retail properties and empty shops” public consultation paper, dated June 2011. The Director of Development indicated that the ‘preferred approach’ outlined in the consultation document identifies a number of key issues, including:

- 20% rate relief to be provided to eligible premises with a Net Annual Value (NAV) of £5,001 to £10,000 and it is anticipated that this relief will benefit approximately 9,000 small businesses.
- No additional relief would be provided to those currently receiving small business rate relief (NAV £5,000 or below).
- An average levy on rates bills of around 20% to be applied to those retail premises with a rateable value of £500,000 or more, in the form of a regional rate supplement.
- Allowing the use of shop fronts or shop window displays for (non-political) community, artistic or other non-commercial purposes so that the full occupied rate is not charged on otherwise empty properties. In this instance an entitlement to 50% empty property relief (or exclusion if applicable) would be preserved.
- The above changes would apply for 3 years from 1st April 2012 until 31st March 2015.

Members AGREED that Council submit a response on the Department of Finance and Personnel's (DFP) consultation document on the "Rating of Commercial Properties: small businesses, large retail properties and empty shops," by 18th October 2011.

11. TOWN CENTRE REGENERATION

11.1. Town Centre Forum

Members NOTED minutes of Town Centre Forum meeting held on 24th March 2011 and also minutes of Town Centre Forum AGM and meeting held on 23 June 2011.

11.2. Cookstown Town Centre Masterplan

Members NOTED minutes of Town Centre Masterplan meeting held on 31st March 2011.

11.3. Shop Improvement Scheme Sub-Committee

Members NOTED minutes of Shop Improvement Scheme Sub-Committee meeting held on 17th June 2011.

11.4. Shopmobility

Members NOTED minutes of Shopmobility meetings held on 18th January 2011, 22nd March 2011 and 17th May 2011.

12. THE DRAPERS' TOWNS

The Director of Development advised that a letter, dated 7th September 2011, was received from Mr George Glover and Mr John Devlin, The Drapers' Towns with regard to securing funding to assist them to use the services of an Architect, Quantity Surveyor and Economic Appraiser to complete the relevant application(s) under the next round of the Heritage Lottery funded THI Scheme to repair and restore a number of derelict buildings in Moneymore.

The Director of Development reminded Members that a similar scheme was successfully delivered in Moneymore and Draperstown 4 years ago and a total of 26 buildings were restored and a further 30 properties benefitted from a complementary paint and signage scheme. As a result a total of £3.4 million was spent in the refurbishment of the buildings in both Draperstown and Moneymore.

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

That Council make a contribution of up to £1,000 to assist The Drapers' Towns to resource the necessary expertise, namely an architect, quantity surveyor and economic appraiser, to complete the relevant application(s) under the next round of the Heritage Lottery funded THI Scheme to repair and restore a number of derelict buildings in Moneymore, subject to the appropriate terms and conditions of Council being complied with.

13. LISSAN HOUSE RESTORATION PROJECT – INTERPRETIVE DESIGN

The Director of Development advised that a site visit will be organised in the near future for Members to view the interpretative signage at Lissan House, co-funded by Council and the Northern Ireland Tourist Board.

Members were advised that a letter, dated 6th September 2011, was received from Mr Andy Best, Funding and Monitoring Manager, Northern Ireland Tourist Board (NITB) with regard to the Interpretative Design at Lissan House. The Director of Development advised that NITB is keen that corporate logos are not included in the final design of the visitor interpretation as these have no relevance to the story being told or any interest to visitors. Council's Economic Development Manager and Monitoring Officer have attended regular meetings of the Lissan House Restoration

Project and have both advised NITB that Council requires its logo on all interpretative materials. Furthermore the inclusion of Council's logo on all interpretive materials is clearly documented as a requirement in Council's Letter of Offer to the Friends of Lissan Trust, following Council's normal procedure. Councillor Wilson advised that should Council relax on this condition and occasion, then a precedent would be set for other organisations, which Council has/or will commit funding to.

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

That Council's corporate logo is included within the final design of all visitor interpretation materials regarding the Lissan House Restoration Project.

14. POMEROY DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS

Members NOTED the letter, dated 10th May 2011, from Mr Kieran Ruddy, Chairman, Pomeroy Development Projects Ltd regarding a planning application for Pomeroy Business Park.

The Director of Development of Development reminded Members that at the Development Committee Meeting on Tuesday 15th March 2011 they requested that Council determines the status of Pomeroy Development Projects Planning Service application. He advised that Council is continually pursuing this matter and Members will be updated at a future Council Meeting when this information becomes available.

15. BURNAVON

15.1. Civic Awards Sub Committee

Members NOTED minutes of Civic Awards Sub Committee Meeting held on 15th August 2011.

16. TOURISM

16.1. Northern Ireland Tourist Board Appointments

Members were informed that the Department of Enterprise, Trade and Investment (DETI) is inviting applications for membership of the Board of the Northern Ireland Tourist Board. DETI is seeking to appoint two new members with effect from 1st February 2012.

NOTED.

16.2. Tourism Sub Group

Members NOTED minutes of Tourism Sub Group meetings held on 8th July 2011 and 17th August 2011.

The Director of Development advised that the Davagh Forest project is progressing and Countryside Access Activities Network (CANN) has been appointed to project manage the development of the recreational trails network within the forest. Council Officers are liaising with officials from the Department of Agriculture and Rural Development on a regular basis to ensure the continual advancement of this project.

Members were advised that in reference to Tullaghoge Fort, the Department of Agriculture and Rural Development (DARD) has agreed to take responsibility for the development of the Fort. Furthermore, Mr Michael Coulter and Dr John O'Keefe, Northern Ireland Environment Agency (NIEA) will be invited to attend the next Tourism Sub Group Meeting to discuss the most appropriate route to progress the Tullaghoge Fort project.

The Director of Development advised that with regard to the development at Lough Fea it is anticipated that the funding application submitted to the Rural Development Programme (RDP) will be assessed by the end of 2011, and if approved will enable the project to be progressed during 2012-2013.

16.3. Tourism Innovation Fund

Members NOTED minutes of Tourism Innovation Fund meeting held on 8th March 2011.

16.4. Western Regional Partnership

Members NOTED minutes of Western Regional Partnership meeting held on 8th March 2011.

17. 16TH ANNUAL NORTHERN IRELAND ECONOMIC CONFERENCE

Members were informed that the 16th Annual Northern Ireland Economic Conference will be held on Tuesday 4th October 2011 at the Culloden Hotel, Belfast.

NOTED.

18. DRAFT STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK FOR COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT FOR NORTHERN IRELAND

The Director of Development advised that Members are invited to attend an event organised by the Rural Community Network (RCN) called “Have your say on the Draft Strategic Framework for Community Development in Northern Ireland” event on the morning of Wednesday 5th October 2011 (exact times to be confirmed) at Lough Neagh Discovery Centre, Oxford Island, Craigavon. Any Member interested in attending this event should contact the Development Department.

NOTED.

19. RURAL DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME

The Director of Development advised that the Rural Development Programme (RDP) is a significant project therefore it is important that Members are kept up to date through the regular inclusion of minutes on the Development Committee Agenda.

19.1. Members NOTED minutes of South West Local Action Group meetings held on 2nd March 2011, 6th April 2011, 1st June 2011 and 6th July 2011.

19.2. Members NOTED minutes of Rural Development Programme Joint Council Committee meetings held on 21st February 2011, 21st March 2011, 18th April 2011, 26th May 2011 and 20th June 2011.

20. SUBSCRIPTION

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

That Council renew its annual subscription to Ulster Business Magazine for the period 4th June 2011 to 3rd June 2012 at a cost of £27.50 plus VAT per annum, to be released with immediate payment.

21. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

21.1. MUSA Changing Facilities

The Director of Development advised that the new 3G pitch located at the Mid Ulster Sports Arena (MUSA) will be completed on schedule. He reminded Members that at the Sport and Leisure Meeting on Tuesday 21st June 2011 it was agreed that Council would explore various options to resolve the impending need for additional changing facilities at MUSA. The Director of Development advised that both a modular and brick building encompassing four changing rooms, a meeting room, male/female and disabled toilets, plant room and reception/office accommodation were considered. A meeting with Party Leaders was convened for Friday 26th August 2011 to discuss the various proposals and it was agreed that Council progress to design stage of the changing facility. A preferred brick build option will be progressed at an approximate cost of £300,000. A full report and recommendations will be brought to a future Council meeting for Members consideration.

The meeting ended at 7.33pm.

Chairman

Clerk/Chief Executive

Date

TABLED FOR INFORMATION

1. Rivers Agency Business Plan 2011-2012.