

COOKSTOWN DISTRICT COUNCIL

Minutes of Proceedings of a DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE MEETING held in the Council Chamber on Tuesday 17th November 2009 at 7.00 pm

Present: Councillor McGarvey (Chairman)

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

Officers: Adrian McCreesh Director of Development
Emma Bell Admin Officer

The Chairman acknowledged the death of the late Ms Peggy Lavery and extended his sympathies to the former Councillor's family. Councillors Glasgow and McAleer further added that Ms Lavery was held in very high esteem and was a former Councillor with whom they were proud to be associated with.

The Chairman proposed that Council send a letter of condolence to the family of Ms Lavery.

AGREED.

1. APOLOGIES

An apology for absence was reported on behalf of Councillors Greer, McCrea, McGlone, McIvor, Quinn and Mr Michael McGuckin.

2. RIPPLE

The Director of Development advised Members that further to the recent RIPPLE presentation at the Development Committee meeting, on 15th September 2009, whereby Council support was requested for the following three issues:

- An Economic Valuation Study

- Ballinderry River Stewardship Awards
- Pollution Mitigation Signposting for Businesses in the Ballinderry Catchment.

The Director of Development of Development reminded Members of the background to the 3 projects and outlined a series of recommended actions for each.

An Economic Valuation Study

This Study is required to evaluate the full range of services provided by the Ballinderry River Catchment, following completion of a scoping study. Key services include; Amenity & Recreation, Education, Recreational Fisheries, Fisheries Habitat, Supporting Rare Species, Commercial Fisheries, Drinking Water Supply, Pollution Assimilation, Industrial Water Abstraction, Flood Attenuation, Energy and Carbon Sequestration. The estimated cost to conduct an Economic Valuation Study is £10,000, which would include; 15 days consultancy services, travel expenses, VAT and the publication of a detailed report.

Recommendation

- Operational Services Department has confirmed that an Economic Valuation Study cannot be funded by the Landfill Communities Fund. This fund has very specific objectives and is normally used for capital work projects.
- RIPPLE to prepare a comprehensive terms of reference for the appointment of consultants with a view to securing funding for an Economic Valuation Study through the Rural Development Programme.

Ballinderry River Stewardship Awards

Within the RIPPLE Community Action Plan a key action is to ‘Establish a River Stewardship Award for Community, Agriculture, Business & Industry’. RIPPLE has requested Council support to host and sponsor the proposed annual event.

Recommendation

- Council host a meeting of the Civic Awards Committee and RIPPLE Representatives to identify if the Ballinderry River Stewardship Awards could be integrated within Councils existing annual Civic Awards Scheme.

Pollution Mitigation Signposting for Businesses in the Ballinderry Catchment

Within the RIPPLE Community Action Plan a key action is to ‘Educate business and landowners on how to avoid polluting rivers and the impact pollution can have on water quality and wildlife.’ RIPPLE has requested Council support to provide a venue and sponsorship for such an event, in addition to providing assistance with contacting all the businesses in the area to notify them of the planned event.

Recommendation

- Council to contribute the Burnavon as a possible venue to hold the signposting event in February/March 2010 to coincide with the start of the 2010 angling season.
- Council to provide refreshments for the signposting event.
- Development Department assist RIPPLE by providing access to Council’s on-line business directory which contains details of businesses located within the Cookstown District.

Members were advised that Council is not in a position to make a financial contribution of £10,000 towards the cost of conducting an Economic Valuation Study. Members were further advised that Council cannot predetermine who is nominated for a Civic Award, as this decision rests with the Civic Awards Committee and therefore it was recommended that the matter be referred to the Civic Awards Committee for consideration.

After discussion, Members AGREED to accept the recommendations as set out above.

3. LOCAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

3.1 Review of Northern Ireland's Multiple Deprivation Measure 2009

The Director of Development highlighted Cookstown District Council's response to the proposed updating of the NI Multiple Deprivation Measure. The response aims to highlight a range of deprivation areas such as income, employment, health and disability and education, skills and training and the distances to access such services. This response was compiled to reflect the needs of the people within Cookstown District.

Councillor Cassidy enquired if those people in receipt of working tax credit will be also be included within the 'Income Deprivation Domain' indicator. The Director of Development advised that he would clarify this and inform Members accordingly.

Councillor Wilson arrived at 7.05pm.

AGREED.

3.2. Assistance to Business

Members were advised that a letter has been received from Ms Fiona Hepper, Head of Strategic Policy Division, Department of Enterprise, Trade and Investment (DETI) identifying various types of financial support provided at European, UK and NI level to help businesses through the current economic downturn. Councillor Wilson further highlighted that this Programme is disappointing due to its limitations with regard to local businesses.

NOTED.

3.3. Northern Ireland Broadband Fund

The Director of Development advised that a letter had been received from Mr Bill Stevenson, Telecoms Policy Unit, Department of Enterprise, Trade and Investment, advising that the NI Broadband Fund has opened its fourth call for applications. He further advised that this opportunity is aimed at attracting private sector telecoms providers to bid for funding to improve the telecommunication infrastructure to support the growth of local businesses.

Members were also advised that the wireless broadband project being progressed by North West Electronics (NWE) is well underway and due for completion in November/December 2009.

The Director of Development advised that a project update will be provided in the next few weeks for Members information.

4. PEACE III

Members were advised that nominations are sought for 5 Members from Cookstown District Council to be involved in the new Peace III 'Leadership Programme' for Elected Representatives and Key Community and Business Leaders. The Programme will be tailored to each Member and will challenge and examine a variety of leadership practices to assist in achieving peaceful outcomes for a shared society. The Programme requires a great deal of commitment, however Members will receive accreditation though ILM. The Programme requires up to 40 participants, of which 20 will come from the Elected Representatives in the Cookstown, Magherafelt, Dungannon and Fermanagh Council areas.

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

That Councillor McAleer be nominated.

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

That Councillor Clarke be nominated.

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

That Councillor Quinn be nominated.

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

That Councillor Cassidy be nominated.

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

That Councillor McNamee be nominated if the remaining place is still available after notifying those absent Councillors.

The Director of Development advised that this information would be forwarded to all Councillors who are absent from the meeting inviting them to consider taking up the remaining place.

5. LOUGH NEAGH & LOWER BANN ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Members were advised that a letter from Mr Graham Seymour, Director of Development of Natural Heritage, Northern Ireland Environment Agency dated 9th November 2009 and a letter from Mr Victor Hamill and Mr Brian Cassells, Lough Neagh & Lower Bann Advisory Committee, dated 10th November 2009, had been circulated prior to this meeting. The Director of Development advised that in previous years, Council had made a financial contribution of £5,000 to the Lough Neagh & Lower Bann Advisory Committee to supplement natural and built heritage, recreation, navigation, drainage, and exploring the ecology of the Lough. At a previous meeting of the Development Committee on 15th September 2009 it was agreed that *“Council agree to provide a contribution of £5,000 for the financial year 2009/10 on the conditions that (i) all other Councils provide funding at the same level and (ii) all requested documentation is received.”* Members were further advised that a number of Councils have refused funding and it is RECOMMENDED that Council agree to provide a contribution on the same terms as set out above.

AGREED.

6. SPERRINS TOURISM LTD

The Director of Development advised Members that the second stage of Council's annual contribution to Sperrins Tourism is now due.

It was proposed by Councillor Cassidy
And seconded by Councillor McNamee and AGREED

That Council make its second stage payment of £10,750 to Sperrins Tourism Ltd for the 2009/2010 financial year.

7. COMMUNITY SERVICES

7.1 Citizens Advice Bureau

Members were advised that the Department for Social Development undertook a review of “the number and location of Area Advice Centres” across Northern Ireland. Advice Centre locations have been tested against key criteria such as population and deprivation. The Department for Social Development anticipates that 34 advice centres will be located throughout Northern Ireland, which includes one in each of the Cookstown, Magherafelt and Dungannon areas. It is anticipated that advice centres will be commissioned using open procurement by the new Councils and that a Network of Service Centres to be available at Council level. Members were further advised that this proposal suggests that the service will be maintained at the current level or improved, however there is no mention of funding for this service. The report proposes that the service should be centralised, however it does not outline whether or not it will be supplemented with outreach clinics.

The Director of Development advised that the report is positive and will not change the current level of service already provided by the Citizens Advice Bureau. Any changes to the advice service after January 2010 will have to be reviewed by the Statutory Transition Committee.

NOTED.

7.2 Community Safety Partnership

7.2.1 Members NOTED minutes of Community Safety meeting held on 1st July 2009.

7.2.2 Members NOTED the Update Report and Indicative Allocation for 2009/10, from the Community Safety Officer, regarding Anti Social Behaviour, Crime and Awareness Raising.

7.3 Good Relations

The Chairman informed the Committee that as the Good Relations minutes were not accompanied by the actual Flags and Emblems Policy then this matter should be deferred to a future meeting.

8. TOWN CENTRE REGENERATION

8.1. Burn Road Environmental Improvement Scheme

8.1.1. Burn Road EI Steering Group Committee

Members NOTED minutes of Burn Road EI Steering Group Committee held on 7th October and 28th October 2009.

8.1.2. Burn Road EI Scheme Update

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

Councillor Wilson highlighted that the street furniture, paving and associated public realm works are being implemented to high standard and looks very well. The Director of Development also complemented the works and highlighted that the Contractor appointed was very efficient. This was reiterated by Councillors McNamee and Glasgow.

8.2. Town Centre Forum

Members NOTED minutes of Town Centre Forum meeting held on 5th November 2009.

8.3. Town Centre Living Initiative

The Director of Development advised Members that the Town Centre Living Initiative (LOTS) has been temporarily reinstated and the Town Strategy Manager is in contact with previous applicants to inform them accordingly. At present 51 enquiries have been received to date, 7 properties have been completed, 3 have been approved or are currently under construction.

Members NOTED minutes of Town Centre Living Initiative (LOTS) Scheme Officers meeting held on 20th October 2009.

8.4. Social Development Committee Inquiry Into Town Centre Regeneration Report

Members were advised that the report completed by the Social Development Committee of the Northern Ireland Assembly, in relation to an 'Inquiry into Town Centre Regeneration' was launched last week in Belfast. The report was completed by an all party committee and the findings are very positive. Cookstown District Council's contribution to the report is evident.

NOTED.

9. RURAL DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME

9.1. Members NOTED minutes of Rural Development Programme Joint Council Committee meetings held on 17th August and 10th September 2009.

Councillor Wilson paid tribute to the effort and commitment made by all staff and in particular those of the LAG in progressing over 170 project applications submitted to the Programme.

Members RECOMMENDED that a letter of recognition be sent to the Chairman of the LAG Committee.

AGREED.

9.2. Members NOTED minutes of South West Local Action Group held on 2nd September 2009.

10. SUBSCRIPTION

10.1. Rural Community Network

It was proposed by Councillor Cassidy
Seconded Councillor Baker and AGREED

That Council renew their membership with Rural Community Network at a cost of £200 per annum, for the period October 2009 – September 2010.

11. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

11.1 Early Years

Members were advised that a letter had been received from Early Years, inviting Council Members to a United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child Celebration Event on Thursday 26th November 2009 at 7.00pm in Tullyglass Hotel, Ballymena. Any interested Members are to inform the Development Department. Councillor Molloy registered his interest in attending this event.

The meeting ended at 7.39pm.

Chairman

Clerk/Chief Executive

Date