

BALLYMONEY BOROUGH COUNCIL**Development Committee Meeting No 211 – 18th January 2010****Table of Contents**

211.1	Minutes – Meeting No 210 – 21 st December 2009	<i>Adopted</i>
211.2	Development Strategy 2009-2011 (Draft)	<i>Meet Minister re RD Planning</i>
211.3	Project Updates	<i>Update</i>
211.4	Henderson Food Service – Plant Closure	<i>Update</i>
211.5	Driving for Better Business Event	<i>Update</i>

**BALLYMONEY BOROUGH COUNCIL
DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE**

Minutes of Meeting No 211 held in the Council Chamber, Riada House, on Monday 18th January 2010 at 3.09pm.

IN THE CHAIR Councillor J Finlay, Chair

PRESENT

Aldermen
F Campbell, Mayor
C Cousley, MBE, Deputy Mayor
H Connolly
J Simpson

Councillors
A Cavlan
R Halliday
M McCamphill, Vice-Chair
T McKeown
A Patterson
E Robinson
I Stevenson

IN ATTENDANCE Chief Executive
Head of Corporate & Development Services
Clerical Assistant

211.1 MINUTES – MEETING NO 210 – 21st DECEMBER 2009

It was proposed by Alderman Campbell, seconded by Councillor Halliday and
AGREED:

*that the minutes of meeting No 210 on 21st December 2009 ,circulated,
be confirmed as a correct record.*

211.2 DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY 2009-2011 (DRAFT)

The Head of Corporate and Development Services gave an overview of the draft Development Strategy 2009-2011, circulated. The strategy, building on the LSP/Council Integrated Local Strategy (2005-2008), sets the strategic context against the background of the Review of Public Administration (RPA). The document includes a socio-economic analysis of the Ballymoney economy;

identifies the internal and external factors that will contribute to or hinder the social and economic development of the borough and the economic opportunities and challenges (SWOT analysis). Based on the socio-economic analysis and the SWOT findings and taking into account the strategic and local context six key priority areas had been identified:

- Enterprise development
- Tourism development
- Town Centre Development
- Community planning
- ICT development
- Partnership working

These priority areas form the basis of the development unit business plan approved by Council. An action plan, together with the funding and delivery arrangements, was being developed and would be added to the strategy document. The updated document would be presented to committee.

- * **Alderman Cousley, Councillor Cavlan and Councillor Stevenson joined the meeting, during the presentation, at 3.11pm, 3.14pm and 3.25pm respectively.**

During discussion the Head of Corporate & Development Services responded to issues raised by members. Alderman Campbell commended the informative document referring to the number of well-established businesses in the borough, many of whom had seen growth and entry into export markets. Councillor Stevenson associated himself with the Mayor's remarks.

- * **Alderman Connolly left the meeting, during discussion, at 3.44pm.**

Councillor Robinson expressed the view that Council should more pro-actively support the case for business development in rural areas, eg, farm diversification and tourism enterprises, where, she contended, the economic benefits of such development were not being adequately recognised by Planning Service. The member evidenced the point by citing a recent innovative tourism proposal in rural Ballymoney, which could well have addressed the needs identified in the rural development partnership strategy, but which had failed to gain the support of Planning Service. The Head of Corporate & Development Services referred to similar difficulties with planning issues, experienced with project proposals under the former "Leader" rural development programme, and advised that during the current rural development strategy process assurances had been given by DARD that they were addressing the problems with Planning Service at the highest level to ensure a resolution and that such difficulties would not emerge for applicants to the current programme. The member assured the meeting that similar problems were continuing to occur. Other members supported this view and reiterated that without planning permission, businesses are unable to apply to the rural development programme.

- * **Councillor Halliday left the meeting at 3.49pm during discussions.**

It was proposed by Councillor Finlay, seconded by Alderman Campbell and **AGREED:**

to invite Ms Arlene Foster, Minister for Enterprise, Trade and Investment and Mr Edwin Poots, Minister for Environment to a future Development Committee meeting to discuss rural development and rural planning issues and the potential adverse impact on economic development of the borough.

211.3 PROJECT UPDATES

a) Ballymoney Business Bulletin

A copy of the second edition of Ballymoney Business Bulletin, circulated. The Bulletin, compiled by the Development Officer, was emailed to local businesses. It provides information on forthcoming programmes, events and seminars; highlights company successes and awards schemes. Excellent feedback has been received on the first edition of the bulletin.

In response to Councillor Finlay, the Head of Corporate and Development Services advised there has been no date set for the North Antrim Business Awards.

b) “Steps to Success” Business Development Programme

An economic appraisal has been carried out on the this proposed programme, submitted to DETI under the Competitiveness Programme and a letter of offer will issue. The programme, led by this Council, would be delivered across the cluster area.

c) Food Tourism Project Application (RDP)

An outline application for a cluster-wide project has been developed for submission to the rural development partnership (Coleraine BC led).

d) Food & Craft Fair Review

Following an evaluation of the town’s seasonal food and craft fairs and further review of the reduced market activity it had been concluded that a regular market was not sustainable. However, specific market events may continue, including the successful Christmas food and craft fair in the Town Hall. In addition, given the success that the market had had in raising awareness of local produce of market participants and getting locally manufactured products into local shops, a project was being developed to further advance this business development opportunity, introducing local

products onto shelves of local shops and supermarkets across the region. This project would align with the food tourism project at c. above.

e) Creative Industries

Terms of reference for a review and baseline audit of the creative industries sector in the Causeway Cluster area had been developed and issued for comment. Following agreement tenders would be invited by the lead Council (Coleraine BC).

f) Business Survey

The survey document was being developed and would issue shortly to local businesses, the objective of the survey was to identify current business needs. The project was being delivered in-house.

g) Business Club

The Development Unit is working closely with Acorn Business Centre on developing a programme of business seminars aimed at providing increased learning for business owners and networking opportunities.

h) Rural events/projects (RDP)

Following approval of the undernoted projects by the RD Partnership a cost/benefit analysis is being undertaken.

- Bygone Ballymoney Event (Shiels) – [RDP Rural Heritage]
- Easter Bunny Fest (RDP Tourism)
- Rural Tourism Product Knowledge (RDP Special Call) – Cluster-wide project led by Ballymoney BC.

i) Rural Product Marketing

Research is underway for target marketing initiative for new tourism activity products.

211.4 HENDERSON FOOD SERVICE – PLANT CLOSURE

The Head of Corporate & Development Service referred to the recent announcement by Henderson Food Service to invest £14M in new warehousing and office accommodation on a 23.5 acre site at Mallusk. The move is in response to sales growth of 30% since 2007 and the company's ongoing expansion will see all warehousing and distribution services centralized at Mallusk with the existing two depots at Finvoy Road in Ballymoney (employing 52 staff) and Mallusk (employing 101 staff) both moving to the new purpose-built facility in early 2011. Staff working at Ballymoney will be given the opportunity to transfer to Mallusk or be offered alternative roles within the company. The development work at Mallusk will be undertaken by Patton Construction, Ballymena, providing employment for 120 people during the construction period.

While regretting the job losses in the local area, The Mayor and Committee Chair had commented in the local press on the matter, welcoming the growth of the company and its strong commitment to redeploy staff. The award of the construction contract to a local firm and the subsequent job opportunity was also welcomed.

211.5 DRIVING FOR BETTER BUSINESS EVENT

Councillor Robinson referred to the excellent seminar to be hosted in Ballymoney Town Hall on 21st January to address the benefits to businesses of having a “driving for business” policy in place. She commended Road Safety Committees in Ballymoney and Coleraine and also the excellent work of this voluntary movement on initiatives aimed at reducing accidents and improving road safety. She however expressed her concern at the lack of recognition and funding for the work of the voluntary movement.

This being all the business the meeting closed at 4.04pm.