

<b>ZOMBA ACTION PROJECT (ZAP)</b>	<b>21 February 2017</b>
<b>CORPORATE POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE For Decision</b>	

<b>Linkage to Council Strategy (2015-19)</b>	
<b>Strategic Theme</b>	Leader and Champion
<b>Outcome</b>	
<b>Lead Officer</b>	Director of Performance
<b>Cost:</b> (If applicable)	Room booking and transport as and when required

## **1.0 Purpose of Report**

- 1.1 The purpose of the report is to enable Committee to make recommendation to Council on the request from the charity, Zomba Action Project (ZAP) for support from Council.

## **2.0 Background**

- 2.1 The legacy Coleraine Borough Council established the connection with Zomba Council in 2002. The Zomba Action Project (ZAP) was established in 2003 to reach out to the communities here and in Zomba and is a charity registered with the NI Charities Commission.
- 2.2 At the Corporate Policy and Resources Committee in February 2016, representatives from ZAP presented to Committee. A copy of the presentation is attached at Appendix 1 which gives further information on the legacy relationship and the future aspirations of ZAP in terms of a relationship with Causeway Coast and Glens Borough Council. Council subsequently agreed that a paper proposing a relationship with ZAP and Zomba, Malawi be brought to Committee for consideration.

## **3.0 Proposed relationship ZAP and Council**

- 3.1 The Zomba Action Project has requested that Council considers the following support:

- The nomination of 4 or 5 Councillors onto the ZAP Management Board; there will be a meeting about once a month, and their attendance at the meetings would depend on the demands of their other commitments.
- A room to meet in monthly at Cloonavin, and in the expectation of a positive extension of ZAP into all three other legacy Council areas, probably a room to meet in, in Ballycastle, Ballymoney and Limavady on a two monthly basis. The nature of this extension into the new areas will be shaped by the newcomers (Councillors and others) who join the ZAP Management Board.
- The existing facility at the Parks Nursery of a container to store 'useful' items for transport out to ZAP Zomba; and the transport facility, a Council van, to take the donated items to Ballynure, again as at present.

3.2 ZAP would also hope that Council would continue to actively promote the Zomba connection and ZAP's role in that connection. The level of this support is a matter for Council to determine. Coleraine Borough Council had agreed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with ZAP and Council may wish to consider using this format as a basis for a future connection. The MoU is attached at Appendix 2. Promotion could include:

- Promotion via the Council's website.
- Local Government, UK/NI Assembly, (International Group) recognition of its imaginative connection with Zomba Council.
- The voice of the Mayor/PR speaking/issuing press statements arising from the connection with Zomba and ZAP's role in that connection; and press photos of the Mayor at occasional supportive functions.
- The voice of the Chief Executive and other senior staff lending weight to active interest and participation in the connection; for example, applying for occasional Commonwealth Scholarships for Zomba Council staff to be attached to Council.
- Councillors and staff organising occasional events to fund Zomba Council projects through ZAP and making monthly contributions through the Council's Finance department. Staff in the previous Coleraine Borough Council made monthly contributions in this way.
- ZAP would also hope that Councillors would use their Community Planning relationships with other public sector bodies to encourage them to make connections with their counterparts in Zomba, similar to the Council to Council relationship; and to use ZAP as the conduit for voluntary funding of projects within their counterpart organisations in Zomba.

#### 4.0 Recommendation

It is recommended that Committee considers the request from the Zomba Action Project and makes recommendation to Council on the following:

- The nomination of 4 or 5 Councillors onto the ZAP Management Board; there will be a meeting about once a month, and their attendance at the meetings would depend on the demands of their other commitments.
- A room to meet in monthly at Cloonavin, and in the expectation of a positive extension of ZAP into all three other legacy Council areas, for example, a room to meet in, in Ballycastle, Ballymoney and Limavady on a two monthly basis. The nature of this extension into the new areas will be shaped by the ZAP Management Board.
- The existing facility at the Parks Nursery of a container to store 'useful' items for transport out to ZAP Zomba; and the transport facility, a Council van, to take the donated items to Ballynure, again as at present.
- **and** determines the level of support Council may wish to give in actively promoting the Zomba connection and the Zomba Action Project's role in that connection.

## Causeway Coast and Glens briefing.

### **Introduction**

I am Terry McMullan, the chair of the Zomba Action Project. I lived and worked in Zomba in southern Malawi, so I know the city and surrounding area well.

With me is Paul Snelling who worked in Coleraine Council when the connection with Zomba Council was established in 2002. That connection was at the instigation of John Dallat, MLA when he was Mayor, with full cross party support.

The population of Zomba city is just over 100,000 so it is comparable with the Causeway Coast and Glens in that sense. However Malawi is one of the poorest countries in the world. And that can be seen in Zomba Council; the Council has to work from hand to mouth to deliver its services.

We are here tonight to encourage Council to move forward on three fronts:

- Firstly, to take up the Council to Council link with your counterpart local authority, Zomba Council
- Secondly, to encourage you to use your influence to persuade other local organisations to make a connection with their counterparts in Zomba
- And thirdly, to make use of the strong existing Zomba Action Project (ZAP) and its reputation locally as a cross-community charity to reach out to the communities both here and in Zomba. ZAP was established in 2003 and is a charity registered with the NI Charities Commission.

Paul will speak on the first two points; I'll speak on the third.

We are happy to answer questions, and would hope you will have some points you want to raise with us at the end of our presentation. We will also provide you with a copy of our presentation before we leave.

### **The connection with Zomba Council**

A connection with Zomba Council is most certainly not a town twinning arrangement because of the enormous difference in the resources the two Councils have at their disposal. Nor is anyone expecting Causeway Coast and Glens to use ratepayer's money to fund Zomba Council development. While this reality imposes a restriction on the scope of the connection between the two councils, it has inspired a more creative approach to attract resources.

My experience was that, in my time in Council, I had to be resourceful to make the connection work. One approach that worked was to use a Commonwealth scholarship to bring a member of Zomba staff over to Coleraine for 3 months to shadow a member of staff in their work. This was very successful and at no financial cost to council; 5 members of staff were brought here for training over the past 13 years. Similarly grants were found to send a number of Coleraine staff from various disciplines to Zomba to train staff there.

However the underlying point is that the connection, if you adopt it, will work with external grants rather than with the ratepayer's money. Of course, any voluntary contributions the ratepayers make through the Zomba Action Project are very welcome.

The important point to emphasis is that you would not be committing to a programme of expenditure. If you should happen to want to spend the ratepayer's money, you can make specific decisions to do that or not; for example if you decided to send the Mayor out to visit Zomba Council you can make that decision without making any further commitment.

You may well ask, what is in it for CC&Gs Council? Primarily, you will be doing good in Zomba by sharing your organisation's expertise with people who can really benefit from your help.

Also, you will be adopting a well proven connection with the developing world, a connection which will enhance the status and reputation of your Council as a forward-looking and outward- looking Council throughout the UK and Ireland, and reflect well on its Councillors.

Finally you will be adopting a connection that you can all give allegiance to, without compromising any party principles; an example of councillors working together to address need in the developing world and offering leadership in that regard to your local community.

### **Encouraging other local organisations to make a connection with their counterparts in Zomba.**

There is one particularly good example of that connection already. The University of Ulster made its connection with Chancellor College of the University of Malawi in Zomba ten years ago; and it is still active. Students and lecturers have gone to Zomba every year for two or three weeks to work on education projects; and students from Chancellor College have benefited from scholarships at Coleraine.

There is much potential to encourage other similar connections; for example the local hospital with the hospital in Zomba, the Roads Service with their counterpart in Zomba, the Fire Service with their counterparts; and there are potentially many more, including the voluntary and private sector.

If you decide to take up the connection with Zomba Council, you could use the new relationships that will undoubtedly flow from community planning to encourage organisations here to engage with their counterparts in Zomba; of course you can't insist; and of course they will be under the same financial restraints that you are under in CC&Gs.

Terry said in the introduction that there were 3 points; I've spoken on the Council connection with Zomba, and the encouragement that Councillors can give to other bodies to connect with their counterparts in Zomba.

I'll hand over to Terry now to speak on the 3<sup>rd</sup> point.

## **The role of the Zomba Action Project in reaching out to communities here and in Zomba.**

I'll start by building on what Paul has said about the Council and the University connections with their counterparts in Zomba. Individual Councillors have voluntarily contributed £30,000 over the last 13 years, through ZAP, for Zomba Council projects; these were a pedestrian bridge, a Mother and Baby Clinic, facilities at Zomba Council Sports Ground and a Street People project. Similarly the University students and staff have contributed generously towards education projects in Zomba.

There is much potential to encourage volunteers here to fund their areas of work in Zomba, if you can use your influence to help make more connections between here and Zomba.

ZAP has focused on engaging with communities, talking about life in Zomba and advising people what they can do to help; so we have had donations from Roe Valley Bee Keepers Club for bee keeping projects in Zomba ; we have had Kilrea Young Farmers Club sending members out to work on an Orphan Support Centre; we have schools raising funds for anything from books to school toilets to classrooms. Donations through ZAP have funded projects to the value of £45,000 per annum, in excess of £600,000 over thirteen years. This has funded over 400 projects in education, health and development.

You might now ask what ZAP as an independent charity is seeking from the GG&Gs Council.

We are not seeking any funding but we would be greatly encouraged in our work as volunteers if you could commit to a continuation of the support provided by Coleraine Council, namely;

- the nomination of Councillors, on a cross community basis, onto the ZAP Management Board
- the use of a Council meeting room for monthly meetings
- the continuation of a facility to store items donated for shipping to Zomba and for their transport to Belfast docks
- Council's finance director to be the independent auditor of our accounts
- the Mayor and Councillors to publicise ZAP and advise us of opportunities to talk to groups and encourage them to fund projects that interest them

If Council supports the connection with Zomba Council and encourages other organisations to make connections with their counterparts in Zomba, then we in ZAP will be able to extend ZAP throughout the CC&Gs Council area; we will take advice from Ballycastle, Ballymoney and Limavady councillors on drawing people from those areas into ZAP and onto the ZAP Management Board.

Paul and I will now be very happy to take any questions.



**COLERAINE  
BOROUGH COUNCIL**

# MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING



**MUNICIPALITY  
OF ZOMBA**

*This Memorandum of Understanding between the Municipality of Zomba in the Republic of Malawi and Coleraine Borough Council in Northern Ireland is dedicated to our two communities working together for their mutual benefit through the auspices of local government.*

*The objective of our joint effort is to mutually improve the economic, social and cultural wellbeing of our two communities through the following activities.*

- ❖ Increasing our understanding of each other's communities and ways of life*
- ❖ Exchanging experience and best practice in local government*
- ❖ Collaborating, co-operating and learning from each other*
- ❖ Supporting practical assistance for the most disadvantaged in the community*

*These activities are described in more detail in a joint Action Plan attached to this Memorandum.*

*We commit to working together in the delivery of the Action Plan to improve the wellbeing of our two communities.*

*[Signature]*

*Mayor of Zomba*

*[Signature]*

*Town Clerk and Chief Executive  
of Zomba*

*[Signature]*

*Mayor of Coleraine*

*[Signature]*

*Town Clerk and Chief Executive  
of Coleraine*

