

MINUTES OF ATHLONE Municipal District **HELD IN THE LOUGHNANEANE** Suite - Áras an Chontae, Roscommon, **ON TUESDAY**, 20th November, 2018 **AT 10.00** am

PRESENT: Councillor Laurence Fallon **PRESIDED**

MEMBERS: Cllr T. Ward, Cllr I. Connaughton, Cllr P. Kilduff and Cllr J. Naughten.

OFFICIALS: Majella Hunt, Director of Services
Martin Lydon, Director of Services
Diarmuid MacDonnacha, Athlone Municipal District Co-ordinator
Mary Grier, Senior Planner
Paul Browne, Executive Engineer
Tracy Davis, Planner
Fiona Fallon, Staff Officer

Apologies: Cllr J. Keogh, absent Cllr J. Keogh

55.18 ADOPTION OF MINUTES

The Cathaoirleach welcomed everyone to the meeting

On the **PROPOSAL** of Councillor Ward
SECONDED by Councillor Kilduff

It was **AGREED** to adopt the Minutes of the Athlone Municipal District Meeting held on 27th September 2018.

It was agreed to defer Matters Arising to allow for a presentation from the Planning Section in relation to the Draft Athlone Joint Retail Strategy. The draft document was circulated.

56.18 PROPOSED DRAFT ATHLONE JOINT RETAIL STRATEGY

Martin Lydon, Head of Finance, presented the Draft Athlone Joint Retail Strategy to the members. This is a joint initiative between Roscommon County Council and Westmeath County Council.

The areas affected in Roscommon and Westmeath are outlined in the Strategy document. The aims of the strategy are:

- to ensure that Athlone continues to be viable retail centre.
- to ensure that the Core of the town is returned.
- Need to address leakage of retail expenditure out of the town of Athlone.
- Job creation is essential for both counties.
- Athlone to be a growth centre.

The following needs to be carried out

- SEA and AA Screening
- Public consultation on the draft strategy in February
- Chief Executive report in March
- At Plenary Meeting, the County Development Plan and Monksland/Bealnamullia Local Area Plan will need Variation No. 2 to take account of Athlone Joint Retail Strategy.

A number of discussions have been held with Westmeath County Council Executive and Roscommon. It was proposed that Monksland would be local neighbourhood centre. However, this was not acceptable. Roscommon require special category status. This is consistent with the Local Area Plan which has already been voted through.

Mr. Lydon advised that Westmeath County Council have proposed a meeting on 12th December 2018 at 3pm in the Civic Offices, Athlone to discuss this Draft Athlone Retail Strategy with the Elected Members from Athlone West. All Councillors in the Athlone MD area, who were present at the meeting, advised they were available to attend this meeting.

Councillor Ward welcomed this meeting. He had put a motion to Roscommon County Council for name change for Athlone to identify west from east. Councillors should meet once or twice a year from both sides.

Councillor Fallon advised that the first meeting should be a “get to know you meeting” as no legislation has been passed yet.

Mr Lydon advised that we have to move forward in the context of the Draft Athlone Retail Strategy.

Councillor Connaughton advised that Roscommon are losing a huge opportunity in the Bogganfin Area. It is a prime location on the Roscommon road.

Martin Lydon advised Bogganfin is not zoned. TII will not approve any development in Bogganfin and it would be remiss of Roscommon County Council to send signals that there may be an opportunity for these lands to be developed at this point.

Councillor Naughten welcomed the Draft Strategy. It is in all our interests to see the town develop and expand and maybe become a city. He queried if there was the possibility of a “Kildare Village” type development for Monksland.

Martin Lydon responded that this is not in the Draft Retail Strategy. Growth centre is not defined for the future.

Members agreed that future discussion were required with TII re Bogganfin lands.

Martin Lydon stated that

1. An Application was referred to TII in relation to lands at Bogganfin approx 6 years ago but not agreed.
2. Draft Athlone Retail Strategy is bringing our policies together with Westmeath County Council.

57.18 MATTERS ARISING

Additional Funding & Expenditure

Councillor Naughten queried the status of the budget allocations for Municipal Districts.

Majella Hunt confirmed that €501,000 additional funding was received from the Department since the last MD meeting. The total additional funding was allocated to Athlone MD.

Majella Hunt advised that €501,000 has addressed quite a number of issues and that no other MD received any additional funding. She advised that the allocation mechanisms be reassessed for 2020 and consider reverting to apportionment funding based on road conditions if agreed.

Councillor Naughten welcomed the additional funding and stated it was a positive result. He stated that Athlone still needs additional funds. There is €3m shortfall in deficit for roads in Roscommon. He stated that funding had been assessed based on condition of roads for 2019 but he will propose allocation based on 25% population/75% road length at the Budget Meeting on 21st November 2018.

Councillor Fallon stated that extra funding was welcome but Roscommon County Council should seek additional funding for 2019 from the Department.

Councillor Ward reminded the members of the weather conditions in January 2018 and advised that he put a motion in February 2018 seeking additional funding. Over a 10-year period, €80m has been withdrawn from County Roscommon. Funding has not been reinstated. While €501,000 is welcomed, at least €3-4m is required to bring roads up to standard.

On the **PROPOSAL** by Councillor Naughten
SECONDED by Councillor Ward

it was **AGREED** to raise the 2019 Roads allocation for Athlone at the Budget Meeting 2018.

All members welcomed the additional funding of €501,000.

Local Improvement Schemes

Councillor Ward welcomed the allocation of €450,000 for rural communities. However, the scheme is not available where there is one household on the road.

On the **PROPOSAL** by Councillor Ward
SECONDED by Councillor Naughten

It was **AGREED** that the scheme should be revised to allow consideration where there is 1 house or landowner on the road.

Majella Hunt advised this is a countrywide scheme and this proposal would need to go to the Department. The Notice of Motion should be submitted to a Plenary meeting.

On the **PROPOSAL** of Councillor Connaughton
SECONDED by Councillor Naughten

It was **AGREED** to advertise the Local Improvement Scheme in 2019.

Part 8 – Cloonakille School

Councillor Naughten requested an update on the status of the Part 8 at Cloonakille.

On the **PROPOSAL** of Councillor Ward
SECONDED by Councillor Naughten

It was **AGREED** to write to the Department of Environment and the Minister for Finance to provide funding for the project as an urgent matter for the safety of the 400-500 pupils at this school.

Majella Hunt advised that it was not a condition of planning to provide roundabout at this location. She confirmed that there have been discussions with the Department regarding funding. Approximately €3m will be required for this project, which will be dependent on Grant funding.

Specific Improvement Grants was the scheme that was in place prior to Rural Regeneration Funding. Roscommon County Council were not successful under this Scheme. An application has been made under Rural Regeneration Funding and the outcome of this application is awaited.

The landowner has been approached but without success.

58.18 PART 8 EXTENSIONS TO HOUSES IN TORPAN BEG BALLYFORAN

Majella Hunt gave a summary of the works involved which included an extension to 4 no. existing 1-bed houses to provide an additional 2 bedrooms at Torpanbeg, Ballyforan. This Part 8 application was

advertised on 14th September 2018 and put on public display until 11th October 2018. Submissions were accepted until 25th October 2018. No submissions were received.

On the **PROPOSAL** of Councillor Connaughton
SECONDED by Councillor Ward

It was **AGREED** that the development be proceeded with as proposed.

59.18 CORRESPONDENCE

There was no correspondence

60.18 NOTICE OF MOTION

13.18 Notice of Motion Councillor Tony Ward

"I am calling on Bus Eireann to extend the Bus route that is at present serving the Monksland and Bealnamullia areas, and to also include Summerhill and Westwood Crannagh areas, Athlone".

The Meetings Administrator circulated the following reply:

This Notice of Motion requires a Resolution of the Athlone MD Members to write to Bus Eireann in this regard

Councillor Ward stated that there are lots of families and older people living in this area and that he had written to Bus Eireann but has not received a response to date.

On the **PROPOSAL** of Councillor Ward
SECONDED by Councillor Naughten

It was **AGREED** to write to Bus Eireann requesting an extension of the Bus route, that is currently serving the Monksland and Bealnamullia areas, to also include Summerhill and Westwood Crannagh areas, Athlone.

14.18 Notice of Motion Councillor Ivan Connaughton

"That Roscommon County Council complete the small section of footpath on the R362 Rahara Road in Athleague Village, just after The Paddock Housing Development"

The Meetings Administrator circulated the following reply:

A Survey of the section of footpath and an Estimate of the cost of completing same will be carried out. There is no specific allocation for Footpath construction in the proposed 2019 Budget.

Councillor Connaughton advised there were 2 sections not completed.
Eircom have carried out works and this has not been reinstated satisfactorily.

On the **PROPOSAL** of Councillor Connaughton
SECONDED by Councillor Fallon

It was **AGREED** that an estimate of Costs be carried out for next MD meeting.

Councillor Naughten raised the extension of footpath to Dolans Garage Creagh. He queried would it be possible to get this work done under CIS Scheme.

Majella Hunt advised that Community Involvement Schemes involves a local contribution and the balance of funding is from Roscommon County Council maintenance monies. This scheme is not suitable.

Councillor Fallon stated that Creagh Development group were proposed to meet the Members prior to

today's MD meeting but were unavailable.

61.18 CIVIC RECEPTION REQUEST

On the **PROPOSAL** of Councillor Kilduff
SECONDED by Councillor Ward

It was **AGREED** that Roscommon County Council honour at the next Civic Reception the following:

- Mr. Paul Clabby from Kilbride, Co. Roscommon on winning the International Rose of Tralee Escort of the Year 2018 on August 20th 2018 at the International Rose of Tralee Festival.
- Special Olympics Team who won a total of 30 medals as part of the Connacht delegation at the 2018 Special Olympics Ireland Games in a variety of sports.
- Danni Neilan from Castlecoote for her excellent achievements in Mixed Martial Arts - As an amateur her greatest achievements were silver medalist in the 2017 IMMAF world champions in Bahrain representing Ireland, No. 1 female fighter in the UK and Ireland in 2017 & Amateur fighter of the year in SBG headquarters 2017.
- Grace Brosnan, Jan Daly, Anna Rose Henshaw, Olivia Meares, Katie Meeley, Olivia Rowan who represented the Kiltoom-Cam group who won Gold Medal in the Talent-Group Drama/Comedy U12 in the Community games
- Naos Connaughton, son of Joe & Anne Connaughton, St Dominics Club, who received an All Star Award at the Christy Ring Champion Charity Awards banquet

62.18 QUESTIONS

14.18 Question - Councillor Tony Ward

Can the Director of Services please inform the meeting if any maintenance work was carried out on the Ballybay River in 2018.

The Meetings Administrator circulated the following reply:

Works have been carried out on the Smaghraan and Cross Rivers and the OPW Project at Onagh/Corraree & Ballygatta. It was not possible to carry out works on the Ballybay River in 2018. Priority will be given to work at this location in 2019. In accordance with Fisheries Legislation drainage works must be carried out in the period July to September only.

15.18 Question - Councillor Tony Ward

Can the Director of Services please inform the meeting if there was any reply to previous Notice Motion from the TII with regards to Road Safety Measures on the N61 at the Ballybay Church/School Kiltoom. I had also included the Road Safety Measures at the Corramore Junction Kiltoom on Road No L2022-0.

The Meetings Administrator circulated the following reply:

TII have given approval to appoint consultants to examine safety issues relating to National Roads in County Roscommon including this location. Currently a Brief is being prepared to allow the appointment to proceed.

63.18 VOTES OF CONGRATULATIONS / SYMPATHY

There were no votes of Congratulations or Sympathy

64.18 A.O.B

The following issues were raised

- Councillor Connaughton requested an update on Low Cost Safety at Araghty
- Councillor Fallon requested an update on Low Cost Safety in Dysart.
- Councillor Ward - flooding issue at Graveyard in Four Roads. Needs some minor drainage works
- Councillor Naughten requested an update on the speed signs on the Old Tuam Road, Monksland
- Councillor Naughten requested an update on the signs at Ballymullavill.

- Councillor Fallon – junction Rahara soccer club to Curraghboy. Crash No. 9 within 300 yards this year.
- Councillor Ward requested hedge trimmer to do works on Curraghboy to Athleague road and at Ballybay Church. Grass verge onto N61.
- Councillor Connaughton requested hedge trimming on Four Roads to Dysart Road.

Diarmuid MacDonncha responded to the issues raised

Hedgecutting

Councillor Naughten requested an update on Hedgecutting Grant Scheme. What was the level of uptake and if there is money that can be released to get another hedgecutter from the €10,000 surplus money if not spent on Grant applications.

Councillor Connaughton advised that it was envisaged that a pilot scheme be put in place in 2019. Diarmuid MacDonncha advised that budgets are closed for the year and the budget for hedgecutting has been spent on maintenance.

Paul Browne advised that hedge trimming will be prioritised on regional roads over the next few weeks. It is proposed to prioritise Curraghboy to Athleague and Athlone to Ballinasloe at Thomastown junction.

Removing Eircom Pole

Councillor Kilduff raised the delay in removal of an Eircom pole at Carnagh. The householder paid the money to Eircom approximately 5 years ago but Eircom have not removed same, resulting in non-compliance with conditions of planning permission.

On the **PROPOSAL** of Councillor Fallon
SECONDED by Councillor Kilduff

It was **AGREED** to write to Eircom for clarification on this issue.

ESB & Eircom

Councillor Connaughton stated that ESB & Eircom charges are outrageous.

On the **PROPOSAL** of Councillor Fallon
SECONDED by Councillor Naughten

It was **AGREED** a letter should issue to ESB & Eircom seeking clarification on their cost structure and how these costs are calculated.

Parkway

Councillor Naughten requested an update on the Parkway Site in Monksland.

Councillor Ward referenced the hoarding at this site and advised that there is no consideration for those who live beside this site. It is downgrading the area and is an issue for the safety of children, especially beside the Cross River.

Majella Hunt again advised that this site is privately owned. Roscommon County Council have written to the owner on a number of occasions. In addition, CCTV has been setup recently. The matter is being pursued under Section 55 of the Litter Act.

Athleague

Councillor Connaughton welcomed works in Athleague and queried if there is an issue that this work was privatised.

Majella Hunt advised that there is a national agreement with unions that works are carried out by direct labour where possible within resources and capacity.

Ambulance Service

There are 2 ambulances at the Athlone base, but only 1 is manned due to rostering. In an emergency ambulances are despatched from Tullamore, Roscommon or Mullingar.


On the **PROPOSAL** of Councillor Naughten
SECONDED by Councillor Ward

It was **AGREED** to issue a request to attend a meeting between Westmeath Councillors and HSE to address the situation.

Next Meeting is due to be held on 15th January 2019.


This concluded the business of the meeting.

The foregoing Minutes are
Confirmed and Signed:



Meetings Administrator

Cathaoirleach



Countersigned