

MINUTES OF ROSCOMMON Municipal District **HELD IN THE MS** Teams, **ON TUESDAY**, 23rd March, 2021 **AT 10.00 am**

PRESENT: Councillor Paschal Fitzmaurice **PRESIDED**

MEMBERS: Cllr M. McDermott, Cllr N. Dineen, Cllr O. Leyden and Cllr K. Shanagher.

OFFICIALS: Neal Geraghty, Roscommon Municipal District Co-Ordinator
Brian Farragher
Breeda Burke, Staff Officer
Martin Lydon, Director of Services
Christina Fannon, Administrative Officer
Nollaig Feeney, Heritage Officer
Fiona Ni Chuinn, A/Director of Services
Adrian Kielty, Executive Engineer
John Mockler, Senior Engineer
Colm Kennelly, Area Engineer

APOLOGIES: Cllr A. Waldron

9.21 ADOPTION OF THE MINUTES

On the **PROPOSAL** of Cllr Shanagher

SECONDED by Cllr Dineen

It was **AGREED** to adopt the Minutes of the Roscommon Municipal District meeting held on 17th February, 2021.

10.21 MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES

The following points were raised –

- Cllr. Shanagher mentioned that the following question raised at the February meeting was not answered “if the public space behind the Bank of Ireland was not being used as intended could it revert back to public parking in the future?”
- Cllr. Leyden enquired when the Draft Roscommon Town Movement and Traffic Study be going out for public consultation.
Martin Lydon stated that he was waiting on a response from the Director of Roads, Shane Tiernan and then he will revert back to the members.
- Cllr. McDermott requested an update on extending the existing foul sewer network at Gallowstown and

On the **PROPOSAL** of Cllr. McDermott

SECONDED by Cllr. Fitzmaurice

It was **AGREED** to forward a letter to Irish Water requesting them to carry out an inspection
Neal Geraghty agreed to correspond with Irish Water on the matter.

11.21 PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT - SECTION 179 OF THE PLANNING & DEVELOPMENT ACT 2000 (AS AMENDED) AND ARTICLE 81 OF THE PLANNING & DEVELOPMENT REGULATIONS 2001 (AS AMENDED)

Brian Farragher gave an outline of the project comprising of the provision of a vertical walkway viewing structure at Mote Park. The proposed development involves the construction of a 13.5m high timber and steel viewing tower and all associated works. The consultation process took place and one submission was received regarding car parking and anti-social behaviour. The project corresponds with the National Planning Framework, Regional Strategy, Roscommon County Development Plan and Roscommon Town Plan. Nollaig Whyte confirmed that concerns regarding adequate car parking will be taken into consideration. Nollaig also assured the members that Roscommon County Council, propose to engage the services of a qualified ecologist to oversee and monitor all the works. We will also work in partnership with Coillte, however we expect that very few trees will need to be felled. This project is well placed to position Roscommon Town and area as a visitor attraction and will address the need to have a resource of this nature in County Roscommon.

The members welcomed the project and a discussion took place with the following matters raised

- Concerns regarding adequate car parking at Mote Park with members concerned that the car parking allowed for will only cater for existing demand and are in favour of providing extra car parking spaces for the development at this stage
- The project is based on the need to position Roscommon Town as a visitor attraction area
- Concerns regarding anti-social behaviour and if CCTV is being considered as a deterrent
- Concerns regarding the safety of the structure if children climb up on it
- Concerns that projects of this nature only come before the elected members at approval stage and request that members are brought into the process at an earlier stage to facilitate more involvement

On the PROPOSAL of Cllr. Leyden

SECONDED by Cllr. Shanagher

It was AGREED that significant regeneration projects are placed as an agenda item for the Municipal District meeting so that members can contribute to the development of a project at an earlier stage in the process. Cllr. Leyden clarified if there was something to report, placing it as an agenda item will create the space to inform members earlier allowing everybody to work in collaboration and discuss projects as they come on board in addition to keeping everyone updated on any new or potential funding streams.

- Cllr. Leyden enquired if the works on the road from Hannon's Hotel to the Golf Links road will be eligible under the Urban Regeneration and Development Fund. The members voiced their concerns on the urgency of these works for health and safety reasons.

Nollaig Whyte responded to the items raised

- The development includes 45 car parking spaces in the immediate vicinity made up from surface dressed road side parking on both sides of the road at the two entrances to Mote Park. Parking is not an easy area to source funding at the moment but improvements in cycling infrastructure will be considered under the URDF.
- The presence of more people in Mote Park should help prevent anti-social behaviour and we will

continue to work closely with Mote Park Conservation group, however, CCTV is not being considered at the moment

- As regards the safety of the structure, Roscommon County Council will involve a structural engineer in the build to ensure that the design meets all standards and regulations to satisfy health and safety requirements
- This whole project is based around cycling, walking and outdoor recreation. Cycling is an integral part of the project with the expectation that many people will cycle to Mote Park and cycling racks will be provided. There will be a signed route linking visitors over to the Visitor Centre in Athleague, with a link from Athleague down through Fuerty and back to Loughnaneane park creating a joined up picture for the whole town
- Nollaig stressed the importance of linking up the Beara-Breifne route to the Suck Valley Way and to secure the maximum amount of funding for County Roscommon. Under measure three the maximum amount of funding is €500,000 and projects must take into account two main themes which include the Beara-Breifne route and the River Shannon.

John Mockler stated that

- The area from Hannon's Hotel to the Golf Links Road is not covered under the Urban Regeneration and Development Fund. Roscommon County Council are hopeful that this section will be eligible for active travel funding. John Mockler explained that Roscommon County Council sought active travel funding for the design for this stretch and work will proceed on this design which should be substantially complete by the end of this year. Hopefully, we will be able to apply for further active travel funding to carry out the work.

On the **PROPOSAL** of Councillor Leyden

SECONDED by Councillor McDermott

It was **AGREED** to proceed with the specified development as outlined in the Chief Executive's report.

12.21 UPDATE ON ROSCOMMON TOWN PUBLIC REALM ENHANCEMENT PROJECT

Nollaig Whyte gave an update on the project explaining how the initial works started on Goff street with the project making good progress and the contractor now moving up to the area adjacent to the AIB Bank with the work in that area expected to have a timeframe of six-nine weeks to complete. The Senior Resident Engineer Ciaran McAlary will liaise with the Chamber of Commerce and the Chairperson of Roscommon Town Team and sort out any issues that arise. A point of contact will be arranged for all residents and businesses over the next few weeks.

The members raised the following items –

- Cllr. Leyden enquired if Ann McHugh was one of the project engineers. Ann McHugh still holds her position but was on leave. Ciaran McAlary is employed solely to be on site and will meet with the Chamber of Commerce President and the Chairperson of Roscommon Town Team on a weekly or fortnightly basis.
- Will the Roscommon Town Movement Study be updated to reflect the work approved under URDF 2020?
- Will provision be made for casual traders and can Roscommon County Council have dialogue with them and identify alternative suitable locations in the centre of the town. Under the casual trading

bye laws casual traders can be relocated, however they had a preference to keep their business near to the town. Ciaran McAlary will be working to facilitate suitable locations for the casual traders but it will be some weeks before we are at the stage that requires them to relocate.

The issue of workers in the town centre using street parking for the duration of the day was highlighted again as ideally no long term parking should be allowed for the duration of the works. It was suggested to drop letters to the businesses asking the business owners and their staff to use the public car parks. Nollaig Whyte stated that a small allocation for signage had been approved under Covid-19 Accelerated TVR and could be used to direct people to the car parks.

- Cllr. Fitzmaurice enquired if the flagstones that were being taken up could be made available for recycling as they could be used by the Rural Social Scheme for seats or signs or other uses. It was agreed that they will go to the Roscommon Operational area yard. The motto of the regeneration team is reduce/reuse/recycle and Roscommon County Council intend to use the flagstones in outdoor regeneration projects.

13.21 INFORMATION SESSION - ROSCOMMON COUNTY COUNCIL POLLINATOR PLAN & ACTIONS

Nollaig Feeney, Heritage Officer presented the Council's Actions for Pollinators' under the All-Ireland Pollinator Plan. It has been agreed at SPC level that Roscommon County Council will sign up as a partner to the All-Ireland Pollinator Plan. Hopefully this will be approved at the April Plenary meeting of Roscommon County Council. Nollaig explained that Roscommon County Council will have to consider the Plan in their policies, plans, and management decisions where possible. They should carry out one pollinator-friendly action in the first year of signing up to the plan and at least three more within the following five years. The focus for this first year will be on altering mowing regimes.

Neal Geraghty indicated that the Roscommon Municipal District is considering two potential pollinator sites where we can reduce the amount of grass cuttings. One site is on the outskirts of Castlerea town coming in from Loughglynn and the other strip is along the Lough road towards Loughnaneane park. We will also look at another area on the Boyle road. Site inspections with Nollaig had been delayed due to Covid-19 restrictions.

The members commented as follows

- Cllr. Leyden spoke about the use of pesticides and **PROPOSED** that as a Municipal District that we should eliminate the use of pesticides where possible. The proposal was **SECONDED** by Cllr. Shanagher.
Cllr. Fitzmaurice asked if this proposal could be put on hold to allow us time to look at alternative ways of treating Himalayan and Japanese knotweed as pesticides are currently required.
Cllr. Leyden accepted the **AMENDMENT** to the **PROPOSAL** that we should eliminate the use of pesticides except for the control of invasive species such as Japanese and Himalayan knotweed.
A further discussion took place on the use of pesticides and it was decided to survey what other Local Authorities are using as an alternative to pesticides.

14.21 DECLARATION OF A PUBLIC ROAD AT CNOC NA GUISE, CASTLEREA

On the **PROPOSAL** of Councillor Dineen

SECONDED by Councillor Fitzmaurice

It was **AGREED** that the road located at Cnoc na Guise, Castlerea be declared a public road.

15.21 DRAFT SCHEDULE OF MUNICIPAL DISTRICT WORKS INCLUDING ROADS PROGRAMME FOR

ROSCOMMON MUNICIPAL DISTRICT FOR 2021

John Mockler introduced the Draft Schedule of Municipal District Works for 2021 including the Roads Programme 2021 and presented the programme for the national and regional roads. Overall there is an increase in funding of €720,000 in 2021. John explained that it will be very challenging to deliver this programme with the current Covid-19 restrictions. Neal Geraghty presented the programme for the local roads.

The following points were raised by the members-

- Cllr. Fitzmaurice welcomed the programme but raised an issue regarding the low budget for gritting local roads and
On the **PROPOSAL** of Councillor Fitzmaurice
SECONDED by Councillor Leyden
It was **AGREED** that €10,000 from the discretionary grant be transferred to winter maintenance for gritting local roads.
- Cllr. Fitzmaurice requested that the TII be informed of the essential works required on the Castlerea west to Ballinlough road especially at Meelickduff.
- Cllr. Leyden welcomed the programme, the inclusion of Lisnamult and requested additional speed ramps in Lisnamult at Thornfield Drive following resurfacing works.
- Cllr. Leyden mentioned that resurfacing works are required on the other approach roads in Roscommon Town and
On the **PROPOSAL** of Councillor Leyden
SECONDED by Councillor Shanagher
It was agreed that Goff street and Church street will be included in the Roads Programme for 2022.
- Cllr. Shanagher welcomed the roads programme and enquired if there was funding to remove the hedging surrounding the playground in Loughnaneane park and commented that European symbols might be a better option for the gym equipment signage.
- Cllr. Dineen welcomed the roads programme and enquired if €80,000 was sufficient to cover the works at Ardeevin
- Cllr. Leyden enquired if the playground at Lisnamult was a Council playground
- Cllr. Fitzmaurice asked if it was a Department requirement to do surface dressing rather than road restoration and in the future could we look more towards road restoration.
- Cllr. Fitzmaurice requested that the maintenance issues at Somers park be carried out.

John Mockler and Neal Geraghty responded to the issues raised

- John Mockler explained that we get €10.2 million euros for restoration improvement. We have already applied to the Department to transfer some money into restoration improvement but ultimately it is the Department that makes that decision.
- There is no issue with the inclusion of Goff street and Church street in next year's programme.
- Roscommon County Council do not get a lot of input into what projects the TII will fund, however, we will keep pressure on them to carry out works on the N60 from Castlerea to Ballinlough.
- John Mockler stated that there won't be any extra roads included in the gritting programme as we already have a very good winter maintenance plan for County Roscommon with everyone living within 3 or 4kms of a treated road. We will however send out additional resources to clear junctions and roads as required.
- The budget for severe weather does not relate to gritting of roads but is needed to cover

- expenditure caused by flooding and high winds.
- John Mockler clarified that a portion of the playground at Lisnamult was maintained, inspected and insured by Roscommon County Council, however there was an additional part added by a local group.
- Neal Geraghty explained that the €80,000 allocation for Ardeevin will cover the drainage works and the additional €50,000 will cover the restoration improvement works.
- Roscommon MD have received some quotations for different options relating to the hedging at Loughnaneane park and will come back to the members with a plan when all the prices are submitted.
- Neal Geraghty agreed to attend to the maintenance issues at Somers park.

A general discussion regarding the Draft Roads Programme took place and following that;

On the **PROPOSAL** of Councillor Leyden

SECONDED by Councillor Shanagher

It was **AGREED** by all the members to adopt the Schedule of Municipal District Works including the Roads Programme for the Roscommon Municipal District for 2021.

16.21 CORRESPONDENCE

- E-mail dated 16th March, 2021 from TII regarding reference 05.21 (February 2021)

17.21 VOTES OF CONGRATULATIONS/SYMPATHY

There were no votes of congratulations or sympathies.

18.21 A.O.B.

The following items were raised-

- Cllr. Shanagher requested signage for the outdoor gym in Loughnaneane park and Cllr. Fitzmaurice requested that the outdoor gym at Somers park in Castlerea be added to the Schedule of Municipal District Works.

Neal Geraghty agreed to look at signage for the outdoor gym.

- Cllr. Leyden suggested that the development of a skate board park in Loughnaneane park would benefit teens and it deserves the support of Roscommon Municipal District and Roscommon Town Team.

On the **PROPOSAL** of Cllr. Leyden

SECONDED by Cllr Fitzmaurice

It was **AGREED** that Roscommon Municipal District will support the development of a skate park in Loughnaneane park.

Neal Geraghty agreed to talk to Community & Enterprise and look into this idea along with possible funding opportunities.

- Cllr McDermott praised the great work carried out at Abbey Street regarding the instatement of yellow boxes allowing access for people and businesses on the street.

Neal Geraghty agreed to look at other areas around the town where yellow boxes could be instated.

- Cllr. Dineen requested progress on works at the N60, Williamstown road junction in Castlerea.

Colm Kennelly agreed to contact the contractors Maddens immediately and come back with an update.

- Cllr. Fitzmaurice raised an issue concerning a blind junction at Cloonkeen and requested signage to signify the concealed entrance and instruct traffic to slow down.

Neal Geraghty agreed to inspect the junction with Colm Kennelly and will consider additional signage. He will also inform the roads department and discuss with them if the speed limit could be extended further.

19.21 DATE OF NEXT ROSCOMMON MD MEETING

It was agreed that the next Roscommon MD Meeting and A.G.M. will be held on Monday, 17th May, 2021 at 2 p.m. It was also agreed that future meetings would be held on either a Monday or a Thursday.

This concluded the business of the meeting.

The foregoing Minutes are
Confirmed and Signed:



Meetings Administrator



Cathaoirleach



Countersigned