

MINUTES OF ATHLONE Municipal District HELD IN THE COUNCIL Chamber - Áras an Chontae, ON WEDNESDAY, 20th September, 2023 AT 10.00 am

PRESENT: Councillor Emer Kelly **PRESIDED**

MEMBERS: Cllr T. Ward, Cllr J. Keogh, Cllr J. Naughten and Cllr L. Fallon.

OFFICIALS: Caitlín Conneely, Director of Services
Susan Loughnane, Municipal District Co-Ordinator
Shelia Glennon, Staff Officer
Shane Tiernan, Chief Executive

Apologies: Cllr D. Kilduff

68.23 DISCLOSURE OF CONFLICT OF INTEREST (SECTION 177 OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 2001 AS AMENDED)

No Disclosures

69.23 ADOPTION OF MINUTES

The Cathaoirleach Cllr. Emer Kelly welcomed everyone to the meeting

On the **Proposal of:** Cllr J Keogh

Seconded by: Cllr L Fallon

It was **AGREED** to adopt the minutes of Athlone Municipal District meeting held on 8th June, 2023.

On the **Proposal of:** Cllr J Naughten

Seconded by: Cllr J Keogh

It was **AGREED** to adopt the minutes of Athlone Municipal District Annual Meeting held on 19th June, 2023.

70.23 HUDSON BAY MASTER PLAN

Aishling O'Brien, SLR Consultants presented the report which was commissioned by Roscommon County Council to the Members. This constrained study examined all possible options for future development of tourism in the Hudson Bay area, taking into account all stakeholders, residents and the special area of conservation. The Members thanked Ms. O'Brien for the comprehensive report and welcomed the Plan to develop tourism in the Hudson Bay area.

Members had some observations on the report.

1. Is all the lands that are listed on the report in the ownership of Roscommon County Council?
2. Where does it fit into from a legal point in the context of the Plan.
3. Will all the facilities be accessible for Disabled People.
4. Funding availability for the Projects
5. Road access to and from the area needs to be reviewed.
6. Adequate Car Parking spaces.
7. Public areas.

8. Residents in the Area.
9. Public Transport to and from Athlone and Roscommon.
10. Active Travel Routes.
11. Development of further accommodation alongside Hotel.

Shane Tiernan, CEO thanked Aisling O'Brien for the comprehensive report which is ambitious yet realistic and he believes will bring a fantastic experience to visitors that come to the area while taking into consideration existing stakeholders, residents and the special areas of conservation. Following on from this a steering committee will be formed to progress the plan.

71.23 MATTERS ARISING

1. The Members welcomed Susan Loughnane, Senior Executive Engineer to the Athlone MD and looked forward to working with her over the coming years.
2. Cllr J Naughten inquired about the reflective signage for the R363 and when it would be erected. Susan Loughnane informed the Members that it has now been delivered and would be erected over the coming weeks.
3. Susan Loughnane informed the Members that she had drawn up the list of outstanding Low Cost Safety applications. Due to the sensitive nature around the details it was suggested that they should be discuss at a private meeting, with a view to select two or three possible applications that could be progressed. Members discussed the possibility of funding two or three outstanding schemes from Athlone MD Budget allocations in October, 2023.

On the **Proposal of:** Cllr J Naughten
Seconded by: Cllr J Keogh

It was **AGREED** by all Members to consider the possibility of getting two or three outstanding LCSS funded from Athlone Municipal District own resources budget.

4. Cllr L Fallon was disappointed with letter back from the Minister of Education Ms. Norma Foley TD in relation to acquiring land for carpark for Mt Talbot N.S.
5. Cllr J Keogh enquired if there was any update on the review carried out on the N61 as there is a serious safety issue for cars turning right.

72.23 NOTICE OF MOTION

Two Notice of Motions for discussion

73.23 CLLR. T WARD - PROVISION OF PUBLIC LIGHTING AND FOOTPATHS ON NEWTOWNCARBERRY RD., ATHLONE

"I am calling on Roscommon County Council in conjunction with Westmeath County Council, to provide public lighting and footpaths on the 1km stretch of road from Newtowncarberry, Baylough to Athlone in the interest of road safety. There are twenty-one families who reside on this road and it is also used by the members of St Peters Soccer Club and landowners use it to gain access to their land.

REPLY:

Roscommon County Council has been in contact with Westmeath County Council with regard to this area.

Following preliminary investigations, it is noted that the proposal may not be feasible in terms of cost benefit given the current road width and requirement to acquire significant third party lands. However, RCC in conjunction with WCC are looking at the provision of measures to provide a low speed environment in the area.

The Motion was supported by all the Members and they agreed that the open drain needed to be addressed as a matter of urgency. St Peters FC have applied for sports capital project grant and this will increase the volume of traffic on the road into the Club.

On the **Proposal of:** Cllr T Ward
Seconded by: Cllr J Naughten

Active Travel funding may be available to close drain, and provide footpaths and public lighting. Susan Loughnane SEE to follow this up with Active Travel Department.

74.23 CLLR. J NAUGHTEN - REQUEST TO HAVE THE EXISTING REST LANES ON THE M6 BETWEEN ATHLONE AND GALWAY OPENED

“That Roscommon County Council request the direct intervention of the Minister for Transport, Eamon Ryan TD in relation to the refusal of TII to open the existing rest lanes on the M6 motorway between Athlone and Galway. There is also a requirement for additional rest lanes to be installed at other locations on this section of road to improve road safety.

REPLY:

Following a NOM at the March meeting the TII were contacted in relation to service area and parking lay-bys on the M6. Correspondence in relation to that NOM was received on 13/07/2023 and is included in the correspondence for the September Meeting. An extract from that correspondence in relation to ‘rest lanes’ or parking areas is shown below.

In addition to parking lay-bys, there are several Garda Enforcement Areas about the motorway and dual carriageway network. Some of the Garda Enforcement Areas on the network are gated and not currently available for public use. These Garda Enforcement Areas (GEAs) currently support a law enforcement function.

However, a revised position is proposed for these gated Garda Enforcement Areas in the draft TII ‘Service Area Policy 2023’. The draft ‘Service Area Policy 2023’ has recently been published on the TII website and TII is inviting the public to make submissions / provide feedback on this. Details on the public consultation process can be found at the following link:

<https://www.tii.ie/news/press-releases/service-area-policy-2023-1/>

Having regard to the adequacy of the number of rest areas along the M6 corridor, this is also currently under review as part of TII's review of its overall Service Area policy.

Section 6.0 of the draft Policy refers to Lay-bys and Garda Enforcement Areas. The public consultation for the draft policy closed on 25th August 2023. The Athlone MD Co-ordinator has contacted the TII to request that any observations on the draft policy would be considered given the absence of Council meetings during the month of August. Once a response is received Councillors will be updated.

The Motion was supported by all the Members.

On the **Proposal of:** Cllr J Naughten
Seconded by: Cllr L Fallon

A letter is to be sent to Minister for Transport, Eamon Ryan TD to request the direct intervention of the Minister in relation to the refusal of TII to open the existing rest laybys on the M6 motorway between Athlone and Galway and to provide additional rest lanes to be installed at other locations on this section of road to improve road safety

75.23 CIVIC RECEPTION REQUEST

One proposal to be honoured at the next Civic Reception

75.23a CLLR L FALLON -HONOUR EMILY DONNELLY BALLYBROGAN LECARROW AT THE NEXT CIVIC RECEPTION

"I am calling on Roscommon County Council to honour Emily Donnelly, Ballybrogan, Lecarrow, Roscommon. Age 10 years. She dances with Roscommon Academy of Irish dance. In April she won the U10 International Intermediate Championship 2023.

Proposed by: Cllr L Fallon
Seconded by: Cllr J Keogh

It was **AGREED** by all Members to included Emily Donnelly to be honoured at next Civic Reception.

76.23 QUESTIONS

Four Questions for noting

77.23 CLLR. T WARD - THE REPORT FROM THE CONSULTANTS APPOINTED BY TII IN RELATION TO SAFETY ISSUE ON N61

"Can the Director of Services please inform the meeting if the consultants that were appointed by TII have examined the safety issues relating to the N61 from Ganly's Roundabout to the turn off for the L7554-0 for the St Brigid's GAA Centre and into the villages of Carrowmurragh-Purts and Moyvannion. Has there been any further update in relation to this issue?"

Reply:

Roughan & O'Donovan Consulting Engineers were appointed by RCC to undertake a study of the N61 between Roscommon and Athlone. Work has been ongoing over the last number of months with the study nearing completion. The report is currently being reviewed by Roscommon NRRO in conjunction with TII and RCC Roads & Transportation Department. It is anticipated that this process will be completed in the coming weeks, and the Councillors will then be briefed on the findings of the report.

78.23 CLLR. T WARD - REQUESTING ROAD MARKING ON THE N61, R363, R363 AND R466

"I am calling on Roscommon County Council to provide road markings at all the junctions going out onto the N61 and also on the Regional Roads R362, R363, R466 and all other road markings that

have worn away on Local Roads to be renewed in the interest of road safety.”

Reply:

The road markings on the national roads are renewed by a third party Contractor engaged by TII. Where there are areas on the National Road Network that need attention RCC will inform the relevant parties in TII. Renewal of road markings on regional and local roads are carried out in conjunction with road overlays. Regional and local roads will be inspected by RCC and a priority list for renewal will be compiled. The renewal of road markings is subject to budget and resource availability.

79.23 CLLR. J NAUGHTEN - RESPONSE FROM MINISTER DARRAGH O'BRIEN IN RELATION TO FUNDING REQUEST TO RAISE THE CLONOWN ROAD

“Has Roscommon County Council received a response to date, in relation to the funding request sent to the Department of expenditure which was forwarded on to Mr.Darragh O’Brien TD Minister for Housing, Local Government and Heritage for the raising of the Clonown Road as these works are urgently required?”

Reply:

There has been no response to date. A follow up request for a response was sent to the Minister of State, Patrick O’Donovan TD on 8th September 2023.

80.23 CLLR. J NAUGHTEN - RESPONSE FROM TII IN RELATION TO AQUAPLANING ON THE M6, KILBEGLEY OVERBRIDGE TO JUNCTION 14

“Has Roscommon County Council received any response from TII in relation to the issue of aquaplaning on the M6 between the Kilbegley Overbridge and Junction 14 both East and West bound?”

Reply:

A response was received from TII on 13th June 2023. TII have committed to reviewing the location, with particular regard to potential aquaplaning issues at the location.

81.23 CORRESPONDENCE

There were three correspondences circulated to the Members.

82.23 TII-REPLY TO NOM 7.23 MAY 2023 ACCIDENTS ON M6

83.23 TII-REPLY TO NOM 8.22 SEPT 22, MARCH 23, REST AREAS ON M6 BETWEEN ATHLONE-GALWAY

84.23 MINISTER FOR EDUCATION MS.NORMA FOLEY TD - REPLY TO NOM 9.23 MAY, 2023 CAR PARKING AREA FOR MT TALBOT NS

85.23 VOTES OF CONGRATULATIONS / SYMPATHY

No votes of Congratulations/Sympathy

86.23 A.O.B

1.Cllr E Kelly raised the issue of Ash trees die back along the roadside needs to be addressed as winter is approaching in the interest of safety for road users. Is there any assistance available from Roscommon County Council or Government to remove these dangerous trees.

On the Proposal of: Cllr L Fallon

Seconded by: Cllr E Kelly

Members requested a letter to be sent to Insurance Bodies of Ireland to enquire if Ash die back trees are covered in their Policies, and to Suggest that they consider including a clause on their policy in relation to Ash die back trees on properties that they are insuring.

Caitlín Conneely, Director of Services informed the Members that this will be a big challenge to the Budgets going forward. A letter to the Minister was sent by the Plenary and she will have it circulated to them. Roscommon County Council can issue notices to landowners to cut back dangerous trees on their property that are adjacent to roads.

Funding to cut back Ash die back in public areas will need to be discussed and It may need to go to SPC for consideration.

NEXT MEETING

The next meeting will be on Thursday, 19th October, 2023.

This concluded the business of the meeting.

The foregoing Minutes are
Confirmed and Signed:



Meetings Administrator



Cathaoirleach



Countersigned