

MINUTES OF ATHLONE MUNICIPAL DISTRICT MEETING HELD IN THE COUNCIL CHAMBER, ROSCOMMON, ON MONDAY THE 15TH JUNE 2015

PRESENT: Councillor Ivan Connaughton, Cathaoirleach **PRESIDED**

MEMBERS: P. Kilduff, L. Fallon, T. Ward, J. Keogh, J. Naughten

OFFICIALS: Majella Hunt, Director of Services
Diarmuid MacDonncha, Senior Executive Engineer, Athlone Municipal District
Fíona ní Chuinn, Meetings Administrator

29.15. ADOPTION OF MINUTES:

Amendment to Minutes:

Cllr Fallon requested that the minutes from the previous meeting amended in relation to his statement on the Athlone to Ballinasloe cycle route amend “bog roads” to “bog”.

On the **PROPOSAL** of Councillor Ward

SECONDED by Councillor Kilduff

It was **AGREED** to adopt the Minutes of the Athlone Municipal District held on 30.4.2015, as amended.

Matters Arising:

Members raised the following issues:-

- Reclassification of L2018 to Regional Road. Timeframe for the traffic count on Curraghboy to Kiltoom Road take place
- Correspondence received on Custume Barracks
- Replacement of light bulbs in street lighting and provision for estate not taken in charge from €20,000 allocation
- Timeline for when the commencement of works on the L2025
- Update on road outside Esther Naughten’s house
- Right-hand turn at Carnamurragh, Kiltoom
- Thanked Diarmuid MacDonncha and area staff for the works on the Old Tuam Road
- Progress on Derrycahill bridge?
- Current position on Pharmaplaz site

Custume Barracks, Athlone

Fíona ní Chuinn circulated correspondence received from Westmeath County Council in relation to a proposed meeting with the Minister of Defence to discuss the future of Custume Barracks in Athlone.

Members welcomed the motion from Westmeath County Council.

On the **PROPOSAL** of Councillor Ward

SECONDED by Councillor Fallon

It was **AGREED** that the members of the Athlone Municipal District are included in the deputation with Westmeath County Council to meet with the Minister to discuss the matter of the Custume Barracks.

Street Lighting:

Majella Hunt informed the members of the following:

- A schedule of street lights in private estates has been issued to Electric Skyline
- Further locations will be identified over time
- Invoice awaited to Roscommon County Council

Members raised the following issues:

- Welcomed the development regarding lighting issues
- Queried that the allocation of €20,000 was for the replacement of light bulbs and not for the payment of electricity bills – clarification was sought on same.

Majella Hunt, Director of Services responded to the issues raised as follows:

- €20,000 was provided for the provision of light bulbs however suppliers are now threatening to cut off power due to non-payment.
Roscommon County Council initially pays the electricity bill and this cost is then levied on the developer's bond through the Planning Department
- Right hand turn at Purts, Kiltoom is an issue for the NRA and Roscommon County Council has submitted a proposal under the low cost accident scheme and is awaiting funding.
- Traffic count on Curraghboy to Kiltoom road is to be carried out. Re-classification of a road is a Ministerial decision.
- Roads funds of €223,000 are insufficient for works to be carried out on L2025. This matter is also raised as a question.

Councillor Keogh requested that funding under the light bulb replacement scheme was specifically for the replacement of light bulbs and again expressed concern about paying developer's unpaid electricity bills. He requested that the funds paid on bills be recouped back to the fund.

Diarmuid MacDonncha informed the meeting of the following:

- Galway County Council has agreed to fund 1/3 of the cost of works on Derrycahill Bridge. The process for the appointment of Consultant has commenced. Preliminary design is complete and it is envisaged that works will be done this year.
- The Solicitor for the new owner of the Pharmaplaz site has confirmed that the owner is willing to discuss the issue of the boundary fence with Roscommon County Council.

On the **PROPOSAL** of Councillor Ward

SECONDED by Councillor Fallon

It was **AGREED** that Roscommon County Council seek additional funding from the N.R.A. for L2025 due to the road damage as a result of haulage route to M6 service stations.

Councillor Ward thanked Diarmuid MacDonncha and Pat Murtagh for pursuing the issue of Derrycahill Bridge.

On the **PROPOSAL** of Councillor Keogh

SECONDED by Councillor Naughten

It was **AGREED** that Roscommon County Council continue to monitor speed on the Old Tuam Road over the few months in association with the Gardaí.

30.15. PRESENTATION BY LOUISE WARD, LOCAL ENTERPRISE OFFICE

Ms. Louise Ward, Head of Enterprise, Local Enterprise Office outlined:

- The role and function of the Local Enterprise Office
- The assistance, advisory services and enterprise support available to business
- Training available to small businesses
- Mentoring services available
- Grant types available to businesses in the County
- Business Initiatives planned for 2015

Louise highlighted that grant assistance is available through Enterprise Ireland and the deadline for applications for funding is the 18th July next.

Members thanked Ms. Ward for the presentation and raised the following queries:

- Keep the members informed of any change to interest rates for loans
- Qualifying criteria for eligible business for assistance from LEO?
- Flexibility in providing assistance to the unemployed
- Is Meet West exclusive to business

Ms. Ward responded to the queries as follows:

- There is no restriction on assistance to the unemployed.
- Micro finance of 8.8% was re-negotiated 9.8% for unsecured loans.
- Lowest uptake is on the export grant.
- All businesses are eligible for assistance with the exception of gambling, prostitution and community.

31.15. LOCAL COMMUNITY & ENTERPRISE PLAN

Ms. Caitlin Conneely, Administrative Officer presented an update to the members of a report on questions previously received on the Local Economic and Community Plan.

She outlined the following:

- The purpose of the LECP is to set out the objectives and actions needed to promote and support the economic development and the local and community development of the local authority area by both itself directly and in partnership with other economic and community development stakeholders.
- The process involved in creating the Local Economic and Community Plan
- Goals of the Socio-Economic Statement to create jobs, increase tourism, attract industry.
- Timeframe for completion of LECP
- Questions or submissions from members must be submitted by the end of June 2015.

The members thanked Ms. Conneely for the presentation and raised the following issues:

- Entering a period of rapid change where a change in thinking and attitude is required
- Endeavour to prevent young people leaving the County
- No bus service from St. John's Church to Day Care Centre

32.15. PRESENTATION BY MICHAEL KELLY, NATIONAL ROADS AUTHORITY, WESTMEATH COUNTY COUNCIL ON THE GALWAY TO DUBLIN CYCLEWAY SCHEME

Mr. Michael Kelly and Ms. Elva Roe, from Westmeath County Council and Ms. Ann Marie Johnston, Roscommon County Council gave an update and progress report to the members of the proposed corridor from Athlone to Ballinasloe for cycle route and outlined the following.

- The potential benefits to the area if the project is successful.
- The features of the Galway to Dublin Greenway
- Needs & preference of users for off road cycling and implications for route design
- Route Corridor Selection Report and project Status
- Marketing, branding and future plans

Members welcomed the cycleway in principal and raised the following issues:

- Use of Government owned land along by the railway line (natural route)
- Division of land holdings by cycle route and knock on effects on grant payments
- Services provided along the cycle route?
- €400,000 allocation for development of Summerhill to Cornafulla was approved and later withdrawn
- Consideration of incorporating bog and small local roads rather than fragmenting farms
- Concerns regarding land susceptible to flooding along route
- Clarification on amount of Bord na Móna lands
- Disappointed that Clonmacnoise not included on the route

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

It was **AGREED** that the members of the Athlone Municipal District propose to meet with the Minister to outline the concerns of the land owners in Counties Roscommon and Galway.

Mr. Michael Kelly, Westmeath County Council responded to the issues raised as follows:

- The Summerhill to Cornafulla project and the Galway to Ballinasloe cycle route are two separate entities.
- Plans to create an off road facility that will be a safe, segregated project and consistent with the identified need for off route cycling routes,
- 150 land owners affected – over 80% of the farmers are not opposed to the route. Route is around the perimeters of farms rather than dividing farm holdings. Land adjacent to local roads will also be used.
- Comprehensive negotiations ongoing to get key agreement with land owners
- Farmers will be compensated for any loss of funding from any schemes they are eligible for.
- A boardwalk solution forms part of the detailed design to overcome the problem of flooding in areas
- Consideration of a link from Shannonbridge to Clonmacnoise
- The ownership of land in County Roscommon affected by proposed route is as follows:
 - 13km through Bord na Móna lands
 - 12-13km through farmlands
 - 40km through bog land not owned by Bord na Móna

The members welcomed the update and clarifications and requested that they be kept informed of developments in terms of the cycle route going forward.

33.15. EXTENSION OF STANDING ORDERS:

On the **PROPOSAL** of Councillor Fallon

SECONDED by Councillor Ward

It was **AGREED** to extend Standing Orders to the close of business.

34.15. QUESTIONS IN ACCORDANCE WITH STANDING ORDER NO. 135.

Replies to the Questions submitted by members were circulated (see schedule).

35.15. NOTICES OF MOTION – JUNE, 2015

9. VERGE TRIMMING

Notice of Motion from Councillor Naughten – 9/15.

“That Roscommon County Council immediately carry out trimming of roadside verges where grass and noxious weeds are currently overgrown and are a hazard to road users.”

The Meetings Administrator read out the following reply:-

Verge trimming will be carried out over the coming months subject to the availability of resources.

Members raised the following issues:

- Overgrown grasses and hedges very dangerous to road users
- Queried if an allocation from the household charge could be allocated to verge trimming
- Redirect funding to cut grass on local and regional roads
- Increase in the 2014 specific allocation of €25,000
- Raise this item up at the next plenary meeting

Majella Hunt responded to issues as follows:

- The allocation of funding of €25,000 was for 2014 only clarifying the position for 2015
- Household Charge are included in Central Funds

On the **PROPOSAL** of Councillor Naughten

SECONDED by Councillor Ward

It was **AGREED** to put this item on the Agenda for the next plenary meeting.

10. ROAD NUMBER L2023-0 – DANGEROUS BEND

Notice of Motion from Councillor Ward – 10/15

“I am calling on Roscommon County Council to remove a dangerous bend from road number L2023-0 at Derryglad, Curraghboy as the road is extremely narrow at this location.”

The Meetings Administrator read out the following reply:-

This Notice of Motion refers to a section of the L2023 Road adjacent to the Derryglad Museum. A Community Involvement Scheme application was submitted to the Department of Transport, Tourism & Sport in 2013 for funding to carry out works comprising the removal of trees and road widening at this location in 2013/2014. However, the scheme did not proceed due to the fact that the applicant was not in a position to provide the 20% monetary contribution required under the terms of the Scheme. The landowner was willing to provide land in lieu of the monetary contribution but this proposal was not

acceptable under the terms of the most recent CIS Scheme. It may be possible to re-submit this scheme for funding under the Low Cost Safety Improvement Scheme which applies to both Local and Regional Roads.

The members raised the following issues:

- Lands owners were already giving land free of charge to remove bends and should not be expected to make a monetary contribution as well
- New CIS Scheme is not successful

Diarmuid MacDonncha stated that he would examine whether a passing bay could be introduced between Curraghboy to Brideswell.

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

It was **AGREED** to write to Minister of Transport to review current CIS Scheme and to reinstate the old scheme whereby land owners provided the land as their contribution only.

36.15 A.O.B.

Staff Recruitment

Councillor Ward queried a letter that was recently issued to Gateway Staff in Roscommon County Council offering them an opportunity to gain employment as a general operative. He requested that an external recruitment process should be put in place due to the reduction of Council staff over the last number of years.

The members raised the following issues:

- Local knowledge of the area where staff are based is important
- Lack of flexibility in terms of recruitment
- Reverse the decision to only recruit Gateway staff

It was **PROPOSED** by Councillor Ward
SECONDED by Councillor Keogh

That Roscommon County Council advertise externally for the recruitment of outdoor staff.

Majella Hunt, Director of Services informed the members that Roscommon County Council's work place plan must be approved in advance of recruitment for permanent staff. Only long-term temporary positions or specific contracts can be currently advertised externally.

She continued that the letter that had issued to Gateway staff offered an opportunity to be placed on a panel for opportunities that may arise for general operatives. These positions would be only for a 6 months period until the end of 2015 and cannot be extended or made permanent.

Old Tuam Road

Councillor Keogh highlighted an issue regarding the Old Tuam Road. The exit from Slí an Choiste onto Old Tuam Road is too narrow and dangerous for residents. He queried the possibility of installation of speed ramps to reduce speed of vehicles on this road.

Diarmuid MacDonncha, Senior Executive Engineer informed the members that signage has been improved on the Old Tuam Road. Speed is being monitored on that road in liaison with the Gardaí. The current speed limit is 50Km.

Boil Water Notice - Killeglan

Councillor Naughten queried when the boil water notice would be lifted as works are completed in Killeglan Plant

Majella Hunt, Director of Services confirmed that this is part of the regional scheme and the plant is at process proving stage and awaiting an audit by the EPA and the HSE, which is imminent. A final date cannot be given until this process is complete.

EPA Guidelines

Councillor Naughten queried the EPA Guidelines regarding planning permission

Majella Hunt, Director of Services suggested that EPA Guidelines could be put as an item for discussion at the next SPC meeting and revert back to municipal district for further discussion.

Athlone – Ballinasloe Motorway

Councillor Ward queried when the snag list for the Athlone to Ballinasloe Motorway would be complete

Majella Hunt, Director of Services confirmed that the Galway to Ballinasloe snag list is complete and Roscommon County Council will request the NRA to complete the snag list of the Athlone-Ballinasloe M6 motorway.

On the **PROPOSAL** of Councillor Ward

SECONDED by Councillor Naughten

It was **AGREED** that Roscommon County Council request the N.R.A. to complete the snag list for the Athlone-Ballinasloe M6 motorway as a matter of urgency.

This concluded the business of the meeting.

The foregoing Minutes are
Confirmed and Signed:

Meetings Administrator

Cathaoirleach

Countersigned

QUESTIONS - JUNE, 2015

Question No. 1 – Councillor Ward:

Can the Director of Services please inform the meeting as to whether or not the NRA has responded to the Consultant's Report which was issued in response to the flooding of farmlands at Taduff East, Mihanbee and other surrounding areas? What course of action does the NRA intend to take in order to prevent the ongoing flooding of farmland in this area? I am calling on Roscommon County Council not to sign off on the projects until the appropriate action has been taken by the NRA.

The Meetings Administrator circulated the following reply

The National Roads Authority has funded the carrying out of some minor mitigation works including some drain cleaning and the provision of one no. culvert on a side road. The NRA has responded to the Consultant's Report but disagree with some of the Consultant's findings. Drainage issues have been discussed with the NRA by Roscommon County Council engineering staff on several occasions without agreement being reached.

Question No. 2 – Councillor Ward:

Can the Director of Services of Roscommon County Council please inform the meeting of when the resurfacing work will commence on the Castlesampson road (L2025-0).

The Meetings Administrator circulated the following reply

The Castlesampson road will be repaired as part of the 2015 Roads Programme. Tenders have been received for the works and are currently being evaluated by the Council. It is expected that works on the section of road West of Rooskagh Cross will commence within the next few weeks. However, it will not be possible to start the overlay section between Kildea's Concrete Works and Bealnamullia until a separate contract for the replacement of a watermain has been completed. It is expected that this project will be completed by late August, 2015.