

DRAFT MINUTES OF ATHLONE MUNICIPAL DISTRICT MEETING HELD IN THE LOUGHNANEANE SUITE, ÁRAS AN CHONTAE, ROSCOMMON, ON WEDNESDAY THE 16TH DECEMBER 2015 AT 9.30A.M.

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

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

OFFICIALS: Ms. Majella Hunt, Director of Services
Mr. Diarmuid MacDonncha, Senior Executive Engineer
Ms. Antoinette Robinson, Administrative Officer

51.15. ADOPTION OF MINUTES:

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

It was **AGREED** to adopt the Minutes of the Athlone Municipal District held on 19.10.2015 and Budget Meeting for Athlone Municipal District held on 09.11.2015.

Matters Arising:

- Update on request for meeting with TII regarding flooding issues on the M6 motorway
- Update on Kilbegley Cemetery
- Any further measures in place on Old Tuam Road in terms of speed
- Insufficient levels of funding available to address flooding issues
- Important to have maintenance program in place for dredging works
- Issue of culverts on the M6 needs to be addressed by the NRA
- When will flashing speed signs on Old Tuam Road be erected?
- Update on upgrading of L2025 to regional road status
- Issue with Bord na Móna silting up River Shannon and River Suck
- Update on completed cemetery survey – request completed report to be circulated to members
- Welcome overlay works on L2018
- Update on request for flashing speed sign and signage at Mount Talbot National School
- Report on Old Tuam Road be available at next Municipal District meeting
- What was the initial timeframe for completion of survey on Kilbegley Cemetery
- Welcome remedial works at Castlecoote National School
- 100km sign at bridge near Mount Talbot National School needs attention
- Disappointed with lack of progress on Derrycabill Bridge

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

- Galway County Council is the lead authority on the M6 project. Roscommon County Council will seek a meeting with the Project Office in the new year.
- Members may need to meet themselves in advance of the meeting with the project Office to agree issues to be raised.
- The archaeological survey of Kilbegley Cemetery is not yet complete – it is expected in early 2016.
- €8 million was announced yesterday for river funding. Each local authority is responsible for submitting their own request. At present Roscommon County Council only funds arterial drainage works
- Roscommon County Council undertook to monitor speed on the Old Tuam Road in liaison with the Gardaí – no commitment was given to install signs.
- Improved signage and monitoring of speed will need to be investigated at Mount Talbot National School.
- A traffic count is currently being conducted at Castlecoote National School

- Works on the L2018 will be included in 2016 works programme – no traffic count has been conducted
- There was no timeframe outlined for the completion of the survey on Kilbegley Cemetery

Mr. Diarmuid MacDonncha, Senior Executive Engineer responded to the issues raised as follows:

- Roscommon County Council commissioned a report from Consultants and have identified the problems on the M6.
- Speed survey is complete on the Old Tuam Road – Roscommon County Council to discuss issue with Gardaí
- Derrycahill Bridge is inaccessible at present due to flooding

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

It was **AGREED** that Roscommon County Council write to the Minister for Finance and the Minister for Environment to request funding for repair to roads damaged by recent flooding.

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

It was **AGREED** to write to Bord na Móna to remove silt from the River Shannon and the River Suck.

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

It was **AGREED** that Roscommon County Council write to the Archaeological Consultants requesting a response on the survey carried out on Kilbegley Cemetery as soon as possible.

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

It was **AGREED** if report is not back from Archaeological Consultant for Kilbegley Cemetery in 3 weeks that Roscommon County Council investigate the appointment of a new consultant and any work done to date will not be paid for by Roscommon County Council.

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

It was **AGREED** that the criteria needs to change on a national level in terms of hiring contractors.

52.15. ATHLONE BOUNDARY REVIEW

Ms. Majella Hunt, Director of Services informed that meeting that a Boundary Review Committee has been set up by the Minister for the Environment, Community and Local Government. There is a public consultation process in place and submissions are due before 27th January 2016. She stated that the members workshop held recently was very productive and that any changes to the boundary of county Roscommon will have a huge impact on both the Athlone Municipal District and the county as a whole. She confirmed that a special meeting of Roscommon County Council will be held on 6th January next to discuss the issue.

The members raised the following issues:

- Thanked Majella and staff of Roscommon County Council for their work on the Boundary Review
- Members workshop was very beneficial and very welcoming
- Welcoming to see Councillors present from other Municipal Districts of county Roscommon
- Need to organise to march on the bridge of Athlone and hand deliver a letter to Westmeath County Council offices
- Thanked Councillors for their input into the Committee
- State bodies such *eir* (formerly Eircom) and Department of Social Welfare have relocated to the east of the country

- Absence of female representative on committee is disappointing
- Concern on developing Athlone as a super town
- No representative from Roscommon County Council in attendance at Westmeath County Council meeting
- Need to fight for 100% retention and not 80%
- How do Roscommon County Council propose to improve the functionality of Athlone – need to formalise service level agreements, etc. between Westmeath County Council and Roscommon County Council
- Need to explore consideration of extending the boundary back to the natural boundary of the River Shannon
- Monksland has been identified as having bio-pharma potential for development in *Action Plan for Jobs* document
- All Westmeath Councillors are in favour of the proposed changes to the boundary
- Why were Westmeath County Council chosen as lead authority on the matter?
- Cannot let ‘land grab’ happen
- Monksland is a highly populated area with ‘clean’ industry
- Appeal to media to inform the public of public meeting scheduled for January 11th in the Athlone Springs Hotel

On the **PROPOSAL** of Councillor Naughten

SECONDED by Councillor Kilduff

It was **AGREED** that Roscommon County Council seek a meeting with An Taoiseach outlining the gravity of the situation and the impact it will have on county Roscommon

It was **PROPOSED** by Councillor Ward

SECONDED by Councillor Keogh

That the proposal requesting a meeting with the Taoiseach be brought before the Special Meeting of 6th January on the boundary review

53.15 REVIEW OF DECEMBER 2015 FLOODING

Mr. Diarmuid MacDonncha outlined to the meeting the vast areas of the Municipal District that had been affected by the recent flooding from Castlecoote to Shannonbridge as a result of flooding from the River Suck and from Hodson Bay to Shannonbridge as a result of flooding from the River Shannon.

He went on to commend the work of the community in Athleague. He stated that there are a number of problem areas highlighted as a result of flooding and Roscommon County Council are applying to the Department for funding.

The members raised the following issues:

- Compliment the staff of Roscommon County Council and communities for working together despite resources being stretched
- Local knowledge is very important
- Unable to alleviate flooding issues in Four Roads despite having funding available
- Better drain and small river maintenance required - €25,000 is inadequate
- Ongoing problem with silt on river bed leading to flooding problems
- There should be one entity in place to look after works on the River Shannon
- Many elderly people in communities affected by flooding
- €8 million allocation is inadequate – breakdown of allocation requested
- Roads budget will be used up looking after flooding remedial works
- Impact on businesses in Athlone, Ballinasloe and Athleague – public should try and support local businesses
- There will be a fodder crisis in Clonown area as fodder was destroyed by recent flooding

- Removal of the River Suck Drainage Committee was a backward step
- CFRAM study does not take into account soil type in areas
- Human element should be taken as a priority ahead of flora and fauna
- CFRAM study does not take into account local knowledge
- Forward planning is required for a more proactive approach

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

- No details/criteria available yet with regard to type of emergency funding available
- In 2009, funding was available to cover emergencies and responses to emergencies – there were a lot of criteria in place.
- Municipal District Engineers are currently compiling lists of works required per Municipal District for funding

It was proposed by Councillor Keogh that Roscommon County Council write to the Minister to ensure works would be carried out on pressure points in the River Suck and River Shannon immediately to problems associated with flooding.

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

It was **AGREED** that Roscommon County Council write to the Minister outlining the concerns of the members of Athlone Municipal District and request what provision is in place for a fund to deal with a potential fodder crisis in South Roscommon.

53.15. CORRESPONDENCE

1. Letter from Department of Transport re: funding for L2025
2. Letter from Department of Communications, Energy & Natural Resources re: introduction of Eircodes
3. Letter from TII re: M6 Athlone – Ballinasloe motorway snag list
4. Letter from Department of Transport re: L2025
5. Letter from Department of Communications, Energy & Natural Resources re: introduction of Eircodes

54.15. QUESTION IN ACCORDANCE WITH STANDING ORDER NO. 135.

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

55.15 NOTICE OF MOTION

FOOTPATHS & PUBLIC LIGHTING IN SUCKFIELD/KILGARVE

Notice of Motion from Councillors Keogh, Ward, Naughten, Connaughton, Kilduff and Fallon – 14/15.

“That Roscommon County Council provides necessary funding, as a matter of urgency, for the installation of footpaths and public lighting measuring approximately 150 metres along the R357 between the boundary of Galway and Roscommon in the area of Suckfield/Kilgarve, Creagh, Ballinasloe, Co. Roscommon. The road in question is used by pedestrians on a frequent basis but does not have a hard shoulder and therefore is considered dangerous for pedestrians using the road.”

The Meetings Administrator read out the following reply:-

There is no funding provided as part of the 2015 Road Works Scheme for the provision of footpaths or public lighting at this location. There is no other funding stream available to the Council to initiate the comprehensive programme of works requested in the Notice of Motion. The infrastructure proposed would require significant capital investment which is not available at present.

Councillor Keogh thanked all the members for their support with this notice of motion. He expressed his disappointment with the response and stated that the funding would have to be found.

The members raised the following issues:

- Request for Diarmuid MacDonncha to work out costings for works as it not feasible for funds to come from Municipal District Budget
- Work should have been carried out with link road to Motorway
- Provision of footpath is a priority for residents
- Interim measure would be to remove the grass verge and install some gravel
- Soakpit required in the field to prevent flooding on this stretch of road

Ms. Majella Hunt, Director of Services informed the meeting as follows:

- The works must be costed as a full project as it is not feasible to install footpaths without the provision of public lighting in the interest of public safety.
- The outstanding works should be included on the snag for the M6 project
- Diarmuid to investigate the possibility of removing the grass verge

It was **PROPOSED** by Councillor Keogh

SECONDED by Councillor Ward

That Roscommon County Council write to the TII requesting that funding be put in place as these works and provision of footpaths along R357 should have been completed during completion of M6 motorway.

56.15. VOTES OF CONGRATULATIONS were extended to:

The people of Athleague and staff of Roscommon County Council in saving the village in the recent floods.

57.15. A.O.B.

Footpaths in Cluain Broc, Danesfort

Councillor John Naughten requested a definite start date for the works on the provision of footpaths in Cluain Broc and Danesfort. He was of the understanding that it was included in the 2015 works program.

Mr. Diarmuid MacDonncha confirmed that these works were originally included in the 2015 works programs but due to unforeseen circumstances associated with the recent flooding the work was not complete.

Custume Barracks, Athlone

Councillor Paddy Kilduff requested an update from Councillors Connaughton, Ward & Naughten in relation to a recent meeting with the Minister in relation to the Custume Barracks, Athlone.

Councillors Connaughton, Ward & Naughten confirmed that the Minister is committed to maintaining numbers in Custume Barracks by means of a 2 brigade structure. He is also committed to keeping Custume Barracks open, however, he made no commitment to reinstate the 4th Western Bridgade.

Roscommon Chamber of Commerce

Councillor Paddy Kilduff disapproved of a recent article in the press where the Roscommon Chamber of Commerce criticised the Fianna Fáil and Independent Alliance for not reducing commercial rates. He confirmed that the introduction of the Rates Incentive Scheme is a method of assisting new businesses and rate payers.

Tenant Purchase Scheme

Councillor John Naughten requested that the Tenant Purchase Scheme would be included as an agenda item at the next Municipal District meeting and a member from Housing may be present to give a presentation.

This concluded the business of the meeting.

The foregoing Minutes are
Confirmed and Signed:

Meetings Administrator

Cathaoirleach

Countersigned

QUESTIONS - DECEMBER, 2015

Question No. 1 – Councillor Naughten:

Can Roscommon County Council provide immediate funding for footpaths, lights and road surfacing works on the road servicing Dansfort, Cluain Broc and Daneshill estates in Monksland, Athlone? It had been agreed these works would be carried out in conjunction with the closure of the railway gates in Cluain Broc estate which has now taken place.

The Meetings Administrator circulated the following reply:

It is proposed that works will commence on the provision of footpaths early in 2016 within the resources available.

Question No. 2 – Councillor Naughten:

Can Roscommon County Council outline the number of people currently on the housing waiting list in the Athlone Municipal District?

The Meetings Administrator circulated the following reply:

These figures quoted below represent approved applicants who are on the waiting list in the Athlone Municipal District i.e. Athlone, Ballyforan and Athleague.

Applicants have selected Athlone, Ballyforan and Athleague the Athlone as one of their areas of choice for accommodation. However, it should be noted that the applicants have also selected other areas of choice on their application outside the Athlone Municipal District.

Area	Accommodation Type:	Accommodation Type:
	Family	One/Two Bed
Athlone	72	38
Ballyforan	5	5
Athleague	21	21

Question No. 3 – Councillor Ward:

Can the Director of Services confirm if repairs have been carried out on Derrycahill Bridge?

The Meetings Administrator circulated the following reply:

Tenders have been sought from competent Contractors for the carrying out of the proposed works in this case. Due to the high water levels that prevail presently the Council has extended the closing date for receipt of tenders to allow Contractors an opportunity to inspect the locus of the works. It is

expected that the successful tender will be awarded early in 2016 with a view to commencing the necessary repairs as early as possible but these works will be dependent upon water levels receding.

Question No. 4 – Councillor Ward:

Can the Director of Services confirm if a further submission has been made to the NRA for funding to provide a right turning lane for Carrowmurragh, Purts and St. Brigid's GAA Club, Kiltoom?

The Meetings Administrator circulated the following reply:

Roscommon County Council has already made a formal submission to the TII (formerly NRA) and has discussed the merits of this proposal with TII representatives in the past. However, no funding has been secured for the proposed works to date and it is unlikely that the necessary funding will be made available based on current assessment criteria.