

MINUTES OF BOYLE MUNICIPAL DISTRICT MEETING HELD IN THE COUNCIL CHAMBER, THE COURTHOUSE, ROSCOMMON ON MONDAY THE 19th OCTOBER, 2015 AT 2.00P.M.

PRESENT: Councillor Rachel Doherty, Cathaoirleach **PRESIDED**

MEMBERS: V. Byrne. J. Cummins, E. Murphy, M. Hopkins, M. Mulligan

OFFICIALS: Martin Lydon, Head of Finance and Planning
Fiona ní Chuinn, Meetings Administrator
Bernard Murray, Senior Executive Engineer
John O'Rourke, A/Director of Services
Richie Farrell, County Librarian

33.15. ADOPTION OF MINUTES:

On the **PROPOSAL** of Councillor Murphy

SECONDED by Councillor Hopkins

It was **AGREED** to adopt the Minutes of the Boyle Municipal District Meeting held on 20.8.2015.

The members raised the following issues:

- Assumption that agreement had been reached on the implementation of the LIS programme but it is not reflected in the minutes.
- Request that the media convey the message that the Royal Hotel in Boyle is not a protected structure and that Roscommon County Council welcome any interest in the premises.
- Wish the two Engineers from the Boyle Municipal District well in their new posts – update requested on their replacements – can't leave Area Offices unattended by engineers.
- Considerable amount of time spent by Engineers dealing with issues on the ground in the areas.
- Approaching a busy time of year for Area Engineers with the pressures associated with winter maintenance programmes and finishing works/closing of accounts.
- All staff across the organisation are under pressure
- Important to have the relevant staff present at Municipal District meetings
- Names and contact numbers for staff responsible for specific areas would be helpful
- Confirmation of staff changes for Municipal District area by the Municipal District Budget meeting of 9th November

Mr. Martin Lydon, Head of Finance and Planning responded to the issues as follows:

- Staffing is an issue for the Executive. The Chief Executive is currently meeting with all staff members and the necessary resources will be allocated to where they are required. The decisions of the Chief Executive will affect the organisation as a whole.
- A number of Engineers are currently working on capital projects which are nearing completion. This is being examined by the Chief Executive.

34.15 HOUSING UPDATE

Mr. John O'Rourke, A/Director of Services outlined to the members an update from the Housing Section as follows:

- 1,354 houses owned by Roscommon County Council
- 34 families under the RAS Scheme
- 655 on housing list (of which 60% are housed in suitable accommodation through the RAS and Rental Supplement)

- 35% refusal rate
- 70 vacant properties
- 2 houses under offer
- 15 traveller accommodation
- 95 grants issued in 2015
- Refurbished 36 voids (21 in Boyle Area)
- Upgrade of 10 derelict houses at a cost of €30,000 pre house
- Record of 7 anti-social behaviour complaints (4 in Boyle)
- HAP upcoming scheme

Mr. John O'Rourke, A/Director of Services confirmed that the housing staff are happy to deal with any representations from elected members and deal with case specific issues.

The members raised the following issues:

- Would have been helpful to have the information in advance of meeting
- Lack of manpower has a bearing on housing repairs (especially area staff)
- 35% refusal rate of first offers is a shocking statistic – clarification sought on reason for same
- More people will require local authority housing in the future with people being pushed out of private rented accommodation
- Lack of Government funding for housing
- Query the number of derelict houses in the Boyle area
- Query the timeframe for the implementation of HAP
- Query average turnaround for housing repairs
- What is 2010 figure for housing stock for Roscommon County Council – have the numbers changed since then?
- Is insulation programme for rural houses still operational?
- Choice of 3 locations per applicant is too much and time consuming for housing staff to process
- Is there still a facility to purchase a demountable?
- Issue with developers not releasing houses for rent while waiting for the housing market to improve
- No financial allocation over the last number of years to purchase additional houses while lists are ever increasing
- Need to know Roscommon County Council's plan in dealing with housing issues
- Does housing application form need to be structured in a different way
- Compliment to housing section on their work with the insulation programme
- Will Roscommon County Council be purchasing houses in 2016
- What is the timeframe for maintenance/refurbishment works

Mr. John O'Rourke, A/Director of Services responded to the issues raised as follows:

- Since 2012, RAS clients (450) are no longer included in the statistics
- HAP will be introduced in early 2016
- Gratifying to see the level of interest in housing
- 6 out of 10 derelict houses included in the programme for upgrade are in Boyle Municipal District
- €650,000 for housing repairs in 2016
- One-off rural houses are included in schemes
- Housing forms are governed by the Housing Act

- Only fair to allow people choice of location – they are fully entitled to refuse
- Unlimited list of reasons for refusal
- Roscommon County Council no longer provide demountable dwellings are they are seen to be sub-standard type of accommodation
- Roscommon County Council have no input with developers once they fulfil their Part 5 agreement to provide 10% of their development for social housing
- 2003 – 2010 600 houses were provided
- Max. 10 houses provided since 2010
- Roscommon County Council are currently purchasing houses which are up to standard where the housing demands are indentified
- Waiting times vary depending of works/repairs required
- 52 – 54 weeks waiting time for refurbishment works
- No demand for houses in some areas of county
- Issue with division of housing repairs and Municipal District division – not operating as smoothly as anticipated as some craftsmen are working under the service level agreement with Irish Water

Mr. Bernard Murray, Senior Executive Engineer stated that the transition to the Municipal Districts had implications on available staff and there is a need to put in place a suitable response capacity for local routine repairs. To this end, discussions are taking place to work towards addressing this in the near future.

Mr. Martin Lydon, Head of Finance and Planning confirmed that once HAP is implemented some people currently on the housing list will have access to other benefits. He stated that Roscommon County Council is not spending any extra funds on homeless accommodation and that HAP will bring clarity to the situation.

35.15. APPROVAL OF CIVIC RECEPTION RECIPIENTS

A list of the proposed recipients to receive a civic honour from Roscommon County Council was circulated to the members.

Request from Councillor Maura Hopkins:

“That Roscommon County Council honour at the next Civic Reception

- St. Nathy’s P.T.A.A. Quiz Senior Team – Seamus Curley, Catherine Durkin, Nathy Regan, Oliver Feeley and Mary Regan who won the All Ireland Quiz recently in Cavan.
- Cillian Doyle, Luke Connelly and James Bolger from Abbey Community College, Boyle on winning the All Ireland Junior Category in Sustainable Energy Authority of Ireland ‘One Good Idea’ competition.

Request from Councillor Valerie Byrne:

“That Roscommon County Council honour at the next Civic Reception

- Junk Kouture from Elphin Community College winning All Ireland Recycled Fashion competition.
- Victoria Geraghty and Emily Dooley from Siobhan Feeney School of Dancing for winning All Ireland medals.”

On the **PROPOSAL** of Councillor Byrne

SECONDED by Councillor Hopkins

It was **AGREED** to award a civic honour to the nominees as circulated.

36.15. LOCAL IMPROVEMENT SCHEMES

Mr. Bernard Murray, Senior Executive Engineer circulated to the members a discussion document in relation to Local Improvement Schemes outlining the following:

- Legal background to Local Improvement Schemes (Local Government Act 2001)
- Statistics in relation to Local Improvement Schemes
- Prioritisation of Schemes

The members raised the following issues:

- In favour of upgrading rural roads where people have paid their development charges in the past
- Written request should be made for special allocation
- Some existing applicants now deceased, so these applications no longer needed
- Even small schemes make a lot of people happy
- Good to reinstate these schemes to some degree
- Some roads only need stone finish
- Cul-de-sac residents shouldn't get reduced level of service compared to outside roads
- Agree to scrap existing list for new list going forward
- Difficult to implement to the same level as it was before
- Should include CIS Scheme also – should be dealt with in tandem to LIS Scheme
- Need to decide ahead of budget meeting where money will be cut
- Always under the remit of Roscommon County Council to deal with public cul-de-sac roads, so CIS should be a last resort
- Not possible to deal with entire list in one year - need to prioritise list
- Would funding come from national or Roscommon County Council allocation for roads
- €140,000 not realistic amount to budget for LIS in 2016
- Look to prioritise a number of roads in 2016
- Not all roads on list are still feasible
- Boyle Municipal District members will not agree to an increased allocation to the Athlone Municipal District at the expense of Boyle
- CIS Schemes should be looked after by Roscommon County Council
- Important to take cognisance of public roads and not decide on percentage allocation today
- Second list of roads in line for works should be drawn up if funding becomes available mid-year
- Public cul-de-sacs should be included

Mr. Martin Lydon, Head of Finance and Planning responded as follows:

- No additional funding available for LIS Schemes
- Municipal District Budget meeting on 9th November – approximately €500,000 allocated to local roads
- If money is allocated to LIS & CIS Schemes in 2016 this will have a knock-on effect to other services in the Municipal District
- Athlone Municipal District are seeking to distribute allocations per population
- Municipal District allocations for 2016 will go before the Corporate Policy Group for recommendation
- Development levies are for services and amenities for overall county – not specific to certain roads

Mr. Bernard Murray, Senior Executive Engineer responded as follows:

- CIS's were provided for in 2014 and 2015
- Deciding of road works scheme is difficult with limited resources – choice of sites by definition excludes other sites
- Bound by Multi-Annual Roadworks Plan which is on a rolling 4 year basis
- Necessary to take account of condition of network and categorise and rank defects
- Also need to consider traffic, levels of usage, public/community reps, political reps, etc.
- Level on intervention will be dependent on funding
- Important to make choices based on greatest return on investment from the Department
- LIS and CIS were always put forward as optional schemes over and above ordinary funding. There were no coercive attempts in dealing with queries. Informal initial estimates were provided, before any formal application was made.
- Any extra mid-year funding would in the first instance generally have to go to the next listed schemes on the multi-annual program, barring exceptional case for a badly deteriorated site.

On the **PROPOSAL** of Councillor Byrne

SECONDED by Councillor Mulligan

It was **AGREED** to write to the Minister requesting a special allocation for LIS Schemes

On the **PROPOSAL** of Councillor Byrne

SECONDED by Councillor Mulligan

It was **AGREED** to allocate a percentage to LIS Schemes in the Municipal District Budget

On the **PROPOSAL** of Councillor Mulligan

SECONDED by Councillor Doherty

It was **AGREED** to scrap the existing list of LIS Schemes and start process again

37.15. PRESENTATION BY RICHIE FARRELL, COUNTY LIBRARIAN ON ROSCOMMON IRELAND 2016 LOCAL PROGRAMME

Mr. Richie Farrell, County Librarian presented to the members a draft of the local programme of events organised throughout 2016 to commemorate the 1916 Rising.

He outlined that a number of events will take place under various headings such as:

- Ceremonial/Local Commemorative
- Historical Reflection
- An Teanga Bheo
- Youth & Imagination
- Cultural Expression
- Community Participation
- Global and Diaspora

The members raised the following issues:

- Compliment Richie and his staff on their work
- Good geographical spread of events
- Welcome the focus on children's involvement in 2016 events with the proclamation and flag being delivered to all national schools
- Who do people contact to get events included in programme
- Concert organised for St. Nathy's Hall, Ballaghaderreen on 17th February

- Important to create interest in all age groups and engage as many people as possible

Mr. Richie Farrell, County Librarian responded to the queries as follows:

- Strong working group established
- Aim to make programme as inclusive as possible
- Need to ensure information is verified and as accurate as possible
- Link on local authority website to programme
- Programme will be advertised on social media
- Submission made to the Local Authority for finance
- €20,000 enabling funding received
- Confident of ability to deliver the programme within the available resources

38.15. CORRESPONDENCE

1. Letter from Electric Ireland re: charges for Old Age Pensioners
2. Letter from Minister for Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation re: LEO support for small business
3. Letter from Minister for Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation re: financial support from LEO
4. Letter from Minister for Agriculture, Food and the Marine re: land drainage scheme

39.15. A.O.B.

New Civic HQ

Councillor Valerie Byrne queried when Roscommon County Council expect to move into new Civic Headquarters

Mr. John O'Rourke, A/Director of Services confirmed that handover of the building is scheduled for Friday, 6th November. Fit-out of furniture and I.T. equipment will take 3 weeks after this date. He said there had been some minor delays due to installation of lightwells in the building.

Wall at Greatmeadow

Councillor John Cummins commended the work done by FÁS workers in the Greatmeadow area of Boyle with the new wall, and requested that footpath works be commenced.

Mr. Bernard Murray, Senior Executive Engineer replied that it is proposed to commence soon, once men become available from other works.

Regional Road to Frenchpark

Councillor John Cummins requested if the grass verge will be removed and section resurfaced in 2015.

Mr. Bernard Murray, Senior Executive Engineer replied that it is intended to do this in the near future.

Cycleway – Rockingham to Boyle

Councillor John Cummins requested that an update on completed works to date be compiled and emailed to members.

Mr. Bernard Murray, Senior Executive Engineer confirmed that the cycleway project is being led by Greg O'Donnell, Senior Executive Engineer, Roads Section. Tenders for the boardwalk section have been received and final arrangements are in place to appoint a contractor.

R294 – Ballina Road

Councillor John Cummins requested an update on repaving works required outside Stewarts and Carty’s Garage.

Mr. Bernard Murray, Senior Executive Engineer confirmed that this work will be included in next year’s works programme subject to funding.

Verge Trimming

Councillor Rachel Doherty stated that verge trimming needs to be addressed at dangerous junctions and should be given priority seen as the roads programme is coming to an end.

Light Bulbs in Housing Estates

Councillor Rachel Doherty said that it is important that the public know to contact the Municipal District offices to get light bulbs replaced in housing estates.

Municipal District Meeting 21st December

Councillor Rachel Doherty requested that the meeting scheduled for 21st December for the Municipal District be rescheduled to earlier in December.

Mr. Martin Lydon, Head of Finance and Planning agreed to bring the issue to CPG for discussion.

This concluded the business of the meeting.

**The foregoing Minutes are
Confirmed and Signed:**

Meetings Administrator

Cathaoirleach

Countersigned