

Minutes of Municipal District of Stranorlar Meeting held on Tuesday 8th September 2015 in the Council Chamber, County House, Lifford, commencing at 11.00am.

Members Present:

Cllr. Frank McBrearty. (Cathaoirleach)

Cllr. Gary Doherty

Cllr. Patrick McGowan

Cllr. Gerry Crawford

Cllr. Liam Doherty

Cllr. Martin Harley.

Officials Present:

Joe Peoples, Director of Service, Senior Management Team

Patrick Mc Laughlin, Senior Ex. Officer, Housing Services

Garrett Doherty, A/Senior Executive Engineer, Roads & Transportation.

Paul Christy Sen. Executive Planner, Central Planning Unit.

Paddy Doherty, Divisional Manager, Community & Enterprise.

Martina Morris, Senior Staff Officer, Corporate Services.

64.00 Corporate Services.

64:01. Confirmation of Minutes of Municipal District of Stranorlar Meeting held on 29th June 2015.

On the proposal of Cllr. Gerry Crawford and seconded by Cllr. Martin Harley the Minutes of the Meeting held on 29th June 2015 were confirmed.

64:02. Confirmation of Minutes of Municipal District of Stranorlar Workshop Meeting held on 29th June 2015.

On the proposal of Cllr. Liam Doherty and seconded by Cllr. Martin Harley the Minutes of the Workshop Meeting held on 29th June 2015 were confirmed.

64:03. Confirmation of date and venue for next meeting.

Members confirmed that the next meeting of Stranorlar Municipal District would be held on *Tuesday 13th October 2015 @11.00am in the Regional Training Centre, Stranorlar.*

It was also agreed that a Workshop meeting would take place that day at 10.00 am prior to the Municipal District Meeting.

65.00 Housing Services.

65:01. Social Housing Reports.

Members noted the reports circulated with the Agenda and presented by Mr. Patrick Mc Laughlin, Senior Executive Officer, Housing.

While Members acknowledged, and were appreciative of, the attendance of Mr. Patrick Mc Laughlin, at the Meeting, they queried when the vacant position of Area Manager, Housing/ Corporate would be filled..

The members were assured by Mr. Joe Peoples that, while it was unlikely that anyone would be appointed to the position before the next Municipal District Meeting in October, there should be someone appointed before the December Meeting.

Members expressed their concern regarding the delay, and requested that, in future, if the Area Manager for Housing is not available to attend the meeting, then the Area Engineer should attend.

65:02. Housing Grants:

Members discussed the level of Housing Grants available to applicants to assist with their housing needs.

It was acknowledged that some people did not take up the offer of a grant when approved, as, they found that they were unable to fund the difference between the cost of the proposed works and the amount of grant approved from their own resources.

Patrick Mc Laughlin stated that the issue was currently being reviewed by the Housing S.P.C. and it seemed likely that the levels of grants would be increased. However, he pointed out that, if the level of grants were to increase, then it would probably mean that these monies would have to be funded from Revenue as the Dept only funded 80% of the grants payable and the Council have to fund the remaining 20% from their own resources.

65:03. Land Bank.

It was noted by the members that an advertisement was currently being run on the radio seeking suitable land for development in the Letterkenny Area.

The members queried if it was proposed to run such an advertisement for land in the Stranorlar Municipal Area.

In response they were advised that the Roads & Housing Capital Section are responsible for the acquisition of land, and that, the advertisement for land in the Letterkenny Area, was being made to address the shortage of suitable land for development in that Area.

The members expressed their concern about the availability of suitable land bank in the Stranorlar Area and requested a report on the existing land bank for the next meeting.

65:04. Misc.

Housing Assistance Payment Scheme (H.A.P.).

An update on the numbers availing of and the uptake of the HAP Scheme in the Stranorlar Municipal District was requested for the next meeting.

Vacant 1 bed Houses in Liscooley.

Members referred to 2 no vacant 1-bed houses in Liscooley, and queried what is now being proposed for these houses following on from the Departments rejection of the Councils previous proposal to amalgamate them together into one larger house.

Sale, of Dwellings.

Members, referring to discussions at previous meetings, requested that an update be provided for the next meeting in relation to potential sale of a number of dwellings where there was a low level of need / the cost of repairs was considered excessive.

66.00 Community, Enterprise & Cultural Services.

Members noted the content of the report circulated and presented by Mr. Paddy Doherty.

In reply to a suggestion that the Council should consider displaying a public notice on site, advertising the Councils contribution where the Council had provided funding for a particular project, Mr. Doherty indicated that this suggestion would be reviewed by Community, Enterprise and Cultural Services Dept.

66:01. Drumboe Walkway.

Members voiced their disappointment at the slow progress being made on the proposed walkway at Drumboe, and requested that a letter be sent to the E.T.B. expressing their concerns on the lack of progress on this issue.

66:02. Riverine & Riverlinks Projects.

Members requested that an update on the Riverine & Riverlinks projects be included in future reports for meetings of the Stranorlar Municipal District.

67.00 Environmental Services.

67:01. Irish Water.

In response to queries raised by the members, it was agreed that the Council should write to Irish Water and request the following information:

- To provide details of their full Capital Investment Programme for the Stranorlar Municipal District.
- To clarify the current position in relation to St. Johnston Sewage Plant and if the necessary Capital Funding has been committed, or is in place, to allow this project to proceed.
- To clarify the position in relation to works to the Water-main at Ard Mc Carron, Ballybofey.

67:02. Flooding

The members were advised that, despite having been written to a few times, the O.P.W. has failed to respond to the members requests to attend a meeting to discuss the issues of flooding and flood defences in the Stranorlar Municipal Area.

The members felt that, as it appeared this issue was not being taken seriously by the O.P.W. then, a letter should issue to the Minister advising him of the various attempts made by the Municipal District to have someone from the O.P.W. come and meet with them, and, to request that he intervene to ensure that they have the opportunity to discuss their concerns with the relevant body.

68.00 Roads & Transportation

Members noted the contents of the report circulated and presented by Mr. Garrett Doherty.

Members raised a number of issues for follow up including:

- The possible erection of a sign at Killygordon to indicate the turn-off to the Crossroads village .
- Crossroads - appropriate Stop signs to be erected at Milltown Bridge junction.
- Ard Mc Carron - seek to get section of roadway completed.
- Castlefin Bridge - provide a breakdown of what resources will be needed to finish the project and indicate when the project is likely to be completed.
- Carricknamana re-surfacing - will the water main be replaced at the same time.
- Taking in Charge - Members queried if the Stranorlar District had made any submissions to the SPC for taking in charge and suggested that, from now, 2 km of roadway in the Area be submitted every year for consideration.

68.01 - Funding

While Members acknowledged the good work done by the Roads staff this year with the amount of monies available, they expressed their concern at the continuing lack of funding available for Roads in the Stranorlar Area.

They expressed their disappointment that the problems in the Stranorlar Area were not getting the full recognition, they deserved, and felt that the Senior Management team in the Council and local T. D's need to push for more investment in roads in the Stranorlar Municipal District.

Members pointed out that, the only real solution to the problem is for more funding being made available to address the particular problems in the Stranorlar Area.

It was agreed by members that a letter should be sent to the Director of Services, Roads and the Chief Executive of the Council outlining their concerns regarding the state of the Roads in the Area and suggesting that the Director and the Chief Executive , attend a special meeting with the members of the

Stranorlar Municipal District to discuss their concerns and explore options to deal with the 'crisis'.

68.02. Bridges.

- Blackburn Bridge - Members welcomed the ongoing works at the bridge, but, suggested that signage should be erected to alert other road users, particularly along the Meenglass Rd, to the fact that lorries will be using the roads to transport stone from a local quarry to the bridge, as part of the ongoing repairs.
They also queried whether monies would be made available to repair this road when the works are complete.
They also sought clarification on the position re: payment for goods etc supplied by subcontractors on this job, and, the period of credit being sought for such payments by the main contractor.
- Logues Bridge - it was agreed by the Members that this project be prioritised for full design as this would be a major project for the Area.

69.00 Planning & Economic Development.

Members noted the content of the report circulated and presented by Mr. Paul Christy.

Members expressed their frustration at the rate of take-over of housing estates and also the slow progress being made in relation to the problems with Unfinished Estates in the Area.

There was a general feeling of dissatisfaction with the Council and Irish Water's perceived failure to fast-track dealing with multiple problems with Sewage Treatment plants in the Area.

It was felt that the future development of many of the towns/ villages in the Area is being hampered by the lack of proper infrastructure, while, at the same time ,Planning policy in general is driving more and more people into the towns and urban areas.

70.00 Notices of Motion.

70.01. - 1916 - Remembrance Garden.

The following motion was submitted and proposed by Cllr. Gary Doherty and seconded by Cllr. Liam Doherty.

"That this Municipal District establishes a 'Remembrance Garden' to commemorate 1916 in line with other local authorities and Municipalities throughout Ireland."

The members were informed that, the Gardens of Remembrance is a project by the Glór na Cásca initiative to ensure an enduring physical legacy following the centenary celebration of the 1916 Rising.

There are 4 different categories of gardens indicated in this initiative:

1. *7 Signatory Gardens of Remembrance.*
2. *Diaspora Gardens of Remembrance.*
3. *County Gardens of Remembrance.*
4. *Community Gardens of Remembrance - each Community garden to include;*
 - An engraved life-size typographical replica of the Proclamation.
 - Maintenance free flag pole with tricolor.
 - 7 trees that would represent the 7 signatories.

Cllr. G. Doherty clarified that it was *a Community Garden* that he was proposing for the Stranorlar Municipal Area.

The members agreed in principle with the Motion, as proposed, and agreed that it be put on the Agenda for the next Workshop Meeting for further discussion.

71.00 Members Written Questions.

71.01. The following question was submitted by Cllr. Liam Doherty.

'Which, department, in D.D.C. are liable for the up keep/maintenance of the lane ways that service the back entrances of houses in council estates?'

Cllr. Doherty was informed that under the Roads Act the roads department of Donegal County Council is responsible for the maintenance of 'Public Roads'. A Public Road is defined as *'a road over which a public right of way exists and the responsibility for the maintenance of which lies on a road authority'*.

In this regard Donegal County Council maintains a Roads Schedule detailing all of the Public Roads for which the Roads Dept. has responsibility for maintenance. Observation of this Roads Schedule will show that the vast majority of back lanes in council housing estates are not listed. Therefore maintenance of those back lanes not included on the Roads Schedule lies with the Housing Department.

71.02 The following question was submitted by Cllr. Liam Doherty.

What is the time scale of the taking over of the housing estates by D.C.C. that was agreed by full council earlier this year?

Cllr. Doherty was informed that there is currently a significant backlog of taking in charge applications for estates through out the County to be worked through by the planning authority which is a work in progress. The planning authority can not give a specific time-line for the taking in charge of these estates as there are varying site specific outstanding issues that need to be addressed. The planning authority are currently considering the taking in charge of an initial batch of estates which are considered satisfactorily completed, 5 of which are located in the Stranorlar MD. These are:

- Caisleain Court, Castlefin
- Admiran, Ballybofey
- Carrick Crescent, Ballybofey
- An Clairin, Killygordon
- Manor Court, Townparks, Convoy.

It is envisaged that public notices setting out the planning authorities intentions to take in charge these estates will be publicised in the local press within the next 2 weeks.

71.03 The following question was submitted by Cllr. Gary Doherty.

'What is the schedule for insulating existing housing stock in this MD?'

Cllr . Doherty was informed that under the Energy Efficiency Retrofitting Works Programme to date this year 54 houses have been completed in Croaghan

Heights, Lifford and 32 houses are due for completion on 18th September 2015 in Emmett Park, Castlefinn.

The prioritisation of older stock will form the basis of the continuation of the programme from now to the end of the year.

71.04. The following question was submitted by Cllr. Gary Doherty

'Can I have a progress report on my Motion to plenary council to establish a tourism committee in this MD'?

Cllr Doherty was informed that - as advised at the July Council meeting Donegal County Council working with its partner agencies with communities and with tourism providers places a very strong emphasis on tourism development and the marketing and promotion of County Donegal for tourism purposes. Tourism marketing and promotion is managed and co-ordinated by DCC through Donegal Tourism Limited. This is a collaborative platform which includes membership from Donegal County Council, Failte Ireland, Udaras na Gaeltachta, the Irish Hotels Federation, local tourism organisations and the tourism trade.

It is now proposed that a presentation be given at the next Municipal meeting to update Members on all tourism activities within the Municipal area and that regular updates be provided at future meetings.

71.05. The following question was submitted by Cllr. Gerry Crawford.

'How many "claims" under any heading have been lodged with Donegal County Council for the Stranorlar Municipal District since January 2014 to date'.

Cllr. Crawford was informed that a total of 46 Public Liability Claims have been lodged for Stranorlar Municipal District from 1st January 2014 to date.

71.06. The following question was submitted by Cllr. Gerry Crawford.

"What is the current arrangement for Road engineer staffing in this MD and which area of the MD are they assigned to?"

Cllr. Crawford was informed that the Municipal District is divided into three Road Service Supervisors Areas: **Drumkeen RSS, Castlefin RSS and Lifford RSS.**

Adrian Mc Cool , Area Engineer,
(Email: amccool@donegalcoco.ie)

Responsible for:

- the **Drumkeen RSS Area - West of the N13**

- the **Castlefinn RSS Area South of the N15.**

***Claire Mc Geever**, Area Engineer,
(Email: cmcgeever@donegalcoco.ie)

Responsible for:

- the **Drumkeen RSS Area – East of the N13,**
- the **Castlefinn RSS Area – North of the N15**
- the **entire Lifford RSS Area.**

***Note:**

Claire Mc Geever is off on Maternity Leave until the end of November her role is currently being fulfilled 3 Days per week (Mon., Tue., & Wed.) by:

Mark Gallagher,
Roads Central Services,
(Email: mark.gallagher@donegalcoco.ie)

71.07. The following question was submitted by Cllr. Gerry Crawford.

"What progress has been made in "numbers" in having carbon monoxide alarms fitted to council housing stock in this MD since Jan 14 to date?"

Cllr Crawford was informed that, Carbon Monoxide alarms have been fitted to 92 dwellings to date this year.

In line with existing policy, alarms will be fitted to any dwellings having works carried out in the future under the insulation programme or where vacant properties are being returned to productive use.

71.08. The following question was submitted by Cllr. Gerry Crawford.

' A number of houses have been advertised "for sale" in one lot in a estate in this MD where the council have houses -will the council consider purchase of same to reduce waiting list in the area?'

Cllr. Crawford was informed that the Stranorlar M.D. has received an "allocation" of three house purchases in 2015 and the identification of suitable properties to meet specific needs is presently underway. While any available properties can be considered, it is likely that this process will result in dwellings being acquired in different areas as opposed to all in the one estate.

An alternative option may be available to consider the acquisition of these dwellings by an Approved Housing Body under the Capital Advanced Leasing Facility Programme. This is dependent on there being a housing need for

dwelling in the area in question and there not already being an over-concentration of social housing units in the estate/area generally.

71.09. The following question was submitted by Cllr. Martin Harley.
'Could you supply me with the traffic count figures that were done this year at Liscooley on the N 15?'

Cllr Harley was informed that the Road Design Dept. carried out a traffic count on the N15 at Donoughmore School in Liscooley. The Metrocount tube system was used to carry out this survey and the counter was in place between 25th of May and 7th of June the Average Annual Daily Traffic (AADT) was recorded as 5437.

71.10 - The following question was submitted by Cllr. Martin Harley.
'Can you give me an update on Logues bridge on the tests that were done there and what the council feel is the best way forward to advance the needed works?'

Cllr. Harley was informed that a detailed structural analysis of Louges's Bridge has now been completed by the Road Design Bridge Team. In summary the report concludes that the bridge has enough structural capacity to carry loads of up to 3.0 tonnes. The initial recommendation of the report is therefore that the bridge may remain open to traffic in the short to medium term provided that height restriction barriers are maintained in place to prevent vehicles heavier than 3.0 tonnes from using the bridge. The Road Design Team is currently preparing an options report based on the structural analysis of the bridge. This report will be complete by year end and will detail what the available options are going forward.

This concluded the business of the Meeting.

Area Manager.
Municipal District of Stranorlar.

Cathaoirleach,
Municipal District of Stranorlar.