

Minutes of Municipal District of Stranorlar Meeting held on Tuesday 13th January 2015 in the Regional Training Centre, Stranorlar, commencing at 11.00am.

Members Present:

Cllr Gary Doherty (Cathaoirleach)

Cllr Martin Harley.

Cllr Patrick McGowan

Cllr Gerry Crawford

Cllr Liam Doherty

Officials Present:

Joe Peoples, Director of Service, Senior Management Team

Gerry Gilroy, Area Manager, Corporate & Housing Services

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

Paddy Doherty, Divisional Manager, Community & Enterprise,

Paul Christy, Senior Executive Planner

Damian Mc Dermott, Senior Executive Engineer, N.R.A.

Martina Morris, Senior Staff Officer, Corporate Services

Apologies:

Cllr. Frank McBrearty.

21.00 Corporate Services.

21.01. Votes of Sympathy.

Members passed a vote of sympathy on the passing of:

- **Mamie Gallen, Lismulladuff, Crossroads, Killygordon**, mother of Christine Lynch, Debtor's Management Section, Lifford.
- **Teresa Coyle, Brockagh, Cloghan**, mother of Francis Coyle, former Director of Services, Planning & Economic Development.

21.02. Confirmation of Minutes of Municipal District of Stranorlar meeting held on 1st December 2014.

On the proposal of Cllr Patrick McGowan and seconded by Cllr Martin Harley the minutes of the Meeting held on 1st December 2014 were confirmed.

21.03. Confirmation of Minutes of Municipal District of Stranorlar Workshop held on 1st December 2014.

On the proposal of Cllr Martin Harley and seconded by Cllr Patrick McGowan the minutes of the Workshop Meeting held on 1st December 2014 were confirmed.

21.04. Confirmation of date & Venue for next meeting.

Members confirmed that the next meeting of the Stranorlar Municipal District would be held on Tuesday 24th February 2015 at 11.00 pm in Lifford.

It was also agreed that a Workshop would take place that day at 9.30 am in Lifford.

22.00 Housing Services.

22.01. - Housing Reports.

Members noted the reports circulated with the Agenda and presented by the Area Manager.

Members agreed in principle, to the proposal put forward in the Workshop meeting that two long term vacant S.I. cottages, be offered for sale in order to test the market. Both cottages are categorised as 'Cost Excessive -Review options' on the Casual Vacancy list for the Stranorlar Municipal District.

The cottages proposed for sale are:

S.I. at Drumdoit, Castlefin.

S.I. at Roundknowes, Cloghan.

Members also referred to discussions at the earlier Workshop in relation to ASB. It was acknowledged that part of the problem can be influenced by perception and that it can take a very long time for an estate to lose a bad reputation. They

agreed that the Council should make use of both the media and social media to make tenants and perspective tenants aware that the Council is taking steps to address the problems of bullying and anti-social behaviour in Council housing schemes.

There was a consensus among Members that taking such matters to Court should only be a last resort. It was agreed additional resources were needed to deal with the many social issues and the active involvement from Tenant Liaison Officers, other Council Services, residents, local Community Groups, and other agencies such as the HSE and the Gardai, was required. Members confirmed their agreement that consideration be given to selecting 1 or 2 estates with the view to seeking the involvement of other groups / agencies to meet with the residents.

23.00 Community, Enterprise & Cultural Services.

23.01.

Members note the contents of the report circulated and presented by Mr. Paddy Doherty.

During the discussion Members confirmed their support for proposals in the Strabane / Lifford area under the Riverine Project. Members submitted that there was growing confidence in the area that funding for the project will be forthcoming and they wanted Donegal County Council to progress elements of the project within their area of responsibility.

It was noted that Members were to meet with Strabane Councillor's representing the 'Derg Ward' on the 24th February.

Members also highlighted the need to progress proposals in relation to the walkway in Drumboe.

24.00 Environmental Services.

24.01 Environmental Services.

Joe Peoples confirmed that a comprehensive written report would be available for the next meeting of the Municipal District, and, this report would include details of activities at the various Civic Amenity sites and updates on Litter Enforcement etc.

24.02. Littering.

Members submitted that the issue of 'fly-tipping' was getting out of hand and the public perception was that offenders just seem to be getting away with it. It was suggested that a better deterrent may be for convicted offenders to be 'named and shamed'.

During the discussion the sensitive issue of debris left behind in the aftermath of a traffic accident was raised. Members asked that there be a systematic follow up to ensure removal of all the debris, including vehicle parts, as soon as practicable.

Members also highlighted the problem of persons allowing their dogs to foul public pavements, walkways etc. and queried how many, or if, had been penalised for this. It was submitted that dog fouling was becoming a major issue which must be addressed but in addition to enforcement it was necessary to support responsible dog owners by providing special bins in towns and villages throughout the Municipal District.

24.03. Flood Defences.

Members highlighted issues such as silting, or obstructions in the rivers contributing to serious flooding.

In reply Gerry Gilroy confirmed that as previously agreed invitations would be issued to the O.P.W. and the Loughs Agency this week to meet with the Municipal District Members, and that it was intended that both groups would be requested to attend together.

24.04 - Issues for next meeting.

Members sought clarification for the next meeting in relation to the following issues;

- Proposed programme for the inspection of Septic Tanks.
- Liability for water charges where the supply is from a Group Water Schemes in cases where it has not been taken over by the Council.
- Assignment of engineer to address issues at Sessiagh Park in Castlefin.

25.00 Roads & Transportation.

25.01 - Road Works Programme.

Members welcomed Mr. Garrett Doherty, A/ Senior Executive Engineer to his first meeting of the Stranorlar Municipal District Committee.

Mr Doherty presented the comprehensive report circulated with the Agenda. Members were advised that a Draft Programme would be ready for Members consideration shortly. It was then agreed, subject to confirmation that this date also suited Cllr McBrearty, that a **Roads Workshop** meeting to consider the Draft Road Works Programme would be held on Wednesday, 28th January @10.00 p.m. in the Regional Training Centre, Stranorlar.

25.02. Bridges.

Members welcomed that Bridge No. 67 Ballindrait was to be replaced in 2015.

They also accepted the recommendation that the priority for funding from the Discretionary Maintenance Bridge Funding in 2015 be;

1. Gobnascale Bridge (No. 234.1)
2. Bridge No. 4162 at Cloghan School.

Members highlighted the urgency to fund the continuation of works at Castlefinn Bridge.

They also highlighted the need to progress the safety measures at Logues Bridge and complete the proposed structural assessment. Members requested that the results of the traffic count be made available for the next meeting.

25.03 Road Safety Measures.

Members noted the reports circulated in relation to a number of locations identified for further investigation / works in 2015. They expressed their serious concerns regarding the accuracy of the number of collisions reported at a number of locations and in particular at the 'Corcam bends' outside Stranorlar. The view was expressed that details of accidents were not being recorded accurately by the agencies concerned. It was agreed that this will be conveyed back through the DNRDO office.

Members also agreed to request an assessment of the junctions on the Letterkenny Road at Rossgeir - routes to Ballindrait and Cavan.

Following a short discussion Members confirmed their support for a standardised reduced speed limit to be imposed outside every school.

25.04 Roads Staff & Depots.

Members discussed the current level of frontline outdoor staff in the area which they considered to be insufficient. They asked that arrangements be introduced right away to extend the duration of the temporary contracts for seasonal workers and that those posts vacant as a result of retirements be filled with workers on permanent contracts.

Members also requested that consideration be given to developing a permanent Depot at Glenmore.

25.05 - Flooding/Drainage.

Members highlighted a number of locations where there was a problem with flooding which needed to be urgently addressed including the area behind the

Council's Roads Yard in Stranorlar, which backs on to Woodview Terrace and the road between Ringsend (Castlefin) and Dooneyloop.

Members sought clarification in relation to the Council's right to open drains and gullies along the roadside to alleviate flooding, and also the responsibilities of landowners.

Garrett Doherty confirmed the position as set out in the Roads Acts and undertook to have the locations identified inspected.

25.06 National Roads

Damian Mc Dermott attended to brief Members in relation the first phase of the N15 Blackburn Bridge Realignment project which is to commence this year. Tenders had been sought for the works which should be returned by February 2015. A decision will then be made regarding the award of the contract with hopefully, actual works starting around May 2015.

He confirmed that officials were pushing to get approval for funding of Phase II to be approved also.

Members welcomed the proposed works on the N15 at Blackburn Bridge.

A number of queries were raised in relation to the N14 National Primary road from Lifford Roundabout to Rossgier. Members had been advised that this pavement strengthening contract, a 2 km section, is to be designed and contract documents prepared during 2015 with a possible commencement of the contract the following year, subject to funding.

Members questioned why it would take a year to 'design' these works and when the proposed works at Ard Mc Carron would commence.

26.00 Planning & Economic Development.

26.01. Planning & Economic Development.

Paul Christy apologised for the absence of a written report but dealt with any questions raised.

27.00 Notice of Motions.

27.01 - Traffic Calming measures at Murlog School/ Church.

The following motion was submitted and proposed by Cllr Gerry Crawford and seconded by Cllr Patrick Mc Gowan.

"To enhance road safety at the location of the School and Church I propose that rumble strips or other effective traffic calming measures be put in place at Murlog School & Church"

Members were informed that, the existing speed limit on this section of road is 80kph there are three 'Advanced Warning' signs on each approach to the school/church, two 'Caution Children Crossing' and one 'School' Flashing Light sign. Following discussions with Donegal County Council's Road Safety Engineer the Stranorlar Municipal District (MD) Roads Office had been advised to firstly collect traffic data at this location (i.e.) traffic volumes and speed over a set period. This data will then be reviewed to determine if the existing speed limit and signage outlined above are being observed by road users. This traffic data review will then inform any future decision in relation to possible traffic calming measures and their potential effectiveness.

Cllr Crawford welcomed this reply and asked that the matter be addressed as quickly as possible.

28.00 Correspondence.

28.01 Approach from Habinteg Housing Association (Ireland) Ltd

Mr G Gilroy, Area Manager Housing & Corporate Services advised that correspondence had been received from Habinteg Housing Association (Ireland) Ltd, an Approved Housing Body (AHB), expressing their interest in acquiring a property in the ownership of the local authority, No. 300 Coneyburrow, Lifford, Members were advised that Habinteg Housing Association, who have a very successful housing project in Lifford which was developed in cooperation with Donegal County Council, are anxious to acquire and refurbish the property and allocate it to an approved applicant on the housing waiting list.

The Area Manager confirmed this property had been vacant for a considerable time, and because of it's current condition, there were no proposals to refurbish

and re-let it at this time. This house was categorised in the report on vacant houses as 'cost excessive- review options'.

It was recommended that the Council should consider disposal of this house subject to terms to be agreed between the parties and including the following terms;

- The house only to be used for social housing purposes.
- Ownership to return to the Council if the house is not substantially developed within 2 years, or longer period if so agreed by the Council.
- The disposal to be at market value.

Members expressed their agreement in principal for this proposal and agreed that negotiations to agree terms for the dispose of this house should proceed.

29.00 Members Written Questions.

29.01 The following question was submitted by Cllr. Gerry Crawford:

What is the delay in the National Roads Authority (NRA) carrying out works on damaged lighting on traffic calming islands on the N14 Lifford?

Cllr Crawford was informed that the NRA administers a nationwide contract in relation to maintenance and repair of all traffic calming installations on the National Primary and National Secondary roads network. Under this contract the NRA's agent carries out 4 scheduled maintenance visits to each traffic calming installation during the year as well as responding to emergency maintenance issues reported to them by Local Authorities. When the NRA receive a report of damage to a particular traffic calming installation they decide whether to classify the reported damage for repair as part of a routine scheduled maintenance visit or for immediate repair in the case of an emergency. The Stranorlar MD roads office has reported the damage outlined in this question to the NRA and they have decided that the required maintenance will be carried out during the next scheduled routine maintenance visit. The NRA is currently drawing up a schedule of routine maintenance visits for Donegal for the coming year and has agreed to provide the schedule dates as soon as they have them.

29.02. The following question was submitted by Cllr. Gerry Crawford:

In view of recent events and taken in addition to the large number of previous occasions when vehicles have left the road at Castletown / Moness / Lynch's Corner between Castletown School and the chip-bed at Drumenan, St Johnston will the Roads Section arrange a road safety engineer to carry out a safety audit on this road ?

Cllr Crawford was informed that the Stranorlar MD roads office is aware of a significant increase in the number of single vehicle accidents occurring on this stretch of regional road particularly during recent winter months. The section of road in question has a poor horizontal alignment with sharp radius bends. An initial desktop assessment of the road surface utilising road surface data available from the Map Road PMS system would indicate that the existing surface provides average to poor resistance to skidding. This lack of skid resistance coupled with a poor horizontal alignment is likely to be a significant contributory factor to the increase in single vehicles leaving this stretch of road.

The Straonorlar MD roads office is currently considering the available options for restoration of road surface skid resistance on this stretch of road under the available grant headings and within available budget constraints. Remediation of this stretch of road will be included in the proposed 2015 Road Works Programme for consideration by the members later this month.

This concluded the business of the meeting.

Area Manager
Municipal District of Stranorlar

Cathaoirleach
Municipal District of Stranorlar.