

22nd April, 2008

TO ALL MEMBERS OF DONEGAL COUNTY COUNCIL
--

The Meeting of Donegal County Council adjourned from Monday 14th April 2008, will be held on Monday 28th April, 2008 at 10.00am in the Council Chamber, Lifford, to deal with the following remaining items:-

Water Environment & Emergency Services

Item 8 (b) Section 85 Agreement

Question and Motions

Item 12

Item 16

Items 18-68

Please ensure that you bring the agenda previously distributed to the meeting.

E. Sweeney
Meetings Administrator

MINUTES OF ADJOURNED MEETING OF DONEGAL COUNTY
COUNCIL HELD IN THE COUNTY HOUSE, LIFFORD ON 28th April,
2008

C/174/08 MEMBERS PRESENT

Clrs. D. Alcorn, L. Blaney, A. Bonner, E. Bonner, C. Brogan, F. Conaghan, G. Crawford, R. Donaghey, M.T. Gallagher, J. Kelly, J. Kennedy, D. Larkin, N. McBride, I. McGarvey, E. McGonagle, P. McGowan, B. McGuinness, P. MacLochlainn, P. O'Dochartaigh, J.J. Reid and Terence Slowey.

C/175/08 APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from Clrs. Boyle, Byrne, Harte, McDaid, McDonald, McEniff, O'Neill and Pringle who were unable to attend the meeting.

Clr. Reid chaired the meeting in the absence of the Mayor who had to attend a prior engagement.

C/176/08 OFFICIALS IN ATTENDANCE

Mr. Sean Sheridan, Director Corporate Services, Mr. Chris Lyons, Director Water, Environment and Emergency Services, Mr. John McLaughlin, Director Roads and Transportation, Mr. Michael Heaney, Director Community, Culture and Enterprise, Mr. Bobby McMEnamin, A/Chief Fire Officer, Mr. Eunan Sweeney, Meetings Administrator, Ms. Anne Marie Crawford, Staff Officer, Corporate Services.

C/177/08 SECTION 85 AGREEMENT WITH MAYO COUNTY COUNCIL

Mr. Sean Sheridan reminded members that they had requested additional information in relation to this item which had been deferred from the adjourned Council Meeting on 14th April, 2008.

Mr. Eunan Sweeney noted that the matter dated back to 1993/1994 and that various reports had been presented to members as part of the annual budgetary process. He clarified that the Section 85 Agreement was required to formalise the arrangements put in place under CAMP

WEST. He proceeded to explain the background of CAMP WEST and the reasons for its introduction.

On the proposal of Clr. Donaghey, seconded by Clr. Kelly, it was resolved that Donegal County Council enter into arrangements with Mayo County Council, whereby Mayo County Council shall perform on behalf of Donegal County Council those of its functions as Fire Authority for the County of Donegal, as set out in the agreement, pursuant to Section 85 of the Local Government Act, 2001.

C/178/08 BALLYMORE NATIONAL SCHOOL AND BALLYMORE CHURCH.

Members agreed to deal with Clr. O'Dochartaigh's motion at this juncture, as he had to leave to attend another engagement.

On the proposal of Clr. O'Dochartaigh, seconded by Clr. McGarvey, the following motion was adopted:-

“That Donegal County Council will address the safety concerns that exist at Ballymore National School and Ballymore Church so that people can exit the N56 on the school and church grounds with a reasonable degree of safety.”

Members were informed that:-

“An on site meeting took place last week with the local Glenties Area Roads Service and Mr. Stephen Lambert, S.E.E., NRA Safety Engineer. A number of options were identified and are currently being explored. When the options are further developed the elected members will be informed and an application compiled for funding.”

Clr. O'Dochartaigh called for the introduction of interim measures to slow down traffic on either side of the school so as to allow people enter the school and church grounds in safety. He outlined the necessity of having proper signage to arm the public of the damages involved.

It was agreed that the Road Safety Officer would provide an update on the matter at the next appropriate Electoral Area Meeting.

Mr. John McLaughlin affirmed that proposals in relation to safety measures for all schools throughout the county would be brought to members for prioritisation at electoral area level.

C/179/08 SIGNAGE AT DERRY CITY AIRPORT

On the proposal of Clr. Kelly, seconded by Clr. McGowan, the following motion was adopted:-

“That this County Council, in light of the money which it allocates annually to the City of Derry Airport, request that the Airport Authority erect a sign at the Airport exit which clearly shows the direction and mileage for County Donegal (Dun na nGall) and that a space be requested within the terminal itself upon which Donegal County Council could advertise.”

Members were informed that:-

“Donegal County Council does not currently provide funding from its annual revenue budget to the City of Derry Airport. However, a decision taken by the members in April, 2006 agreed that to facilitate the completion of work by the North West Air Access Consortium in supporting the development of the City of Derry Airport as a hub for tourism and economic development for North West Region, to consider the provision of co-funding to a maximum amount of €70,000 to co-fund a Special EU Programmes grant aimed at marketing and route development activities.

This matter has only recently been concluded (grant offer being prepared by SEUPB in February 2008) and it appears at his point in time that the actual level of commitment required will be somewhat less than that originally committed to by the Council. Further details in relation to this will be brought to the Council as part of a full report to on the City of Derry Airport at the June General Purposes Committee Meeting.

Contact with management at the City of Derry Airport is ongoing through the North West Air Access Consortium and the issues raised in the motion will be raised in this context with the request that direction and mileage signage be

assessed. Agreement would need to be reached with the Roads Service, Northern Ireland with regard to the proposal.

It is understood that there is Donegal visitor information available at the information desk at the City of Derry Airport at present including accommodation guide and any literature from Donegal that they are requested to display. It is proposed on foot of this motion that Failte Ireland North West will be engaged with to request that they proactively and systematically put in place advertising material to support the advertising of various tourism product, accommodation and attractions throughout County Donegal to facilitate visitors who are landing at the City of Derry Airport on an ongoing basis.”

It was acknowledged that signage at the airport needed to be updated with members calling on the Airport Authority to provide a map of the entire county and not just the Inishowen Peninsula. Calls were also made for more comprehensive access for taxis at the airport.

Concern was also expressed that Donegal County Council representation on the City of Derry Airport Committee was not being taken seriously and that it amounted to nothing more than a token gesture.

Given the level of funding currently provided by both the Irish Government and Donegal County Council, it was agreed that there was an urgent need to assess the level of service provided by the Airport Authority and clarity was also requested in relation to the future of the airport, the development of the runway and future air access plans at the location.

Members were informed that a comprehensive report on the matter would be provided at the June General Purposes Committee.

C/180/08

TOWN PLANS FOR HERITAGE TOWNS

On the proposal of Clr. Slowey, seconded by Clr. McGarvey, the following motion was adopted:-

“That Donegal County Council put in place with immediate effect the protocols and procedures to ensure that a Town Plan is enacted for the Heritage Town of Ardara and other Heritage Towns across the county.”

Members were informed that:-

“Members of the County Council agreed a Local Area Planning Programme for each electoral area in 2004. Ardara is at No. 7, on the Glenties priority list. I am currently reviewing the whole approach to Local Area Plans in the county and it is my intention to prepare on a pilot basis, at least on Electoral Area Local Plan, during this year, which will include some of our Heritage Towns. Thereafter, each area in the county will then be subject to a comprehensive programme of Local Area Plans, so that there is a consistent planning policy base at a localised level to guide and promote development opportunities.”

It was noted that the Director of Planning and Economic Development would provide a report on the enactment of Town Plans for Heritage Towns in due course.

Mr. Michael Heaney, in response to members queries, advised that Ballybofey, Stranorlar and Lifford had been designated Heritage Towns for the purposes of the HEART Project.”

C/181/08

MATERIALS USED DURING ROADWORKS

On the proposal of Clr. Alcorn, seconded by Clr. McGowan, the following motion was adopted:-

“That this Council discuss the type and quality of materials used during roadworks construction and repair work.”

Members were informed that:-

“The Roads Service is available to discuss any aspect of roadworks including material type used, construction methods used, specification for the various materials, cost of material/plant/labour, maintenance techniques and quality of materials.

Generally speaking with regard to materials, the Council operate a system of tendering to department specifications. The Council also operate a testing laboratory which samples and test certain materials.

There is a wide variety of materials and techniques available for roadworks and the County Council currently use the

most appropriate based on cost and prevailing circumstances in each area.”

Members requested that :-

1. A senior person in the Roads Directorate answer members queries in relation to the type and quality of materials used for road repair.
2. Clarity be provided in relation to the current policy of banking roadsides under the Road Strengthening Programme.
3. A Workshop be held to discuss current methods and materials used in road repairs.
4. An update be provided in relation to the ongoing co-operation between the Roads and Planning Directorate on drainage issues.

Clr. Conaghan queried whether or not there had been any progress on his motion, agreed during the budgetary process, to have pothole repair works allocated to private contractors, on an experimental basis.

Mr. John McLaughlin reminded members that the surface dressing of roads was weather related. Ideally, he noted, that asphalt surfacing was the ideal solution but was dependent on overall costing.

He agreed to include the range of issues raised by members at the next Roads Workshop.

C/182/08 USE OF TURBINES

On the proposal of Clr. Gallagher, seconded by Clr. McGarvey, the following motion was adopted:-

“That this Council meet with interested parties with an interest in renewable hydro energy to investigate the possibility of using turbines on this Council’s water resources, to create energy, to return to the grid, that in turn would create revenue hence relieving costs on the Council and rate payers.”

Members were informed that:-

“The Council has, in recent years, facilitated a small private hydro electric generation scheme in Killybegs using water from the Council’s Dam. We are available to meet any interested party regarding a specific scheme proposal on request.

The Community and Enterprise Service recently organised a successful workshop/conference on precisely this issue.”

Mr. Chris Lyons outlined the need for Donegal County Council to face up to the challenges involved. This, he advised could be progressed with the assistance of the Energy Conservation Development Officer.

C/183/08 PRIORITISING COUNTY WIDE LIST OF NON-NATIONAL ROADS

On the proposal of Clr. Conaghan, seconded by Clr. Donaghey, the following motion was adopted:-

“That this Council discuss the prioritising of the county wide list of non-national roads submitted to the Department for funding given that some roads agreed at Electoral Areas have been omitted from the county wide list without explanation.”

Members were informed that:-

“In August 2007, the DOEHLG requested that a county wide list of Roads be submitted for a new 3 year programme based on an annual allocation of €15,244,000 – same as 2007.

Each Electoral Area was then requested to submit prioritised lists of roads for their respective areas based on a maximum figure per year for their Area.

The breakdown between electoral areas generally follows road lengths. In addition, consideration was given to the population from the SAPS (Small Area Population Statistics) to help reflect the weighting of traffic on the roads. This resulted in Letterkenny showing a greater need for strengthening grants. This is also consistent with the conditions of roads around Letterkenny and what has been experienced over the past number of years on road

maintenance monies where it has consistently been shown that Letterkenny cannot keep up with the demand for road maintenance funds. While Letterkenny will benefit from the extra strengthening monies in 2008, the impact on other Electoral Areas will be less than one percent of the overall grant.

The submission from Inishowen did not initially include for the Community Assisted Schemes or cost of IRI surveys and an adjustment was made to allow for this. The amounts included for Community Assisted (€38,207) and IRI surveys (€10,000) totalled €48,207.

Overall, this resulted in €3,659,000 being allocated to Inishowen Electoral Area in 2008. However, this is expected to balance out over the next 2 years based on the submission sent to DOEHLG.”

A lengthy debate ensued with Clr. Conaghan requesting further clarification on who removed the Brae Road and Carroghill Road from the countywide list of Non-National Roads. He also queried the non-inclusion of the Kilderry Road. He confirmed each year members made decisions at electoral area level and these inevitably seemed to change as soon as they reached Lifford.

Referring to the reply provided by the Director, he asked for greater clarity on the changes made in respect of the small area population statistics. He advised that members needed to be told if money was being diverted from their respective electoral areas.

A number of members contended that the role of the elected members in the decision making process was effectively being eroded.

It was acknowledged that a varying range of selection criteria for L.I.S. monies was being used across the electoral areas and that, in the long run, this was not an effective method for running the scheme.

Letterkenny Electoral Area members pointed out that the strengthening of roads in the Letterkenny Electoral Area would benefit the county as a whole.

Mr. John McLaughlin advised that there were two options in relation to the situation in the Inishowen Electoral Area:-

1. To reverse the decision or
2. To move forward with the current listing

It was agreed that the matter be discussed further at the next scheduled meeting of the Inishowen Electoral Area Workshop.

Mr. McLaughlin agreed to provide Clr. Crawford with an update on the funding of works at the Ballyholey Junction.

C/184/08

DEVELOPMENT OF RAIL NETWORK

The motion was moved on the proposal of Clr. MacLochlainn, seconded by Clr. McGowan:-

“That Donegal County Council seek to employ a dedicated employee/officer to promote the development of a rail network linking Derry to Letterkenny and Sligo and that the Council also convene an implementation committee of elected Council members, Oireachtas members and other relevant stakeholders to oversee plans for rail links within Donegal and connecting Donegal to existing Island wide rails links.”

Members were informed that:-

“A small budget of €10,000 has been allocated in 2008 to advance rail projects in county Donegal on foot of a recommendation of the Roads SPC in late 2007 to seek funding of €40,000 for a dedicated staff member. A number of introductory presentations have been made by staff from the Roads and Transportation Directorate at recent SPC Meetings. It will not be possible to have a dedicated member of staff working full time on rail in the current year given the small budget. However, several members of staff have agreed to work part-time on the project in the first instance. Part of their brief is to seek funding from various sources to advance the project. Should they prove successful in obtaining additional funding we can return to the issue of having a full time dedicated member of staff on the project.”

Clr. MacLochlainn called on Donegal County Council to lead the way in relation to the provision of rail structure for access to areas of lesser population.

It was agreed that Mr. Michael Heaney should liaise with the County Development Board and other relevant agencies in relation to funding options. It was acknowledged that cross-border funding options needed to be explored also.

On the proposal of Clr. MacLochlainn, seconded by Clr. McGowan, it was agreed to amend the motion to read as follows:-

“That Donegal County Council seek to employ a dedicated employee/officer to promote the development of a rail network linking Derry to Letterkenny and Sligo and that the Council also convene a cross-border implementation committee of elected council members, Oireachtas members and Assembly members and other relevant stakeholders to oversee plans for rail links within Donegal and connecting Donegal to existing Island wide rail links.”

The motion as amended, was adopted.

Clr. McGowan advised that the North West Region Cross Border Group should also be consulted in relation to the matter.

C/185/08 ADJOURNMENT OF MEETING

On the proposal of Clr. Conaghan, seconded by Clr. Crawford, it was resolved to adjourn the meeting until 1.45 to allow members avail of lunch.

C/186/08 CLONMANY TUG O' WAR TEAM

On the proposal of Clr. McGonagle, seconded by Clr. McGuinness, the following motion was adopted:-

“That this Council give funding to the Clonmany Tug O' War Team who won a gold medal in the World Championship.”

Members were informed that:-

“It is suggested that the Clonmany Tug O’ War prepare an outline proposal for spend so as to provide guidance to the Directorate regarding potential fund sources available for the development of the club. The Inishowen Electoral Area is in the process of preparing spend for the Development Fund Initiative 2008 and consideration could be given in this context. Proposals should be submitted by 04th March.”

Mr. Michael Heaney advised that a specific policy for dealing with such requests was nearing completion and the matter could be dealt with in the short-term through the Members Development Fund.

C/187/08 DRUGS UNIT IN COUNTY DONEGAL

On the proposal of Clr. Donaghey, seconded by Clr. A. Bonner, the following motion was adopted:-

“That Donegal County Council write to both the Minister for Justice and the Garda Commissioner urging them to set up a full time Dog Drugs Unit in County Donegal.”

Members were informed that:-

“The Community, Culture and Enterprise Directorate can arrange for a letter to be sent to both the Minister for Justice and the Garda Commissioner urging them to set up a full time Dog Drugs Unit in County Donegal. The issue can also be raised through the County Development Board and the pilot Joint Policing Committee.”

Clr. Donaghey asked that a letter outlining the need for a full time Dogs Drug Unit be forwarded to both the County Development Board and the Joint Policing Committee. She also asked that correspondence be forwarded to the Chief Superintendent and the Minister for Justice enquiring as to when the countywide Garda Liaison Committee would be set up.

C/188/08 RATES EXEMPTION FOR SMALL SHOPS/RETAIL OUTLETS

On the proposal of Clr. McGuinness, seconded by Clr. MacLochlainn, the following motion was adopted:-

“That this Council encourage the return of the small shops/retail outlets by exempting them from rates.”

Members were informed that:-

“Rates or a charge on property valuations originated in the 19th Century when all property with certain exceptions was valued based on an annual letting value. In this jurisdiction, rates on domestic property were abolished in 1977 – Government of the day introduced the rate support grant to local authorities in lieu – and, in 1982 rates on agricultural lands and buildings were deemed unconstitutional and were subsequently abolished.

This left only commercial premises of various size and in various areas of economic activity liable for commercial rates levied by the Local Authority on the basis of a net effective valuation.

The Council cannot exempt from Rates businesses/organisations/individuals who have a commercial valuation determined independently under existing law. What we attempt to do at all times is to treat each case on its individual merits and to avoid hardship where possible through allowing Ratepayers to pay in instalments as well as examination of audited accounts even though valuation is not based on turnover. Earlier in today’s agenda you will have noted the report on Irrecoverable Rates for 2007 and within that you will have noted ‘strike offs’ for hardship, which would have been adjudicated on a case-by-case basis.

There is currently no direct compensation for such income foregone and to widen it further by a blanket exemption for certain shops and other retail outlets would have implications for council funding of its day to day operations. In any event as noted earlier the Council must levy a Rate Demand on all properties in commercial usage

Other Comments

The rate support grant up to about 1983 or so compensated the Local Authorities for loss of rate income. In the 1983 Local Government (Financial Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1983, the concept of Domestic Service Charges was

introduced against the background of national financial difficulties at the time. Local Authorities were at liberty to levy service charges – Water, Sewerage, etc. This Council introduced charges for Water Services, which continued until their abolition in 1996, with effect from 1st January 1997.

The Rate Support Grant evolved over time and from 1st January 1999 it was called the Local Government Fund Grant.

Whether this Fund and the level of allocation to Donegal County Council (2008 €44.098m) adequately compensates the Council for Commercial Rates and Service Charges foregone as well as meet the needs of service provision is a moot point and indeed is something which the Executive through the CCMA has been endeavouring to progress with the Department of the Environment, Heritage & Local Government over the past few years.

The following tabulations sets out some key data for Gross Revenue Expenditure, Local Government Fund Allocation, Commercial Rate Income (Gross and Net), Commercial Rates Multiplier and Net Effective Valuation for the period 2001 - 2008 inclusive.

<i>Year</i>	<i>Budget Revenue Expenditure</i> €m	<i>Income Local Gov. Fund</i> €m	<i>Income Gross Rates</i> €m	<i>Irrecoverable Rates</i> €m	<i>Income (Net) Rates</i> €m	<i>Multiplier</i>	<i>N.E.V.*</i> €
2001	87.144	22.800	11.135	0.508	10.627	55.52	218,387
2002	103.172	24.198	12.462	0.635	11.827	58.30	234,902
2003	113.430	26.160	14.641	0.650	13.991	61.51	240,324
2004	124.552	32.356	15.074	1.100	13.974	64.59	231,655
2005	136.543	35.733	16.285	0.940	15.345	67.82	243,064
2006	150.162	38.547	17.867	1.196	16.671	69.85	259,367
2007	167.353	41.557	19.067	2.000	17.067	72.29	266,241
2008	178.945	44.098	20.793	2.091	18.702	74.46	274,739
%							

Change 2008 over 2001	105.34%	93.41%	86.74%	311.61%	75.99%	34.11%	25.9%
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Key N.E.V. = Net Effective Valuation

*On 1st January 2004 - €21,345.26 of Net Effective Valuation was transferred to Letterkenny Town Council on a Revenue Neutral basis at that time.

A further tabulation of 3772 Rateable Properties within Donegal County Council shows the following as of 27th March 2008.

<u>Valuation Range</u>	<u>No. of Properties</u>
Under €25 Valuation	1985
Under €38 “	482
Under €3.50 “	557
Over €3.50 “	748

Some key pointers in the context of this motion from the above tables are:-

1. The difficulties faced by this Council in relatively low buoyancy Rate base. The % increase in N.E.V. works out at 25.9% over an 8-year period.
2. The number of properties under €38 Valuation stands at 2467 or 65% of all rateable properties
3. The rise in irrecoverable rates over this timeframe much of it arising from specific difficulties in the Gweedore Industrial Estate, Killybegs Fishing Industry and their impacts on local economic activity generally. I refer to the report earlier on today's agenda on 2007 irrecoverable rates. There is no doubt that with the preponderance of low valuations as noted above under (2) that there is quite a significant level of closures and partial closures each year due to perhaps economic and indeed wider societal changes in consumer behaviour for whatever reason.

4. Donegal County Council has adopted, over the 8-year period on average reasonable levels of increases in the Rate Multiplier.

Donegal County Council in 2008 will seek to progress the issue of obtaining increased Government Funding for General Purposes in 2009 and in future years as agreed following Adoption of the Budget for 2008 to minimise cost impacts on rateable customers under existing law in the County.”

Clr. MacLochlainn requested that correspondence outlining the necessity of exempting small shops/retail outlets from rates be forwarded to the Minister for Finance and the Minister for the Environment, Heritage and Local Government.

A lengthy debate ensued with members advocating the setting up of a “help mechanism” for new and fledgling businesses.

Mr. Sean Sheridan acknowledged members concerns but advised that Donegal County Council had no option but to levy rates. As the Head of Finance had previously indicated, a sympathetic view was taken in relation to individual cases. Credence would be given, he advised, to members views in the forthcoming submission to the Commission on Taxation currently being considered by the Finance Directorate and the Corporate Policy Group.

Mr. Aidan McNicholas, in response to members’ queries, advised that it was not possible to rate moveable properties.

C/189/08

BUSINESS PARK IN BALLYBOFEY/STRANORLAR

On the proposal of Clr. Reid, seconded by Clr. Slowey, the following motion was adopted:-

“That the Council consider investing a similar amount of funding towards a Business Park in Ballybofey/Stranorlar area in lieu of a Public Services Office if the electoral areas are redrawn to include Lifford in the Stranorlar Electoral Area.”

Members were informed that:-

“The members will be aware that it has been the intention of the Council to complete its decentralisation programme with the provision of a 6th electoral area office at Stranorlar and the completion of Headquarters Phase II refurbishment at Lifford. The HSE had agreed to lead with the procurement of the Stranorlar Public Services Centre. However, negotiations between the HSE and the Butt Hall Committee in relation to use of a site adjacent to the car park remains unresolved and it is now looking more likely that agreement will not be reached.

In the event that the HSE is unable to progress the procurement, the Council could consider taking the lead role for the procurement of a PSC (or Outreach Centre, in the event that the Electoral Area boundaries are redrawn to include Stranorlar with Lifford). The progress which can be made on the procurement of the Stranorlar Public Services Centre will be primarily influenced by the Council’s ability to put a funding package together. This funding package will require the approval of the elected members and the Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government (DOEHLG). The cost of the Council’s Electoral Area brief is currently estimated at circa €5.8m. In addition, the estimated cost of the proposed library is estimated at €1.6m. The capital cost of libraries is normally funded by the DOEHLG to a maximum of 75% of the cost. The balance, circa €6.5m will require to be funded from the Council’s own resources. Note: Department approval for the library is awaited.

One procurement option, which is considered to have some merit, is to look at the possibility of offices being provided by a Public Private Partnership arrangement, which utilises some Council owned assets in the Ballybofey/Stranorlar region as collateral/part collateral for procuring office accommodation.

In the event that members no longer wish the Council to pursue the procurement of a Stranorlar PSC/Outreach Centre, alternative proposals can be worked up for servicing the Stranorlar/Ballybofey area.”

The following questions and replies were noted:-

C/189/A1/08 The following question was submitted by Clr. Harte:-

"When will the Diamond area and approach road into Raphoe be resurfaced as the situation is unacceptable at present?"

Clr. Harte was informed that:-

"The Diamond Area of Raphoe is one of the Non National Roads Schemes to be funded from 2008 - 2010 Restoration Improvement Grants. Due to the serious deterioration of the surface in this Area arrangements are being made to have this work carried out as a first priority this year."

C/189/A2/08 The following question was submitted by Clr. Brogan:-

"When will design be complete on proposed road from Ballyraine to Dry Arch as funding for same is now in place?"

Clr. Brogan was informed that:-

"Some funding is in place to advance this design in the current year. It is expected that we will get a route selected. According to the NRA, a business case will have to be made for the project and submitted to the NRA for approval before the project will be considered for further funding. This will be followed up using the Department of Finance guidelines."

C/189/A3/08 The following question was submitted by Clr. Brogan:-

"When will works start on proposed third lane from Ballyraine to Port Bridge as agreed by both Councils?"

Clr. Brogan was informed that:-

"A grant has been received in the current year from the NRA to undertake Design Work on various pavement projects on the National Secondary Routes. It is intended to use some of

this grant to advance the design of this project. This is subject to the approval of the NRA. Although sought, no specific grant was made for construction of this job in 2008.”

C/189/A4/08 The following question was submitted by Clr. Larkin:-

"Will the Council call on the Standing Orders Committee to meet to look at the functions of our Council Meetings and Protocols etc."

Clr. Larkin was informed that:-

“ working group of members and officials is currently reviewing these matters and will report through the Corporate Policy Group in due course.”

C/189/A5/08 The following question was submitted by Clr. Larkin:-

"Has there been any update on GIF for Letterkenny?"

Clr. Larkin was informed that:-

“he Council still awaits a decision in this case. Indications are that a decision should be made over the next few weeks.”

C/189/A6/08 The following question was submitted by Clr. McEniff:-

"Why is the Carrickboy area excluded from the Ballyshannon Sewerage Scheme contract and what are the necessary steps to have it included?"

Clr. McEniff was informed that:-

“he houses in question are 6 dwellings located at Carrickboy, Ballyshannon, on the southern fringe of the Ballyshannon sewerage network. The network has already been extended in this area as far as can be economically justified.

An additional pumping station would be required to connect these houses to the main sewers. The cost of providing a pumping station, rising main, and collection network is in the order of €100k, giving a unit cost per dwelling of €16k

which exceeds the limit of funding deemed economic by the Department which is €10k as per circular letter L7/06.”

C/189/A7/08 The following question was submitted by Clr. McEniff:-

"Could I please have an up to date report regarding the application to the Department of Environment for separate Fire Stations for Ballyshannon and Bundoran?"

Clr. McEniff was informed that:-

“A report on this matter is included in the Manager's Report for the Council meeting.”

C/189/A8/08 The following question was submitted by Clr. O’Neill:-

"Will this Council make available the necessary funding to provide a new sewerage pumping station at Carrickboy, Ballyshannon for the established houses that are inside the town bondary but have been omitted from the current Capital Scheme that is under construction?"

Clr. O’Neill was informed that:-

“The houses in question are 6 dwellings located at Carrickboy, Ballyshannon, on the southern fringe of the Ballyshannon sewerage network. The network has already been extended in this area as far as can be economically justified.

An additional pumping station would be required to connect these houses to the main sewers. The cost of providing a pumping station, rising main, and collection network is in the order of €100k, giving a unit cost per dwelling of €16k which exceeds the limit of funding deemed economic by the Department which is €10k as per circular letter L7/06.”

C/189/A9/08 The following question was submitted by Clr. O’Neill:-

"Will Donegal County Council proceed with the erection of the proposed statue of Rory Gallagher in Ballyshannon, as agreed at a recent meeting of Donegal County Council?"

Clr. O'Neill was informed that:-

“A working group of relevant staff has been established to review all issues associated with this proposal. It is intended to convene a review meeting of this group in the next number of weeks with a view to identifying the key actions now required to progress the proposal further.”

C/189/A10/08 The following question was submitted by Clr. McGarvey:-

"What is the present intention for the disused reservoir at Breaghy, Ramelton and could the Local Development Group acquire it as an amenity for the area?"

Clr. McGarvey was informed that:-

“The old dam, water treatment works and reservoir at Ramelton, usually referred to as the Breaghy waterworks, date back to the 1880's and have been not been used since the 1990's. The site was considered as a candidate site for a new reservoir to serve Ramelton. Early indications are that it may not be suitable as it is at too low a level and due to difficulty in routing pipework from both Milford and Letterkenny networks on the site. No decision has been made about alternative uses, but if it is of no use to the water supply, alternative future uses of the site may be considered in the context of the Council's overall landbank.

The Council would be willing to consider any specific proposal put forward by any interested group in relation to the future utilisation of this facility.”

C/189/A11/08 The following question was submitted by Clr. McGarvey:-

"What is the result of the traffic survey for Ramelton?"

Clr. McGarvey was informed that:-

“Various options to improve traffic management in Ramelton are being considered by the Road Design Forward Planning Team in conjunction with the Roads Area staff. A report detailing the various options will be prepared and

presented to the Milford Electoral Area Committee in Quarter 3 2008.”

C/189/A12/08 The following question was submitted by Clr. Reid:-

"Could we have an up to date report on the final plans for Brogan's field, Stranorlar?"

Clr. Reid was informed that:-

“The Regional Training Centre and Civic Amenity Centre are completed and operating very successfully. Work is underway on the construction of the new Civil Defence Headquarters.

The The Council has completed the exchange of land with Ballybofey & Stranorlar Mart to facilitate the development of the new Finn Harps stadium. Negotiations are at an advanced stage, between the Council and a number of parties, regarding the Stadium lands and development of the facilities.

The Council has decided to develop an all weather pitch on the lands and this will be progressed when the stadium negotiations are completed. Any surplus land south of the old railway will be used for sport and recreational activities.

The Council has agreed to allocate a site along Railway Road for the new Emterprise Centre.”

C/189/A13/08 The following question was submitted by Clr. Reid:-

"The residents of Crossroads/Killygordon are being told that they cannot connect into the new public services when it is built. How many years will it take to complete this work-1-5, 5-10, 10-20 yrs, how do the Council intend to treat the sewerage in the interim?"

Clr. Reid was informed that:-

“Substantial work was completed at the Killygordon Wastewater Treatment in 2006 in partnership with a private developer which resulted in significant improvements to the

existing wastewater treatment infrastructure on the Killygordon side of the River Finn. Further wastewater treatment capacity and new transfer infrastructure between Crossroads and Killygordon may be provided in conjunction with and in parallel with further significant developments on the Crossroads side of the River Finn but this will be dependent on such significant developments proceeding. It is not possible to give a timeframe as the works will be developer led. No individual or developer is being told that they cannot connect to the existing or proposed infrastructure but connection will of course be subject to the normal application procedure and payment of the appropriate charges.”

C/189/A14/08 The following question was submitted by Clr. Slowey:-

"When will the new lighting programme be drawn up and what is the timescale for its implementation"?

Clr. Slowey was informed that:-

“Meetings have been arranged with ESB personnel for the beginning of April. It is anticipated that a programme and an implementation timescale will be agreed at these meetings. It is expected that lights will be installed in two towns in each electoral area to get the programme of installation kicked-off and this then will be followed by further towns.
VI.”

C/189/A15/08 The following question was submitted by Clr. O’Dochartaigh:-

"When will Donegal County Council commence dredging operations at Magheroarty Pier?"

Clr. O’Dochartaigh was informed that:-

“It is expected that dredging operations will commence in early April 2008 subject to the relevant permits being granted by the Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food.”

C/189/A16/08 The following question was submitted by

Clr. O'Dochartaigh:-

"When will Donegal County Council advertise for Harbour Masters for the small ports in the county?"

Clr. O'Dochartaigh was informed that:-

"It is intended that bye-laws for a number of harbours in County Donegal will be adopted in the current year. The question of Harbour Master provision can be considered in the Budget for 2009."

C/189/A17/08 The following question was submitted by Clr. Byrne:-

"Can this Council include the R230 from Glencolumbkille to Ardara in the Regional Signage Programme?"

Clr. Byrne was informed that:-

"The R230 has been included in the final phase (Phase 6) of the Regional Road Signage Scheme. This phase deals with any snagging issues and includes Phases 1 & 2 which were designed and erected prior to the enactment of the Gaeltacht Placenames Order and Official Languages Act. It is envisaged that the design and procurement of Phase 6 will be complete by July/August 2008."

C/189/A18/08 The following question was submitted by Clr. Byrne:-

"Can this Council make an application to Roinn na Gaeltachta for co-funding to construct a footpath to Noamh Cartha's National School, Kilcar from the village to Kilcar?"

Clr. Byrne was informed that:-

"The Area Engineer has agreed to progress this request and this will be followed up."

C/189/A19/08 The following question was submitted by Clr. Alcorn:-

"Could I have an update on the Dungloe Foreshore Project and details as to what part of the development will be done during year end 31/12/2008?"

Clr. Alcorn was informed that:-

“Negotiations are continuing with the main landowner. The Councils technical staff are preparing the tender documents. When the land negotiations are finalised the members will be informed of the proposed work programme.”

C/189/A20/08 The following question was submitted by Clr. Slowey:-

"What is the contribution in monetary terms that Donegal County Council will be expected to pay for the following projects: Glenties Sewerage Scheme, Dungloe Sewerage Scheme, Burtonport Sewerage Scheme, Gweedore Sewerage Scheme, Falcarragh Sewerage Scheme, Dunfanaghy/Portnablagh Sewerage Scheme.

Clr. Slowey was informed that:-

“From Table 12B of Budget 2008 the estimated amounts that the Council will have to raise for the Glenties, Dungloe, Burtonport, Gweedore, Falcarragh, and Dunganaghy/ Port naBlath sewerage schemes are €1.138m, €0.874m, €1.4m, €5.5m, €1.0m, and €0.4m respectively, giving a total of €10.312m for total project costs of €39.0m (26% on average). Approximately half of this sum will be funded from general development contributions and half from non-domestic loans repaid from water service charges. The matching figures for Dungloe and Glenties are considered reasonably accurate at this stage but the other schemes are not at a stage where the Department has examined the Water Services Pricing Policy issues in detail. Consolidation of the Gweedore and Burtonport schemes is also likely which will result in reduced capital costs.”

C/189/A21/08 The following question was submitted by Clr. Alcorn:-

"I request a detailed report as to why it took between four to five months from the date tenders were sought for the Environment Section of this Council to appoint a contractor to remove the old end of life cars on Arranmore Island?"

Clr. Alcorn was informed that:-

“Tenders for the collection of end-of-life vehicles from Arranmore Island were sought by circular letter dated 4th October 2007. The closing date for receipt of completed tenders was Friday 26th October 2007.

The preparation of the tender documents and the evaluation of tenders received were carried out in-house by staff of the service. This work had had to be scheduled amid other ongoing work of the service. Unfortunately, delays ensued in the evaluation of these tenders due to the pressure of work surrounding the end of the financial year 2007 and the preparation of the budget estimates for 2008.

The evaluation of tenders was completed in February and the successful tenderer was appointed by Manager’s Order dated 19th February 2008. On the 20th February 2008, the Council wrote to the unsuccessful tenderers advising of its intention to award the contract and giving details of the successful tenderer and tender price. On the 25th February the Council wrote to the successful tenderer to confirm the appointment, subject to submission of insurances and agreement being reached regarding methods to be used and timeframe for completion of the work.

The contractor submitted the required documentation on 29th February. A site meeting was held with the contractor on 10th March, where it was agreed that the work would commence on Tuesday 25th March. It is expected that the work will be completed within three weeks of commencement, weather permitting.”

C/189/A22/08 The following question was submitted by Clr. Conaghan:-

"What solution has this Council got to address the serious number of bursts occurring on the water inter-connector at Grianan farm, Burt and does the Council appreciate the severe difficulties this causes for a wide catchment area such as Killea right back to the Crislaghmore Crislaghkeel Group Water Scheme at Burnfoot and Fahan?"

Clr. Conaghan was informed that:-

“The council is presently exploring options to deal with such interruptions. It would appear that the ground conditions in the lands in question are particularly corrosive, which has led to the weakening of the bolted connections on such items as air-valves, etc. which are fixed to the trunk-main. Unfortunately any consequential failures interrupt supply to the areas noted, both as a result of the burst occurring but also during the extended period involved in repairing the 'trunk-main' in question. Any progress towards securing a final solution will be brought to the member's attention at the EAC meetings.”

C/189/A23/08 The following question was submitted by Clr. McGonagle:-

"When will Malin Sewerage Scheme be complete?"

Clr. McGonagle was informed that:-

“It is expected that the civil works on the Malin Sewerage Scheme will be completed by the third quarter of 2008 with the mechanical and electrical works being completed and commissioned in the fourth quarter of 2008.”

C/189/A24/08 The following question was submitted by Clr. MacLochlainn:-

"What plans do the council have to ensure the delivery of a Civic Amenity Site to Bunrana"?

Clr. MacLochlainn was informed that:-

“The Council’s Waste Management Plan 2006-2010 made reference to the possibility of a Civic Amenity Site being provided in Bunrana. The Council remains committed to this, pending grant funding being obtained towards the construction costs. As no funding has been identified, this project will not proceed in 2008.

The Council remains committed to commissioning the new Civic Amenity Sites currently being developed in Milford, Dungloe and Letterkenny by the end of 2008.”

C/189/A25/08 The following question was submitted by Clr. Conaghan:-

"When will the lights go up at Tooban, Burnfoot, as prioritised by the Inishowen Electoral Area Committee, given the fact that the Senior Official responsible for same refused to answer this question at a recent Inishowen Electoral Area Committee Meeting?"

Clr. Conaghan was informed that:-

"The matter has been discussed in some detail with the staff in charge since the Electoral Area Meeting. In addition, contact has been made with ESB Contracts, ESB Networks and the local area team who will install ducting. It is expected the lights will go up at Tooban in May 2008."

C/189/A26/08 The following question was submitted by Clr. Donaghey:-

"When will work begin on the Mill Bridge, Buncrana, which is part of the Buncrana Inner Relief Road?"

Clr. Donaghey was informed that:-

"Due to new Department of Finance procurement requirements, the Department of Transport requires Donegal County Council to undertake additional design work on this bridge. Road Design has completed a detailed design brief for this additional work and is in dialogue with the consultant regarding fees. Once this design work is complete and approved by the Department of Transport a contractor can be procured and the construction works commence. Because of the complexity of the additional design work and the statutory approvals required it is difficult at this stage to give an accurate start date for the construction work. In addition, issues relating to land acquisition are currently being addressed. This project remains a high priority and it is hoped that construction work will commence in late summer 2008."

C/189/A27/08 The following question was submitted by Clr. McGuinness:-

"Why has the carpark at St. Boden's Terrace, Culdaff not been resurfaced?"

Clr. McGuinness was informed that:-

“This matter was previously raised at the September 2007 and January meetings where it was advised that the car park area at St. Boden's Tce., Culdaff is being addressed by the Housing and Roads Directorates and that proposals would be made to the Electoral Area Committee to allocate CLAR Class II and III funding to bitmac the area in the 2008 allocation. Confirmation of the CLAR allocation for 2008 is currently awaited.”

C/189/A28/08 The following question was submitted by Clr. MacLochlainn:-

"Can the roads section give a report on the progression of pedestrian crossings in Muff"?

Clr. MacLochlainn was informed that:-

“The siting and design of a pedestrian crossing and junction traffic control in Muff is currently with the Council's Road Design Department where it is a Priority One Project (ie. one that is to be designed as soon as possible). This design, based on a location agreed with the Electoral Area's Roads Staff for the pedestrian crossing shall be presented to members at the next Electoral Area Meeting. It is anticipated that the works will be commenced during the second half of 2008, with funding from special development contributions and development charges subject to the approval of members at the Electoral Area Meeting.”

C/189/A29/08 The following question was submitted by Clr. Donaghey:-

"When will Donegal County Council have the Section 47 finalised for occupancy conditions of people who will benefit from planning permissions granted to original applicants?"

Clr. Donaghey was informed that:-

“The documentation in this case will be finalised within the next two weeks.”

C/189/A30/08 The following question was submitted by Clr. McGonagle:-

"When will the Town Renewal Scheme start on the Market Square, Clonmany?"

Clr. McGonagle was informed that:-

“In 2007, the Planning and Economic Development Directorate successfully secured €38,000 from the Peace II Taskforce for Village renewal works at Clonmany. It was agreed with Clonmany Community Group that the monies would be allocated to the enhancement of the Clonmany Market Square area and would complement the work completed to date at the Square by the local Group. These proposed works have also been agreed with the Peace II Taskforce. The local group will also make a financial contribution towards the cost of the works.

The EIS Team is currently finalising the designs of the Square and upon completion, will be tendering the contract works as a matter of urgency. Upon appointment of the contractor, it is envisaged that works will commence without delay to allow for the successful drawdown of the Peace II funding by June 2008.”

C/189/A31/08 The following question was submitted by Clr. McGuinness:-

"How much money, to date, has (a) the Council and (b) the Irish Government contributed to the City of Derry Airport?"

Clr. McGuinness was informed that:-

“Donegal County Council has contributed directly one payment of €100,000 to support route development and marketing activity at the City Of Derry Airport through the North West Air Access Consortium in 2005.

A further committment, made by the Council In April 2006, of up to the equivalent of £70,000, exists to co-fund further marketing and route development as part of a Peace 2 funded proposal. The actual amount required is likely to be less than this amount and a full report on this and an update on

activity and plans at the City of Derry Airport will be brought to the June General Purposes Committee meeting.

The Irish Government has made a number of contributions to this airport. Interreg funding totalling €300,000 was made during the 2000- 2001 period. Currently a commitment exists to co-fund, in conjunction with the British Government and Derry City Council, the completion of safety works to a total estimated cost of £19 million. The actual level of funding being made available by the Irish Government will be further assessed and detailed in full in the June report.”

C/189/B/08 The following motions from other authorities were noted:-

BALLINASLOE TOWN COUNCIL

“That this Council write to the Minister for the Environment and Local Government requesting the immediate reversal of his Departments decision to withdraw grant assistance from “Disabled Persons Grants” applications and that this motion be circulated to every Local Authority for their consideration and to the East Galway Oireachtas members.”

LIMERICK COUNTY COUNCIL

“That Limerick County Council adopts a motion of no confidence in the Health Services Executive (HSE) and calls upon the Government and the Minister for Health to abolish the HSE and replace it with an efficient body who would have the professionalism and commitment to deliver a modern and effective Health Service for Cystic Fibrosis patients, especially young adult patients who are born with this life threatening disease; furthermore, that this motion be circulated to all local authorities seeking their support for same.”

BALBRIGGAN TOWN COUNCIL

“Balbriggan Town Council call on the Government to bring legislation to prevent economic migrants and refugees with criminal records from entering Ireland.”

MACROOM TOWN COUNCIL

“In light of the 2006 statistics that 14,598 dogs were put to sleep by local authorities not to mention the number of dogs put down by individuals, Macroom Town Council calls on the Government to introduce a micro chipping and neutering/spaying incentive scheme to curb unwanted dogs (suggestion: licence for a neutered dog = €10, licence for unneutered dog = €150.)”

It was pointed out at the meeting that persons on restricted means i.e. Social Welfare are able to have their dogs neutered/spayed for €14 through the neutering scheme being run by the Dog Trust.

MACROOM TOWN COUNCIL

“The Council notes the increase in agency employment throughout the economy. We are aware that many workers from home and abroad are offered agency employment when they are seeking direct and permanent employment. We understand trade unions have raised concerns that many of these workers are retained on minimum conditions and in some instances are not receiving all their entitlements. Agency employment should not be used as an unnecessary substitute for direct employment or as a mechanism for avoidance of or undermining of fair pay and conditions.”

Noting that legislation will come before the Oireachtas on the issue of Agency Employment, Macroom Town Council believes and recommends to the Minister that the principle of equal treatment should be included in any such legislation on the issue.”

SOUTH TIPPERARY COUTNY COUNCIL

“That this Council writes to the Government supporting the Irish Guide Dogs for the Blind appeal for an increase in funding and furthermore, that this motion be circulated to all local authorities for their support.”

CLONMEL BOROUGH COUNCIL

“That this Borough Council request all Borough/Town Councils to call on the Minister for Justice to continue to oppose any move by Bookmaker chains to have gaming machines placed in their offices. This is to help families from returning to poverty status, when parents get hooked on

these machines, as has happened in Clonmel in the not too distant past.”

CLONMEL BOROUGH COUNCIL

“That this Borough Council undertake not to apply any water charges to non-commercial activities such as schools etc.”

CLONES TOWN COUNCIL

“That Clones Town Council call on the Minister for Health, Mary Harney, T.D. to appoint an Ombudsman in the Department of Health so that the people of the country can get an honest answer regarding their complaints about health matters.”

This concluded the business of the meeting.