

**MINUTES OF MEETING OF
GLENTIES ELECTORAL AREA COMMITTEE**

HELD ON 20TH JANUARY 2009, IN THE PUBLIC SERVICE CENTRE, DUNGLOE

Members Present: Cllr Kelly
Cllr Slowey
Cllr Bonner
Cllr Gallagher
Cllr Doherty
Cllr Alcorn

OFFICIALS IN ATTENDANCE:

Frank Sweeney – Senior Executive Planner
John Gallagher – Senior Executive Engineer, Water & Environment
Charles Sweeney, Area Manager, Community & Enterprise
Virginia McLoone - Area Manager, Corporate Services
Eunan O Donnell, Executive Engineer, Roads & Transportation
Vincent Lynn – Senior Engineer, Capital & Marine
Myrtle Quinn – CO Roads & Transportation
Michael Rowsome – Senior Staff Officer, Corporate Services

APOLOGIES: Paul McGill – Area Manager, Housing & Building
Brendan Mc Fadden – Senior Executive Engineer, Roads & Transportation
Seamus Neely – Director of Services, Water Environment & Emergency Services

GEA 01/09 CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES OF MEETING HELD ON 18TH NOVEMBER 2008

On the proposal of Cllr.Doherty, seconded by Cllr.Gallagher, the minutes of meeting of the 18th Nov 2008 were agreed.

GEA 02/09 REPORT FROM WORKSHOP HELD ON 18TH November 2008

On the proposal of Cllr Alcorn, seconded by Cllr Doherty, the report from the Workshop of the 18th November 2008 was agreed.

GEA 03/09 REPORT FROM WORKSHOP HELD ON 15TH December 2008

On the proposal of Cllr Slowey, seconded by Cllr Doherty, the report from the Workshop of the 15th December 2008 was agreed.

GEA 04/09

ELECTORAL AREA AGENDA

The Committee requested Services to include any documentation for their consideration with the agenda and notification of meeting issued to Members of least three working days prior to the meeting.

COMMUNITY, ENTERPRISE AND CULTURAL SERVICES
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GEA 05/09 FUND MANAGEMENT

Members noted the report circulated at the meeting.

GEA 06/09 COMMUNITY PLAYGROUND PROGRAMME

The Committee welcomed the report circulated at the meeting and presented by the C & E Manager outlining the selection of Loch an Iúir for the development of a community playground facility. An application for co-funding the project is currently being assessed by An Roinn Gnóthaí Pobail, Tuaithe and Gaeltachta.

GEA 07/09 DONEGAL INTERPRETATIVE PROJECT

The Committee welcomed the report presented by the C & E Manager detailing the completion of the Donegal Interpretative Project at Cnoc Fola. Members were also informed that funding sources are being sought for improvement work to the surface at the Council car park at Cnoc Fola.

GEA 08/09 RESEARCH & POLICY UNIT

Members noted the report circulated at the meeting listing the activities of the Research & Policy Unit in 2008.

GEA 09/09 COMMUNITY SMOKE ALARM SCHEME

The Committee discussed the report circulated at the meeting and presented by the C & E manager highlighting the benefits of this scheme to 634 households in the County.

Cllr Slowey requested the Council to source funding to retro fit all Local Authority Housing with AC smoke alarms, along with the imposition of mandatory planning regulations for the installation of AC alarms.

The Planning Manager advised the Committee that smoke alarm installation would be more suitably addressed under Building Regulations and undertook to bring this issue to the attention of the Building Control Manager.

Cllr Kelly criticised the creation of a culture of dependency on the Council, HSE and other state bodies and stated that the public have to exercise a greater degree of personal responsibility as regards their own safety.

GEA 10/09

FOREST LINK

Members noted the report circulated at the meeting.

GEA 11/09

SOCIAL INCLUSION UNIT

Members noted the report circulated at the meeting and presented by the C & E Manager.

GEA 12/09

CULTURAL SERVICES REPORT

The Committee welcomed the report circulated at the meeting and presented by the C & E Manager outlining developments in the Central Library, County Musuem, Herigage Office, Public Art Programme and the Archives Service.

Cllr Slowey commended the Library Service for the success of the Taobh Tire programme in the enhancement of library services for rural areas. Cllr Kelly requested that Councillors be provided with copies of any Publications that are funded by the Council.

GEA 13/09

ANY OTHER BUSINESS

The Committee noted the following documentation circulated at the meeting.

- (i) Donegal Community Bulletin
- (ii) Donegal – Community in Touch E Zine
- (iii) Wood Energy Strategy for the Western Region.

GEA 14/09

MARINE DEVELOPMENT – BURTONPORT

In response to queries form Cllr Alcorn and Cllr Gallagher regarding the issue, the Committee were advised that a meeting has been scheduled for the 28th and 29th of January under the Chairmanship of the County Manager.

ROADS AND TRANSPORTATION

GEA 15/09

PUBLIC LIGHTING

The Committee discussed the report circulated at the meeting and presented by Vincent Lynn, Senior Engineer in relation to the 2009 budget of €437,000 for the refurbishment, infill and extensions of the public lighting infrastructure. The Committee agreed to the recommendation that €48,000 be prioritised to assist in the ESB 2009 Low Voltage Programme in the towns of Donegal and Ardara leaving a balance of €389,000 to be divided equally between Councillors ie. €13,413 per councillor.(€80,478 for the Glenties Electoral Area)

Vincent Lynn informed Members that expenditure (not including ESB network charges or Civil works) on the two towns previously agreed for the Glenties Electoral area was as follows:

Creeslough	€10,358.72 =(7.29%)
Dungloe	<u>€131,832.89 = (92.71%)</u>
	€142,191.61 = (100%)

On the proposal of Cllr Bonner, seconded by Cllr Alcorn, the Committee agreed that similar ratios be utilised for the distribution of available funding in the sum of €80,478 resulting in additional budgets of €5,866 and €74,612 for the Creeslough and Dungloe projects respectively.

Cllr Bonner expressed extreme frustration and annoyance that public lighting was not itemised on the agenda for discussion and that relevant documentation was not circulated to Members prior to the meeting for their consideration. He also expressed frustration at his minimal input to the Lighting Programme notwithstanding his regular submissions and representations on the issue. In relation to queries from Cllr Bonner regarding budgets for the Programme, Vincent Lynn undertook to liaise with the County Secretary's office regarding a Public Lighting motion proposed by Cllr Bonner a number of years ago and to provide details of all expenditure on the Public Lighting Programme from that date onwards.

GEA 16/09

RENEWABLE ENERGY LIGHTING AND LOW ENERGY LIGHTING PROJECT

Members welcomed the report circulated at the meeting and presented by Vincent Lynn, Senior Engineer detailing expenditure on renewable low energy lighting at a number of locations in the County including hybrid lights at a cost of €5,000 each on Iniskeragh Pier, and Neadh na gCedh Pier in Burtonport.

GEA 17/09

MEMBERS LIGHTS

The Committee discussed the reports circulated at the meeting and presented by Myrtle Quinn, Roads Service, Lifford in relation to the status and costs associated with the provision of the Members Lighting Programme.

The Committee undertook to agree their intentions regarding Members Lighting monies following the Roads workshop scheduled for the 2nd of February 2009 and to liaise with Myrtle Quinn, regarding any issues to be addressed by Paul Doherty, ESB prior to the end of January. Cllr Kelly criticised the excessive increase in costs imposed by the ESB on the Council and also their inefficient maintenance service.

Cllr Gallagher and Cllr Kelly informed the meeting that Council Engineers should determine the location of lights based on their professional expertise, to improve efficiencies and obtain greater value for money from the Members Lighting Programme.

GEA 18/09

ROADWORKS PROGRAMME

Eunan O Donnell, Executive Engineer informed Members that a decision on funding 2009 programme is still awaited from the DOE and NRA. The Committee highlighted the following issues for the immediate attention of the Roads Services.

- (i) Drainage requirements on Carrickataskin Road, Derrybeg and Meenaleck to Ranafast Road.
- (ii) Glen Road, Annagry
- (iii) Deteriorating roadway in proximity to National School at Hillhead, Ardara.
- (iv) Hedgecutting Policy issues
- (v) Necessity to liaise with the Ardara Tidy Towns Committee regarding upkeep of green areas.

Cllr Alcorn commended the Roads Service for their 'round the clock' efforts during the recent adverse weather conditions.

HOUSING & BUILDING

GEA 19/09 HOUSING CAPITAL PROGRAMME

Members noted the report circulated with the agenda.

GEA 20/09 SOCIAL HOUSING

The Committee noted the progress report circulated previously regarding the status of the Social Housing Programme.

GEA 21/09 CASUAL VACANCIES

The Committee noted the report on casual vacancies as at the 2nd of January 2009 circulated with the agenda.

PLANNING & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT
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GEA 22/09

PLANNING STATISTICS

The Committee discussed the report circulated with the agenda and presented by the Planning Manager, who advised Members of the continuing decline in the level of planning applications.

In response to a query from Cllr Kelly regarding implications for staff as a consequence of reducing application numbers, the Planning Manager informed the Committee of ongoing and future reductions in staff numbers and that enforcement and pre- planning activity has increased.

GEA 23/09

CONSIDERATION OF RECENT REFUSALS

The Committee noted the report circulated previously in relation to refusals issued during the period from 1/11/2008 to 31/12/2008.

GEA 24/09

ENFORCEMENT STATISTICS

The Committee noted that comparative yearly statistics in relation to enforcement issues.

GEA 25/09

AREA PLANS

On the proposal of Cllr Bonner, seconded by Cllr Doherty, the Committee recommended that the Central Planning Unit in Lifford expedite the completion of Area plans within the Glenties Electoral Area.

GEA 26/09

WEEKLY PLANNING LISTS

Members welcomed the receipt of weekly planning lists in electronic format.

GEA 27/09

NRA POLICY – N56 ACCESS

A lengthy debate ensued regarding the conflict between NRA policy and the Council's Development Plan. Cllr Kelly requested that the Corporate Manager communicate Members concerns to the Director of the Roads Service for discussion at the Roads Strategic Policy Committee.

WATER & ENVIRONMENT

GEA 28/09

MAJOR CAPITAL SCHEMES PROGRAMME

The Committee discussed the reports circulated with the agenda and presented by the Water & Environment Manager. In relation to the Dungloe and Glenties Sewerage Schemes, the Committee were informed that (i) contract documents for separate construction contracts will be submitted for approval to the DOEHLG in the first quarter of 2009.

(ii) Tenders have been received for the site investigation contract in both towns and it is expected that these works will commence in the first quarter of 2009. Cllr Bonner requested that the Director of the Water Service issue a report to the Committee for the next meeting detailing the reasons for ongoing delays. The Committee also requested the attendance of the Director at the next area meeting. Cllr Gallagher was of the opinion that delays were due to financial considerations.

GEA 29/09

SMALL CAPITAL SCHEMES PROGRAMME

The Committee welcomed the report circulated previously and presented by the Water Services Manager, detailing the status of the Small Capital Schemes Programme.

GEA 30/09

GROUP WATER SCHEMES

Members discussed the report circulated with the agenda and presented by the Water & Environment Manager. In response to queries from Cllr Bonner and Cllr Alcorn to extend the Tully G.W.S, the Water Services Manager informed Members that this issue is on their work agenda.

In response to a query from Cllr Slowey regarding the Maghera Private Source Scheme; the Water Service Manager advised the Committee that a flow proportional chlorine dosing system has been installed as an interim solution to improve water quality.

The Water Services Manager further informed Members that an Ultra Violet System is proposed in the short term to improve the water quality on Tory Island in conjunction with the upgraded sand filters and flow proportional chlorine dosing system.

GEA 31/09

ASBESTOS REMOVAL

In response to a query from Cllr Gallagher regarding asbestos removal, the Environment Manager informed the Committee that the removal of a trailer load of asbestos would cost €10,000 and that a minimum budget of €100,000 would be required in the Glenties Electoral Area to tackle this issue.

GEA 32/09

ENVIRONMENT SERVICE – STAFFING ISSUES

Cllr Kelly recommended that the Council lobby the Minister For Environment regarding the potential loss to Donegal County Council of proactive Environment personnel. The Environment Manager in response to a query from Cllr Alcorn advised the Committee that he has updated the Director of the Environment Service in relation to the harmful implications of staff losses.

CORPORATE SERVICES

GEA 33/09 ACTIVITY REPORTS

Members noted the report circulated with the agenda and presented by the Corporate Manager detailing the comparative activity levels during 2007 and 2008.

GEA 34/09 SCHEDULE OF MEETINGS 2009

The Committee agreed to schedule the next Glenties Electoral Area and Island meetings on the 9th of March and to re consider the draft schedule at this meeting.

THIS CONCLUDED THE BUSINESS OF THE MEETING