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**MINUTES OF MILFORD ELECTORAL AREA COMMITTEE MEETING
HELD IN THE MILFORD PUBLIC SERVICES CENTRE ON 18th JULY 2005**

MEMBERS PRESENT

Cllr Ian McGarvey,
Cllr Liam Blaney
Cllr Noel McBride

OFFICIALS IN ATTENDANCE

Mr Brendan McFadden, Area Manager, Roads & Transportation
Mr John Gallagher, Area Manager, Water, Environment & Emergency Services
Mr Paul McGill, Area Manager, Housing
Ms Virginia McLoone, Area Manager, Corporate Services
Mr Eunan Quinn, Area Manager, Planning & Economic Development
Mr Charles Sweeney, Community Enterprise, Development Officer
Mr Gerry Keeney, Executive Engineer, Water, Environment & Emergency Services
Mr Liam Edwards, NRDO
Mr Damien McDermott, NRDO
Mr John McElwaine, Water Services Design

MEC26/05 ELECTION OF CATHAOIRLEACH

On the proposal of Councillor Blaney, seconded by Councillor McGarvey, Councillor Noel McBride was unanimously elected Cathaoirleach of the Milford Electoral Area Committee

Councillor Ian McGarvey expressed his thanks to the Area Managers and staff for their cooperation and assistance to him during his term as Cathaoirleach of the Electoral Area Committee. He also acknowledged the support of his fellow Councillors during the last year.

MEC27/05 VOTES OF SMYPATHY

Councillor McGarvey proposed a vote of sympathy to Annette Doherty and Angela Toner on the death of Charlie Doherty. Councillor McGarvey also proposed a vote of sympathy to Councillor Liam Blaney on the death of his wife's relative. Councillor McBride and Councillor Blaney wished to be associated with the votes of sympathy.

MEC28/05 CONSIDERATION OF MINUTES

On the proposal of Councillor Blaney, seconded by Councillor McGarvey, the minutes of the Electoral Area Committee meeting held on May 16th 2005 were agreed.

28.1 MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES

Report and recommendation of Safety Measures at Lough Salt

Members welcomed the report from the Area Manager that tenders are due in three weeks time and it is anticipated that the successful tender will be awarded by mid September with anticipated completion date of mid November. Members recommended that this work be expedited before winter.

**MEC29/05 CONSIDERATION OF MINUTES OF WORKSHOP HELD ON
MAY 16th, 2005.**

On the proposal of Councillor Blaney, seconded by Councillor McGarvey the minutes of the workshop held on May 16th, 2005 were agreed.

**MEC30/05 RECEPTION OF DEPUTATION FROM RATHMULLAN 21
GROUP**

The Chairman welcomed representatives of the Rathmullan 21 Group Ms Áine Ni Dhuibhne, Mr Tony Brennan and Ms Ann Deeney. The Rathmullan 21 Group presented an informed presentation to the meeting.

Ms Ni Duibhne presented a paper to the meeting outlining the history and the significance of the Flight of the Earls to the Rathmullan area. On behalf of the Rathmullan 21 Group she sought the support of the Elected Members for the Area to ensure that the infrastructure in Rathmullan was improved and delivered to a high standard in preparation for the Flight of the Earls Commemoration in 2007 when people from all over the world will converge on Rathmullan for this prestigious event.

Mr Tony Brennan highlighted the infrastructure deficits as follows:

Sewage Treatment

He noted that sewage effluent was discharging directly into the Swilly in contravention of EU regulations which has led to the loss of the Blue Flag for Rathmullan. The issue of sewage pipes discharging into the Swilly had a negative visual impact on the town and he urged that this issue be addressed.

Water Supply

Mr Brennan pointed out that water quality is questionable with frequent bursts which is a source of concern particularly at the height of the holiday season.

Pier Area and Environs

In Mr Brennan's opinion the pier area has been neglected over the years and cruise ships cannot come in due to the condition of the harbour area.

Village Renewal

Ms Ann Deeney advised the meeting that a deputation from this Group had been presented to the Electoral Area Committee two years ago and expressed her concern that nothing had been delivered in the interim.

The Chairman and Members thanked the Deputation for their contribution and assured them that every effort would be made to have the issues addressed before the Commemoration of the Flight of the Earls.

The Committee recommended that a comprehensive response issue to the Group on the issues raised.

MEC31/05 PLANNING & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Eunan Quinn briefed the members regarding staffing in the Planning Office advising that the Planning Service had been assigned a Technician for the Milford and Glenties Electoral Areas who would carry out enforcement work and the registration of quarries. He had also been allocated an additional Clerical Officer exclusively for the Milford Office. Members welcomed the additional staff.

31.1 Planning Statistics

Members were circulated with the up to date Planning Statistics for the Milford Electoral Area together with comparative figures for the County and National average. Members noted that invalid applications are running the 25% approximately and the Area Manager advised that there currently was work in progress to address this and he would revert in September to the Members with his report regarding the proposed next steps.

31.2 Consideration of Recent Refusals

Members noted the report on recent refusals of Planning Applications that circulated with the Agenda. The Area Manager invited Members to discuss with him after the Meeting any particular cases of concern to them.

31.3 Local Area Planning Programme

Members noted the Local Area Plan Programme – Updated list July 2005 that circulated with the Agenda. Members agreed to revert to the Area Manager at the Workshop on September 5th 2005.

31.4 Development Charges

Members urged that every effort would be made to collect outstanding Development Charges and allocate them to the Area. They welcomed the new staff in Lifford to handle the work load.

31.5 Rathmullan Environmental Works

Disappointment was expressed by the Members that there was no representative from Economic Development at the meeting to brief them on the position regarding the proposed Rathmullan Improvement Works and on Milford Car parking / Improvement Works

MEC32/05 ROADS & TRANSPORTATION

32.1 Recent Allocations

Strategic Gaeltacht Roads 2005 – Atlantic Drive L.I.S. Allocations 2005.

Members noted the recent allocation from An Roinn, Gnothaí, Pobail Tuaithe agus Gaeltachta for the L1032 Atlantic Drive to carry out works on street lay byes at appropriate locations to the value of €300,000. This grant was welcomed by the Members.

32.2 2006-2008 Multi Annual Restoration Programme

The Area Manager advised the members that proposals for the new 3 year programme must be submitted by mid September and in this regard members agreed that a Workshop be convened on September 5th to commence at 10.00 am to consider submissions from them for the three year programme. In advance of that Members were invited to submit their lists of proposed works to the Area Manager. The content of Circular Letter RLS22/2005 was noted.

32.3 EU Co-Financed Draft Priority List 2005

The letter from the Department of the Environment/Specification for 2006-2008 Restoration Improvement Scheme Priority List was noted. Together with the EU Co-Financed Priority List 2005. On the proposal of Councillor McBride. Seconded by Councillor McGarvey the Committee agreed to resubmit this list for 2006.

The Area Manager agreed to provide a Progress Report on work under the EU Co-financed Schemes to date.

32.4 N56 Mountain Top Project - Illistrin

Damien McDermott offered apologies on behalf of Aidan O'Doherty, SE and advised that Mr Liam Edwards will attend the Milford Electoral Area Meetings to update members on the Mountain Top project.

Liam Edwards presented a progress report to the meeting on the N56 Project as follows:

“Donegal County Council received 10 Tenders for the Phase 1 Road Realignment on 1st July 2005.

Tender opening took place on Wednesday 6th July and the Tender Assessment was immediately commenced by DNRDO.

A draft Tender Assessment report was issued to the NRA on the 15th July 2005. The final report will incorporate the Independent 'Tender numerical checks which have been commenced by the Lifford Road Design Office and which will be completed next week.

A 'without prejudice' meeting was held with the lower compliant Tenderer on Friday 15th July 2005 and the Contractor has suggested a start date of Mid September. DNDRO have urged the Contractor to investigate an earlier start.

A meeting with the NRA is scheduled for Wednesday 20th July 2005 and it is anticipated that the final Tender Assessment Report will be available for approval at that meeting.

Once the final report is confirmed DNDRO will be in a position to advise the name of the lowest compliant bidder and arrange for the issue of a Letter of Intent.

Design and Land acquisition on the remaining phase of the work will continue in 2005."

Liam Edwards further advised that it will be necessary for the full Council to approve the successful tender.

Members urged that the work is completed on time and within budget.

32.5 Kilmacrennan Village By Pass Proposal

Councillor Blaney, seconded by Councillor McBride recommended that public consultation with Kilmacrennan residents should commence on the Kilmacrennan By Pass proposal with a view to seeking funding for the project. The Committee unanimously agreed that the Kilmacrennan By Pass must now be raised as a priority with local Members of the Oireachtas in order to source funding from the NRA.

32.6 Letterkenny – Milford Regional Road

The Committee requested the Area Manager to make a case to the NRA to have the Letterkenny – Milford Regional Road reclassified as a National Secondary Road in order to attract funding to upgrade it.

32.7 Draft Development Charge Improvement Works

The Committee considered the draft proposal for the allocation of €60,000 from Development Charges collected in the Milford Electoral Area.

The allocation was welcomed but the Members requested the Area Manager to revert to them with details of the €60,000.

On the proposal of Councillor McGarvey, seconded by Councillor Blaney, the following proposal was agreed.

1. Carrigart Continuation of footpath in front of Health Centre on Milford Road to Gortnabrade Road Junction.
2. Milford Replacement of footpath at Milford National School.
3. Ramelton Town Park towards Post Office
4. Churchill Completion of low cost accident works at Gartan Bridge

In response to a query as to the possibility of the road above the Tank in Ramelton and the Ballyare Road being considered under this Scheme, the Area Manager invited Members to submit such proposals to him for consideration in the context of the Restoration Programme.

On account of developments on the road from the Milford Inn into town and in Ramelton, Members recommended that Development Charge monies be ring fenced to provide footpaths in the interests of Road Safety.

32.8 AOB

Letterfad Road

The Area Manager agreed to assess the request for the Council to take over the Letterfad Road and revert to the Members.

33.1 Housing Capital Programme

Paul McGill, Area Manager, presented the Report on the Housing Capital Programme and responded to a number of questions from Members.

33.2 Social Housing

The Area Manager sought the views of Members regarding further work being undertaken on the provision of Affordable Housing in Kilmacrennan, Ramelton and Rathmullan. Members welcomed the proposals where as a result of the new Housing Assessment the Housing List now demonstrated a need in these particular towns.

The report on Social Housing that circulated with the Agenda was noted.

The Report on Disabled Persons Grants was discussed and the issue of delays in processing applications was highlighted. The possible reasons for delays were explained by the Area Manager.

The Committee welcomed news that the Central Heating Programme will commence next week and that it is intended that it will be completed by year end.

The Area Manager further advised that a submission has been made to the Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government under the Remedial Works Programme and a response is awaited.

33.3 Casual Vacancies

The Casual Vacancies Report was noted. The Committee recommended that as Casual Vacancies become available that work on the upgrading of them be expedited so that they can be let without delay.

MEC34/05 COMMUNITY & ENTERPRISE

34.1 Presentation from Donegal Youth Council

Ms. Louise McDonald and Dean Boyce, Youth Councillors for the Milford Electoral Area, made a presentation to Members detailing activities undertaken by Youth Councillors.

The Committee thanked the Youth Councillors for their presentation and Members paid tribute to Anne McGeever, Youth Council Co-ordinator for her efforts in promoting the work of the Youth Council during her employment with Donegal County Council.

34.2 Tourism Product Development

Garry Martin Divisional Manager, made a presentation to Members in relation to the role of the Council in directly supporting Tourism in Donegal.

Issues covered in the presentation were as follows

- Summary of Council's Role in supporting Tourism in the County
- Review of Investment in 2005 by the Council
- Recent Reviews & Studies
- Ongoing Role of North West Tourism and Donegal Tourism Ltd.
- Key Issues going forward
- Initial Feedback for Tourism Workshop scheduled for September 2005.

Members were requested to forward any suggestions to the Community & Enterprise Unit.

34.3 Funding Update

The Committee noted the report circulated with the agenda.

34.4 Inter Organisational Local Development

The Committee noted the report circulated with the agenda outlining the status of Inter Organisational Local Development Projects.

34.5 County Strategy

Members noted the report previously circulated listing ongoing activity.

34.6 Research and Policy

The Committee noted the report previously circulated in relation to the above matter.

34.7 Flight of the Earls Commemoration 2007

A report detailing the events and activities proposed to commemorate the Flight of the Earls in 2007 was circulated for Members information. Details of the Committee Commemoration Membership were also made available.

MEC35/05 WATER, ENVIRONMENT & EMERGENCY SERVICES

35.1 Major Capital Programme

John McElwaine, SEE, Water Services Design, attended the Meeting to brief Members on details of the Capital Programme for the Milford Electoral Area.

Rathmullan Sewerage Scheme

It was noted that the Scheme has been substantially delayed and the Committee expressed concern that construction may coincide with the Flight of the Earls Celebrations in 2007. The Roads and Water Services will liaise and a co-ordinated approach will be taken by the Council in undertaking infrastructure works in Rathmullan. Members urged that this plan will include the provision of toilet facilities. The Committee recommended that work be undertaken to ameliorate the visually obtrusive pipe entering the Swilly at Rathmullan prior to the 2007 celebrations.

35.2 Small Capital Schemes Programme

The report circulated with the Agenda was considered by the Committee.

Pipe Replacement Programme – Portleen to Milford Water Pipe Replacement Project

The Area Manager briefed the Meeting on the Project advising that this stretch has been prioritised for replacement this year due to the ongoing difficulties with leaks and extensive loss of water but he emphasised that the costs of carrying out this work would have to be funded from next years monies. The Committee unanimously agreed that this work proceed and that it be funded form next years allocation for pipe replacement.

The Committee further recommended that where other Electoral Areas are not in a position to spend their allocations for pipe replacement that it be transferred to the Milford Electoral Area.

Ramelton Water Supply – Site for Reservoir

The Area Manager briefed the meeting on the up to date position regarding this Project advising that the developer was ready to commence work but was awaiting the resolution of land title.

Milford Water Supply

The Committee recommended that the Water Services should consider the provision of a reservoir for Milford and in this regard they committed to support the sourcing of funding for land acquisition for a reservoir.

Fanad Water Scheme Stage 1

The Committee were informed that 17½ kilometres of water main have now been constructed. Work is on schedule and it is anticipated that Phase I will be complete by the end of September. Members noted that funding has not yet been approved for Phase II. Of the Scheme.

Downings/Carrigart Water Supply

Members unanimously applauded the work of the Water Services personnel in the construction of the new pipeline acknowledging that it was a huge success. Members noted that this is the first holiday season that complaints from residents about lack of water was not highlighted. John Gallagher, Area Manager, also acknowledged the contribution of the Water Conservation Team and thanked the Committee for their kind words.

35.3 Group Schemes

The report that circulated with the Agenda was noted.

Private Source Group Schemes

The Committee noted the report on Private Source Group Schemes that circulated with the Agenda.

35.4 Meenaboll Landfill

The Area Manager briefed Members on the up to date position regarding the proposal advising that An Bord Planala had sought further information which had been forwarded to the Bord.

35.5 Illegal Dumping

Members discussed photographic evidence of illegal dumping circulated with the Agenda. The Committee condemned incidences of illegal dumping in the Milford Electoral Area and expressed disappointment that the Environment Section had secured no convictions. The Area Manager advised that the public are dumping their domestic refuse on roadsides and litter bins are being vandalised in Rathmullan and Downings. He expressed concern that if the Blue Flag is left up at night in Portsalon that it would be vandalised.

Members recommended a number of measures to promote litter awareness and urged the press who were present at the meeting to highlight this disgraceful situation in our scenic County.

This completed the Business of the Meeting.

DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The next meeting of the Milford Electoral Area Committee will take Place on September 19th 2005 to commence at 11.00 a.m. with the Workshop in advance to commence at 10.00 a.m.

A Workshop with Members will be held on September 5th, 2005 at 10.00 a.m. to consider Roads and Planning related issues.