

**MINUTES OF MEETING OF  
GLENTIES ELECTORAL AREA COMMITTEE  
HELD ON 10<sup>th</sup> NOVEMBER 2009, IN THE PUBLIC SERVICE CENTRE,  
DUNGLOE**

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**Members Present:** Cllr. Marie Therese Gallagher  
Cllr David Alcorn  
Cllr Pádraig Doherty  
Cllr Terence Slowey  
Cllr Séamus Ó Domhnaill

**OFFICIALS IN ATTENDANCE:**

Paul Mc Gill, Area Manager, Housing/Corporate Services  
John Gallagher – Senior Executive Engineer, Area Manager  
Water & Environment  
Brendan Mc Fadden – Senior Executive Engineer, Area  
Manager, Roads & Transportation  
Frank Sweeney – Senior Executive Planner, Area Manager,  
Planning & Economic Development  
Charles Sweeney-Area Manager, Community & Enterprise  
Michael Rowsome – Senior Staff Officer, Corporate Services

**GEA 131/09 CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES OF MEETING HELD  
ON 8<sup>TH</sup> SEPTEMBER 2009.**

On the proposal of Cllr Slowey, seconded by Cllr Alcorn, the minutes of meeting of the 8<sup>th</sup> September 2009 were agreed.

**GEA 132/09 REPORT FROM WORKSHOP HELD ON 8<sup>TH</sup>  
SEPTEMBER 2009**

On the proposal of Cllr. Slowey, seconded by Cllr. Alcorn, the report from the Workshop held on the 8<sup>th</sup> of September 2009 was agreed.

## **HOUSING & BUILDING**

**GEA 133/09**

### **BEST KEPT COUNCIL ESTATES PRESENTATION**

The Chairperson of the Glenties Electoral Area, Cllr. Gallagher presented cheques to the representatives of the successful category winners on behalf of the Area Committee. The Committee expressed their admiration and appreciation for the voluntary work undertaken by the scheme representatives and also for their dedication and voluntary contribution to their communities.

<b>CATEGORY</b>	<b>WINNERS</b>
Small Estates	Fairhill, Dungloe
Medium Estates	Ard Mc Gill, Glenties
Larger Estates	Ballina, Falcarragh
Most Improved Estate	St. Mary's Close, Stranacorkra

**GEA 134/09**

### **HOUSING CAPITAL PROGRAMME**

The Committee discussed the progress report on the Housing Capital Programme at the 1<sup>st</sup> of November 2009, circulated with the Agenda and presented by the Housing Manager. Members welcomed progress on the schemes at Loughanure, Creeslough and Meenanillar.

In response to Cllr. Alcorn's expression of disappointment at the delay in letting the Lettermacaward Scheme, the Housing Manager informed the Committee that discussions are ongoing with the Contractor in relation to remedying ground settlement issues around the houses in the scheme.

The Housing Manager undertook to revert to Members regarding proposals for Housing Developments in Glenties and Ardara.

Cllr. Gallagher requested an up to date list of Housing Need in the Glenties Electoral Area for the next meeting.

**GEA 135/09**

### **SPECIFIC INSTANCE COTTAGES**

Members discussed the report circulated previously and presented by the Housing Manager in relation to the status of Specific Instance Cottages in the Glenties Electoral Area at the 1<sup>st</sup> of November 2009.

Cllr. Alcorn welcomed the development of a new contract regime between the Council and Contractors in relation to construction of Specific Instance Cottages.

In response to a query from Cllr. Slowey regarding the length of time taken for an SI application to reach construction stage, the Housing Manager undertook to liaise with the Housing Construction Unit in this regard.

**GEA 136/09**

### **SOCIAL HOUSING**

Members discussed the reports on Social Housing as at the 1<sup>st</sup> of November 2009, circulated previously and presented by the Housing Manager.

A lengthy debate ensued regarding the Council's recent decision to accept grant applications, and the Housing Manager clarified that the Council were accepting grant applications.

The Housing Manager also informed the Committee that 143 no. applications awaiting a decision will be prioritised along with any applications where there is a critical medical need for Housing Assistance.

**GEA 137/09**

### **CASUAL VACANCIES**

The Committee discussed the report on casual vacancies at the 1<sup>st</sup> of November 2009, circulated with the Agenda. The Housing Manager updated the Committee in relation to work being undertaken by the Housing Assessment Officer which will expedite the letting of casual vacancies.

**GEA 138/09**

### **LEASING PROGRAMME**

In response to concerns expressed by Cllr. Gallagher regarding the advantage of this programme for Developers, the Housing Manager informed the Committee that the Leasing Programme is being promoted by the Department of Environment.

# PLANNING & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

**GEA 139/09**

## **PLANNING STATISTICS**

The Committee noted the report on planning statistics circulated with the Agenda and presented by the Planning Manager.

Members were informed that the Dungloe Planning Office was in receipt of the highest number of application in the county (24%).

In response to queries from the Committee regarding the status of the Planning office, the Planning Manager informed Members of the ongoing reduction in staff numbers in the office, and the negative impact on the provision of the Planning Service.

**GEA 140/09**

## **PLANNING REFUSALS**

The Committee noted the report circulated with the Agenda detailing planning refusals during the period from 28.8.2009 – 23.10.2009.

**GEA 141/09**

## **ENFORCEMENT STATISTICS**

Members noted the report circulated previously in relation to enforcement issues in the Glenties Electoral Area.

**GEA 142/09**

## **ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT**

Cllr. Gallagher requested that the Council afford greater prominence to the Economic Development of West Donegal in future meetings of the Committee.

Cllr. Gallagher expressed disappointment at the closure of Ostán na Rosann in Dungloe and Burtonport Fisherman's Co-op and requested that the Council prioritise the following issues:

- Infrastructural deficiencies in West Donegal.
- Directional Signage Improvement.
- Cross Border Shopping and the necessity to harmonise VAT Rates.
- Reduction in the burden of Commercial Rates on local businesses.

The Committee echoed the sentiments expressed by Cllr. Gallagher and expressed frustration and anger at the NRA's inactivity and lack of investment in the road network in Donegal.

On the proposal of Cllr. Alcorn, seconded by Cllr. Slowey the Committee requested that an invitation be extended to Cathal Mac Suibhne, the Chief Executive Office of Udaras , to attend the next local area meeting to discuss the economic development of West Donegal.

**GEA 143/09**

#### **ARD NA gCEAPAIRÍ AREA PLAN**

In response to a query from Cllr. Slowey, regarding the status of Ard na gCeapairí Area Plan, the Planning Manager agreed to liaise with Eunan Quinn, Senior Executive Planner in relation to this matter.

**GEA 144/09**

#### **DEVELOPMENT CHARGES**

Cllr. Doherty requested the Planning Manager to liaise with the Senior Planner regarding the exorbitant development charges levied on applicants building their first home.

Cllr. O Domhnaill and Cllr. Doherty criticised the imposition of a sewer charge on applicants who provide their own sewerage treatment facility.

**GEA 145/09**

#### **PLANNING REFUSALS**

Cllr. O Domhnaill requested the Director of the Planning Service to liaise with the NRA regarding the ongoing objections to development accessing the N56.

## **ROADS & TRANSPORTATION**

**GEA 146/09                      ROADWORKS PROGRAMME**

The Roads Manager informed the Committee that the Roadworks Programme is currently being completed and that potholes and drainage works will be carried out in December.

**GEA 147/09                      ROAD MAINTENANCE ISSUES**

Cllr. Gallagher informed the meeting that Members have agreed to forward road maintenance concerns directly to the Roads Service and requested that a report on submissions be issued to the Committee monthly.

**GEA 148/09                      NATIONAL DISABILITY STRATEGY FUNDING 2009**

The Committee welcomed the report circulated at the meeting and presented by the Roads Manager outlining funding for the following projects:

- Dungloe footpaths                      €25000
  - Ardara paint crossing                      € 3000
  - Gortahork repaint crossings              € 4000
- €32000  
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**GEA 149/09                      WINTER MAINTENANCE PROGRAMME**

In response to a recommendation from Cllr. O Domhnaill regarding the necessity to convene a Workshop regarding the Winter Maintenance Programme, the Roads Manager undertook to liaise with Senior Roads Management in Headquarters who manage the programme centrally.

**GEA 150/09                      AIRPORT ROAD**

In response to a query from Cllr. Alcorn regarding the importance of upgrading the Airport Road and the recent negative media coverage in relation to this issue, the Roads Manager informed the Committee that this road was recently

prioritised as No. 2 on the EU-Co-Financed Roads Programme for 2010.

**GEA 151/09**

**ROAD SIGNAGE**

Cllr. Gallagher highlighted the necessity to improve road signage to the West of the County. The Roads Manager undertook to (1) circulate Members with signage rules, (2) liaise with relevant engineering staff in the NRDO and (3) carry out an audit of signage from Letterkenny and Donegal Town to the West of the County.

**GEA 152/09**

**GWEEDORE FLOODING**

The Roads Manager updated the Committee and circulated a report at the meeting outlining the status of work undertaken in the Gweedore area to repair damage caused by the floods on the 23<sup>rd</sup> of June 2009 at an estimated cost of €641,000. Members were informed of the success of a Section 50 application for replacement of culverts and that an order will be placed this week for 5 no. culverts.

The Committee were also informed that funding in the sum of €100,000 has been allocated from Roinn na Gaeltachta for the repair of non-county accommodation roads and Cllr Alcorn requested further details regarding same.

Members welcomed the preparation of a report on flood alleviation measures that will be submitted to the Office of Public Works for consideration.

Cllr. O Domhnaill expressed disappointment that Roinn na Gaeltachta have not expeditiously dealt with repair works. Cllr. O Domhnaill and Doherty also requested that the Council extend the LIS deadline for receipt of applications as many non accommodation roads have only been partially completed.

**GEA 153/09**

**LETTER OF ACKNOWLEDGEMENT**

The Committee unanimously agreed that a letter of acknowledgement issue to former road Technician, Damien O'Sullivan whose contract expired with the Roads Service. The Committee commended Damien O'Sullivan's contribution to the Roads Service and the courtesy that he afforded all Members.

## **WATER & ENVIRONMENT**

**GEA 154/09**

### **MAJOR CAPITAL SCHEMES PROGRAMME**

The Committee discussed the report circulated with the Agenda and presented by the Water Services Manager regarding the Major Capital Schemes Programme.

Members expressed frustration at the lack of progress in relation to the major schemes, and also at the 25% co-funding requirement imposed on the Council.

Cllr. O Domhnaill requested that the Director of the Water Service liaise with the Department of the Environment and Local Government to expedite progress with the Major Schemes. The Water Services Manager also undertook to arrange a meeting, at which the Committee could relay their concerns to the Director.

**GEA 155/09**

### **SMALL CAPITAL SCHEMES**

The Committee noted the report previously circulated and presented by the Water Services Manager.

**GEA 156/09**

### **GROUP WATER SCHEMES**

Members discussed the report circulated with the Agenda and presented by the Water Services Manager.

Cllr. Doherty requested the Council to expedite the provision of a scheme on Tory Island to provide a water supply compliant with the 2007 Drinking Water Regulations.

**GEA 157/09**

### **FINTOWN WATER SUPPLY**

The Committee discussed the report circulated with the Agenda and presented by the Water Services Manager in relation to the Boiling Order issued by Donegal County Council on the 9<sup>th</sup> of October 2009 due to bacterial contamination in the water supply.

Members commended the Water Services Manager and his staff for the level and quality of consultation with the public and Councillors in relation to the status of the Fintown Water Supply.

The Committee were informed that the Boiling Order will remain in place until the HSE is satisfied that the contamination has been eliminated and that the water is safe to drink.

**GEA 158/09**

**CROLLY FILTERHOUSE**

In response to a recommendation from Cllr. Alcorn, the Water Services Manager agreed to organise a visit to Crollly filterhouse for Members of the Area Committee.

## **COMMUNITY, ENTERPRISE & CULTURAL SERVICES**

**GEA 159/09**

### **FUND MANAGEMENT**

The Committee noted the report circulated with the Agenda in respect of the Development Fund Initiative.

**GEA 160/09**

### **DONEGAL COUNTY DEVELOPMENT BOARD**

Members noted the report circulated previously and presented by the Community & Enterprise Manager.

**GEA 161/09**

### **SOCIAL INCLUSION WEEK**

Members noted the report on the Council's first Social Inclusion Week, which was held on the 21<sup>st</sup> to the 25<sup>th</sup> of September 2009, and also the status of the Social Inclusion Measures Group.

**GEA 162/09**

### **POVERTY PROFILE**

The Committee noted the report circulated with the Agenda in relation to the compilation of the Poverty Profile 2009 by the Research and Policy Unit and also the Poverty Impact Assessment.

**GEA 163/09**

### **DONEGAL CDB INTERAGENCY GROUP ON TRAVELLER ISSUE**

Members noted the report circulated previously in relation to:

- (i) 3 year action plan
- (ii) Pavee Pathways Employment Project and
- (iii) Pilot Tenant Participation Project

**GEA 164/09**

### **DONEGAL COMMUNITY BULLETIN**

Members noted the circulation of the October edition of the Community Bulletin to over 515 community and voluntary groups.

**GEA 165/09**

### **TOOLKIT FOR COMMUNITY AND VOLUNTARY SECTOR**

The Committee noted the report circulated with the Agenda in relation to the status of this project.

**GEA 166/09**

### **COMMUNITY SMOKE ALARM SCHEME**

Members noted the report circulated previously outlining the provision of smoke alarms to 850 households in the County.

**GEA 167/09**

**ALL ISLAND PRIDE OF PLACE**

Members noted the report circulated with the Agenda outlining the representation of five groups in Donegal at the All Island Pride of Place awards ceremony in Dublin on the 21<sup>st</sup> of November 2009.

**GEA 168/09**

**PEACE III ACTION PLAN**

The Committee noted the report outlining the status of the Peace III Action Plan.

**GEA 169/09**

**DONEGAL YOUTH COUNCIL**

The Committee noted the report circulated with the Agenda in relation to the Donegal Youth Council.

**GEA 170/09**

**FAI – COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT OFFICER**

The Committee noted the report circulated with the Agenda.

**GEA 171/09**

**LIBRARY SERVICE**

The Committee discussed the report circulated with the Agenda and presented by the Community & Enterprise Manager. Cllr. O Domhnaill and Cllr Doherty requested the location and establishment of a library service as a matter of urgency and that their concerns at the unacceptable delay be communicated to the Chief Librarian and the Director of the Community & Enterprise Service.

**GEA 172/09**

**MUSEUM SERVICE**

Members discussed the report circulated with the Agenda.

**GEA 173/09**

**CULTURAL SERVICES REPORT**

Members discussed the report circulated with the Agenda and presented by the Community & Enterprise Manager. On the proposal of Cllr. Slowey, seconded by Cllr. Alcorn, the Committee nominated Cllr. O Domhnaill to represent the Glenties Electoral Area on the Public Art Selection Panel.

**GEA 174/09**

**RETIREMENT OF SEAN O LONGAIN**

The Committee requested that a letter issue to Sean O Longain on the occasion of his retirement from the VEC and to express their appreciation of his efforts in transforming the Adult Education & School Building Programmes in the County.

**GEA 175/09**

**WESTERN DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION REPORT**

Cllr. Slowey welcomed the report on “travel to Work and Labour Catchments in the Western Region” circulated at the meeting.

## **CORPORATE SERVICES**

**GEA 176/09**

### **MEENACUING RESIDENTS**

The Corporate Manager informed the Committee of correspondence received from the Meenacuing Residents regarding public lighting, footpath and speed limits issues. The Roads Manager agreed to convene a meeting of the NRDO, Council Engineering Staff and Meenacuing Residents and to update the Committee at the next meeting.

**GEA 177/09**

### **ISLANDS COMMITTEE**

The Corporate Manager updated Members in relation to the status of this Committee and agreed to convene a meeting of the Coiste na nOileán in January 2010.

On the proposal of Cllr Alcorn, seconded by Cllr Doherty, the Committee recommended that all Members of the Glenties Electoral Area be nominated for inclusion on the Islands Committee.

**THIS CONCLUDED THE BUSINESS OF THE  
MEETING.**