

**MINUTES OF MEETING OF STRANORLAR ELECTORAL
AREA COMMITTEE HELD ON THURSDAY 9TH JUNE, 2005
IN THE REGIONAL TRAINING CENTRE, STRANORLAR**

Members Present

Cllr J J Reid (Chairperson)
Cllr Patrick McGowan
Cllr Alice Bonnar

Officials Present

Gerry Gilroy, Area Manager, Corporate Services
Eileen Doherty, Staff Officer, Corporate Services
Barney McLaughlin, Community & Enterprise Development Officer
Peadar Thomas, Area Manager, Roads
Claire McGeever, Area Engineer, Roads
Tommy Doherty, Assistant Engineer, Housing
Denis Kelly, Area Manager, Planning & Economic Development
Conal McGettigan, Area Planner
Ciara Conlon, Assistant Planner

Apologies

Mary Hannigan, Area Manager, Housing
Michael Breslin, Area Manager, Water/Environment/Emergency Services
Brendan Porter, Area Engineer, Water/Environment/Emergency Services

SEC 22/00 ADOPTION OF MINUTES

**22.1 Adoption of Minutes of meeting held on Tuesday 19th April,
2005**

On the proposal of Cllr McGowan seconded by Cllr Bonnar the minutes of the meeting held on 19th April 2005 were adopted.

It was agreed that matters arising would be dealt with under each service heading.

22.2 Votes of Sympathy

The Members wished to express their sympathy to Mrs Nancy Kennedy on the recent death of her husband Cllr. Peter Kennedy.

SEC 23/00 WATER/ENVIRONMENT/EMERGENCY SERVICES

G Gilroy conveyed apologies from Mr Michael Breslin, Area Manager and Mr Brendan Porter, executive engineer and advised that Mr Breslin would contact members early next week to discuss any issues of concern.

Cllr McGowan expressed his annoyance at the fact that no one was present from the Water Services Section in the absence of Messrs Breslin and Porter. He submitted that the Members had serious issues with the Water Services Section and requested an early meeting to discuss these issues. Cllrs Reid and Bonnar were in support of Cllr McGowan's comments.

In the absence of personnel from the Water/Environment/Emergency Services Directorate it was agreed to defer any further discussion on the matter.

SEC 24/00 ROADS & TRANSPORTATION

24.1 Dreenan Bridge Phase 2

Members queried if any progress had been made in relation to finalising the additional claims made by the contractor. Mr Thomas advised that the claims were still being considered but hoped that they would be finalised shortly. Again Members reiterated the fact that the allocation had to be spent before November otherwise it would be lost. Mr Thomas advised that as soon as the information was available he would let members know and confirmed that if the additional claims weren't settled shortly then the allocation would be spent on another aspect of the project before the deadline in November.

24.2 2005 Road Works Programme

Members noted the report circulated with the agenda.

Mr Thomas advised that no allocation had been received yet under the Gaeltacht or Local Improvement Schemes. He undertook to advise Members when this information becomes available.

Mr Thomas advised that the surface dressing and restoration programmes were ongoing at present.

Mr Thomas also advised that the allocation for footpath upgrade was €60,000 for 2005. As funding was being made available from the Development Contribution Scheme Mr Thomas advised that the money could only be spent in the areas where the development contributions were collected. At present the Development Contribution Scheme is only being implemented in the Ballybofey and Stranorlar areas. Mr Thomas asked Members to consider introducing a Development Contribution Scheme in other towns within the electoral area for such purpose.

Mr Thomas circulated a draft priority list for Members consideration at the meeting.

Members referred to a different priority list agreed with Mr Hall last year that included locations where they felt accidents were most likely to happen.

Mr Thomas submitted he felt these were the most urgent locations at present in need of repair. Following a short discussion on the matter the priority list circulated at the meeting was agreed by Members subject to the addition onto No.4 Lifford Road (either side of Golf Course Road) of the area from Glebe Hollow to Woodlawn.

Following a query from Cllr Reid Mr Thomas advised that no further money was available from maintenance monies for footpath repair.

24.3 Bridge Waiting List

Members considered the Draft Priority list submitted by Mr Peadar Thomas, Area Manager, Roads and Transportation, and circulated with the agenda.

Members were strongly of the view that the Castlefin Bridge was not alone first priority within the Electoral Area, but also a bridge of significant importance as a major access route to the County and as such special funding should be pursued. It was felt that this would require a multi-million Euro allocation, and that while this may take a number of years to complete, that this should not prevent progress on other bridges.

Of the other bridges on the list, Logue's Bridge was singled out as being in a very dangerous condition and required immediate attention to prevent its collapse. Members were unanimous that in-house design work, for the replacement of Logue's Bridge, and estimated to cost in the region of €20,000, should be commenced right away. Options to identify the source of funding this design to be urgently explored.

Mr P Thomas briefed the members on the contents of correspondence addressed to Ms Claire McGeever, Executive Engineer, from Mr. Donal Murphy in relation to representations submitted by Cllr Alice Bonnar with regard to Logue's Bridge. Cllr Bonnar expressed her annoyance that she had not received the courtesy of a direct reply. Other members in support of Cllr. Bonnar's comments confirmed that the Council's failure to respond to correspondence in a regular and timely way is a major issue for both members and the public and must be addressed urgently.

The priority list as proposed was adopted and it was agreed that the Council proceed as set out above.

24.4 Special Speed Limits at Schools

Members advised that this matter was dealt with at the Council meeting the previous day.

24.5 Other Matters Arising

Street Names

Mr Thomas circulated a list of all the streets within the Ballybofey & Stranorlar area and including proposed names for those, which had not been formally named. He requested Members to examine the list and the matter could be discussed at the next electoral area meeting.

Stranorlar Car Park

Members expressed their disappointment that no progress had taken place since the last meeting. Mr Thomas advised that the project had to go through the Part V111 planning process however there was no funding available at this time to progress the project.

Cllr McGowan expressed his annoyance at the fact that the existing car park appeared to be used as a dumping ground at present and this wasn't acceptable. Cllr Reid added that this area was a disgrace coming into the tourist season and requested that the area be tidied up and surface dressed immediately. Mr. Thomas agreed to examine the possibility of having this work done.

In order to fund the improvements, Cllr McGowan proposed that the small piece of adjoining land at this location be put on the market and the proceeds used for upgrading this car park. Cllr Bonnar seconded the proposal and Members requested that the matter be brought to the County Manager's attention and progressed prior to the next electoral area meeting.

N13/N15 Ballybofey/Stranorlar Bypass

Members noted the report circulated by Mr Thomas at the meeting outlining the up to date position in relation to this project.

Traffic Calming

Following a query from Cllr Bonnar, Ms McGeever advised that works were ongoing at Letterkenny Road however additional funding is being sought to complete these works. No funding was available this year to carry out the traffic calming works on the Lifford Road.

Cllr Reid referred to the length of time the works were ongoing at this location and submitted that supervision appeared to be a problem.

Lafferty's House at Drumboe

Members referred to a piece of ground in front of this house that the Council had already agreed to clear and surface in order to widen the road as it was very narrow at this location. Ms McGeever agreed to follow up.

Navenny Residents Association

Cllr Bonnar referred to the attendance of a deputation from the Navenny Residents group some months back in relation to traffic problems in the area. Since the opening of Dreenan Bridge, the residents felt traffic volume and speed had actually increased on the road and that speed limits aren't being adhered to. Members referred to the decision made at the time to paint the speed limit on the road. This had not been done and the residents had requested that they attend the next Electoral Area meeting to discuss this and other issues raised by them. It was agreed that this work would now be done and a deputation from the residents be invited to the next meeting.

Woodlawn Residents Stranorlar

Cllr Bonnar referred to a grant of €12,500 the Woodlawn residents have received and they have requested the Council to do some digger work for them. Ms McGeever agreed to follow up.

Navenny Bridge

Members raised a query in relation to the proposed works to widen the bridge at this location submitting that an agreement had been reached with a developer as part of his planning permission for a development in the area. Mr McGettigan advised that a special charge for upgrading the bridge had been imposed on the contractor as part of phase 11 of his development. Mr Thomas agreed to follow the matter up with the developer in question.

Pothole Repairs

Members requested clarification on the funding available for local roads from the maintenance budget for pothole repairs. Mr Thomas advised that the total budget for maintenance of local roads was €111,819 and €40,000 of this had to fund office staffing costs. The balance had to cover street cleaning etc. There was therefore little funding available from maintenance monies for pothole repairs. Members referred to procedures in other electoral areas where, fellow elected members advised them, funding for pothole repair was not a problem and requested

a written breakdown of funding available for pothole repairs in the Stranorlar and Donegal Areas.

Other roads issues

Members raised a number of other roads issues at locations throughout the electoral area. Mr Thomas and Ms McGeever took note of these issues and agreed to follow up.

SEC 25/00 PLANNING & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT
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25.1 Matters Arising from Previous Meeting

Casual Trading

Mr Kelly advised that no further progress had taken place since the last meeting. It is expected that the appeal hearing will be heard in June however no definite date has yet been confirmed.

McGinley's Development in Convoy

Cllr McGowan referred to the recent footpath works that had been carried out at this location submitting that it was sloppy and not what was agreed. He also submitted that the footpath was left unsafe. Mr Kelly advised he would again contact his counterpart in the Letterkenny Electoral Area. He had previously been advised that if the contractor didn't comply with the planning conditions by the 20th June 2005 then a summons would be served on Mr McGinley.

25.2 Recent Refusals

Members noted the report circulated with the agenda.

25.3 Planning Enforcements

Members raised a number of issues in relation to unauthorised development. Mr Kelly advised the Members that this matter was causing problems throughout the County and not alone in the Stranorlar electoral area. He advised that the Council intended to be more pro-active and including the earlier prosecution of offenders. Members will be kept informed of progress.

25.4 Planning Statistics

Members noted the report circulated with the agenda.

25.5 Other Matters Arising

Master Plan for Drumboe

Mr Kelly advised Members that the Central Planning Unit would be preparing the design for the Master Plan Area. He also noted that there was land for sale in this area.

Butt Hall Committee

Cllr Bonnar referred to a planning application submitted by the Butt Hall Committee. She submitted that this was a €6m investment, which was important for the town and if possible to accommodate this major community development. Mr Kelly advised that the planning application must be dealt with in accordance with the planning regulations.

Blue Cedars - Residents concerns

Cllr Bonnar referred to a request from the residents of Blue Cedars to meet with planners regarding the contractor's non-compliance with planning conditions regarding traffic calming and play areas within the housing development. Cllr Bonnar referred to correspondence submitted by the residents some time ago to the planning office however no response had been received.

Mr Kelly agreed to have a look at the correspondence and advise what action can be taken. If he needs to contact the residents in this regard he will make contact with their chairperson. A response will issue to the residents correspondence shortly.

Members submitted that contractors shouldn't get permission for further developments if the conditions of previous permissions aren't complied with.

SEC 26/00 HOUSING & BUILDING
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26.1 Housing Capital Programme

Members noted the report circulated with the agenda.

Mr Doherty advised Members that the Council were currently doing a costing for the Turnkey development at Donegal Road, Ballybofey.

He also advised Members that the following the recent Housing Assessment carried out by the Council they would not be accepting the Turnkey Proposal for the Stranorlar area as there did not appear to be the need for it.

Members expressed their concern at this matter and submitted that they were not satisfied with this report. They requested a report for the next meeting outlining the number of people on the waiting list for Stranorlar and the number of houses available for letting. Mr Doherty agreed to have the report available for the next meeting.

Cllr Bonnar queried when the houses at Glen Patrick would be available for letting. Mr Doherty advised that he could not say at this point however the scheme was progressing well.

Cllr Bonnar submitted that applicants on the Council's housing waiting list should be given first priority for the affordable housing element of the scheme. Members requested that consultation take place with them before the affordable houses are let.

26.2 Social Housing

Members noted the report circulated with the agenda.

26.3 Casual Vacancies

Members noted the report circulated with the agenda.

22 Railway Avenue has now been accepted.

17 Railway Avenue has been accepted but then refused.

Members submitted that if applicants on the housing list are refusing houses offered to them then they should lose points and move down the waiting list. Mr Doherty advised that this was already the case.

26.4 Office Accommodation

Members considered the report submitted by Mr. J F Howard in relation to the proposed Public Service Centre for the Stranorlar Electoral area. The members reaffirmed their determination that a Public Service Centre will be provided in Ballybofey/Stranorlar and strongly recommended that the Council confirm this as its first priority. Members went on to propose that this project receive 'first call' on the estimated €10.5M to be raised from the disposal of assets as referred to in Mr Howard's report.

Members also strongly recommended that this proposal include not alone the new Library for the Twin Towns area but also the Administrative Headquarters for the Central Library Service.

SEC 27/00 COMMUNITY, CULTURE & ENTERPRISE
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27.1 Report on Community & Enterprise

Tourism Brochure

Mr McLaughlin advised Members that funding was available for the Chamber of Commerce who were setting up a website. The remainder of the money will be used to finance the distribution of the tourism brochures.

Stranorlar Interagency Initiative

Mr McLaughlin advised Members that letters have issued to other agencies seeking their views on the establishment of a Stranorlar Area Fora.

Local Area Teams

Mr McLaughlin advised Members that the initial meeting for the Castlefin project will take place after the summer.

Cllr McGowan expressed his disappointment at the lack of progress with this initiative submitting that other electoral areas appeared to be more advanced.

In response to a query Cllr McGowan advised that the County Development Board selected the towns.

County Community Forum

Mr McLaughlin advised that the AGM would take place next week.

Taskforce Funding

Mr McLaughlin advised that the Task Force funding had been extended. Information sessions will be held county wide, over the coming weeks and application forms will be available at these sessions.

27.2 Playgrounds

Mr McLaughlin advised that the agreed priority for this year was Cross and Killygordon-Railway road. It was proposed and agreed that Ballybofey/Stranorlar area be considered next year in conjunction with Coillte. Discussions are to take place with Coillte.

27.3 Cultural Services

Members noted the report circulated by Mr McLaughlin at the meeting.

Cllr Bonner wished to express her annoyance at the current opening hours in the Library in Ballybofey submitting that it was ridiculous. The fact that the Library is only a temporary measure and is only open half the time isn't good enough for a town the size of Ballybofey/Stranorlar.

Cllr Bonnar requested a breakdown of the opening hours/costing of all the libraries in the County for the next meeting. Mr McLaughlin agreed to follow up.

Cllr Reid supported Cllr Bonnar's comments submitting that the Ballybofey/Stranorlar area was No 1 priority for a library 20 years ago however this fell by the way side over the years.

27.4 Youth Council

The youth councillors could not be in attendance today as their exams are ongoing at present.

27.5 Stranorlar Community Interagency

Mr McLaughlin circulated a report at the meeting outlining the work carried out to date by the Community Interagency Initiative. Mr McLaughlin advised Members that the Project Development Worker, Susan Gibbons had tendered her resignation.

Members expressed their good wishes to Ms Gibbons and commended her on her good work during her time with the interagency initiative.

SEC 28/00 DATE OF NEXT MEETING
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The next meeting to be held on Tuesday 12th July 2005 in the Regional Training Centre, Stranorlar commencing at 2pm.

