

29th January, 2008

TO ALL MEMBERS OF DONEGAL COUNTY COUNCIL
--

The Meeting of Donegal County Council adjourned from Monday 29th January, 2008, will be held on Monday 04th February 2008 at 2.00pm in the Council Chamber Lifford, to deal with the following remaining items:-

Item 5 (c) To consider proposed deletion of a property at Main Street, Ballyshannon from the Record of Protected Structures.

Items 10-88 Questions and Motions

E. Sweeney
Meetings Administrator

MINUTES OF ADJOURNED MEETING OF DONEGAL COUNTY
COUNCIL, HELD IN THE COUNTY HOUSE, LIFFORD ON 4th
FEBRUARY 2008

C/48/08 MEMBERS PRESENT

Clrs. J. Boyle, Mayor, D. Alcorn, L. Blaney, , E. Bonner, C. Brogan, B. Byrne, F. Conaghan, G. Crawford, R. Donaghey, M.T. Gallagher, J. Harte, J. Kelly, D. Larkin, N. Mc Bride, T. McDaid, M. Mc Donald, S. Mc Eniff, McGarvey, D. Mc Gonagle, P. Mc Gowan, B. Mc Guinness, P. Mac Lochlainn, B. O' Neill, J.J Reid, T. Slowey

C/49/08 APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from Clrs. A. Bonner, P. Doherty, J. Kennedy, and T. Pringle , who were unable to attend the meeting.

Apologies were also received from the County Manager who had to attend a prior engagement. Mr. Liam Kelly Assistant County Manager, Director of Housing & Building deputised for the County Manager.

C/50/08 OFFICIALS IN ATTENDANCE

Mr. L. Kelly, Assistant County Manager, Director of Housing, Mr. Francie Coyle, Director of Planning and Economic Development, Mr. Sean Sheridan, Director Corporate Services, Mr. John Mc Laughlin, Director Roads and Transportation, Mr. Aidan Mc Nicholas, Head of Finance, Mr. Michael Heaney, Director Community, Culture and Enterprise, Mr. Chris Lyons , Director Water, Environment and Emergency Services, Mr. Peadar Mac Rory, Senior Engineer, Water, Environment and Emergency Services, Ms Clare Mc Callan, Conservation Officer, Mr. Eunan Sweeney, Meetings Administrator, Ms. Anne Marie Crawford, Staff Officer, Corporate Services.

C/51/08 TO CONSIDER DELETION OF PROPERTY AT MAIN STREET BALLYSHANNON FROM THE RECORD OF PROTECTED STRUCTURES.

Members were reminded that a decision on this item had been adjourned from the Council meeting on 28th January pending further clarification from the Planning Directorate.

The Meetings Administrator reminded members that the following motion and amendment were before the Council:

Clr. Mc Garvey had proposed, seconded by Clr. Mc Guinness, “that the matter be referred to the Donegal Heritage Forum for deliberation”. An amendment, proposed by Clr. O’ Neill, seconded by Clr. Byrne, that the front façade of the building be retained on the Record of Protected Structures.

Ms Clare Mc Callan, informed members that, in her opinion, there was nothing to warrant the demolition of the building and her advice was to retain the entire block.

Mr. Francie Coyle advised that the building should be retained on the Record of Protected Structures as a result of the property’s historic merit and special interest.

A second amendment was proposed by Clr. McEniff, seconded by Clr. Byrne:-
“That the building in question be removed from the Record of Protected Structures.”

Mr. Eunan Sweeney, informed the Council that in accordance with Standing Orders the first amendment “that the front façade of the building be retained on the Record of Protected Structures” would have to be taken first.

In accordance with Standing Orders, a recorded vote was taken on Clr. O’ Neills amendment..

This resulted in 7 voting for, 11 against, with 4 abstentions.

Those voting in favour were:
Clrs. Boyle, Harte, Mc Bride, Mc Guinness, O, Neill, Reid, and Slowey. (7)

Those voting against were: -
Clrs. Alcorn, Blaney, Byrne, Conaghan, Crawford, Donaghey, Larkin, Mc Donald, Mc Eniff, Mc Gonagle, and Mc Gowan. (11)

Clrs. Gallagher, Mc Daid, Mc Garvey and Mac Lochlainn abstained.

The Mayor declared the amendment lost.

A recorded vote was then taken by the Meetings Administrator on Clr. Mc Eniff's amendment.

This resulted in 11 voting for with 11 against.

Those voting in favour were: -

Clrs. Alcorn, Blaney, Byrne, Conaghan, Crawford, Donaghey, Larkin, Mc Donald, Mc Eniff, Mc Gonagle, and Mc Gowan. (11)

Those voting against were;-

Clrs. Boyle, Gallagher, Harte, Mc Bride, Mc Daid, Mc Garvey, Mc Guinness, Mac Lochlainn, O' Neill, Reid and Slowey.(11)

The Mayor did not exercise his casting vote and the amendment was declared lost.

Mr. Eunan Sweeney, in response to a query by Clr. McGuinness, advised that the provisions in Standing Orders dealing with rescinding resolutions were applicable in this case. In relation to the motion in the name of Clr. McGarvey, seconded by Clr. McGuinness, it was agreed that Ms. Clare McCallan, would consult with the owner of the property in advance of a full report being presented to the Council in due course.

C/52/08

BROADENING OF REVENUE BASE

It had been agreed at the meeting of Donegal County Council held on the 28th January 2008 to continue the debate on the following motion proposed by Clr. Mc Guinness and seconded by Clr. Conaghan: -

“That this Council seek a meeting with the Minister for the Environment to explore ways to broaden our revenue base:
(a) our proposals to the Indecon Report
(b) funding or Cross Border co-operation
(c) the implications of the Water Services Pricing Policy (Polluter Pays Principle)”

Members again highlighted the Holiday Home issue and stated that the public needed clarity.

The message should go out that the Council was not making a specific decision to levy a tax on holiday homes but rather seeking advice from the Minister as to how the revenue base could be increased.

The ever-increasing burden on the commercial sector was deemed to be unfair, and that continuing increases in water charges would have serious implications for the county as a whole given that many local industries were now struggling. The overall financial impact of compliance with a range of European Directives was also noted.

It was acknowledged that there were a significant number of registered companies in the county which were not operating out of specific premises and were, therefore; not rateable and those could be targeted as a possible revenue base.

It was agreed that further consideration needed to be given to the exploration of crossborder funding options and the future implications of the Water Pricing Policy.

The motion was adopted.

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

C/53/08

OLD COUNCIL BUILDINGS IN CARNDONAGH

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

“That this Council use the old Council buildings in Carndonagh for a bus depot and café.”

Members were informed that:-

“The funding provided by the DOEHLG for the new Carndonagh Fire Station included a reduction of €45k in respect of the value of the old fire station. This leaves an outstanding capital balance to be funded by DCC. The old fire station is strategically located at a junction alongside the old bus depot and former alcohol factory. The disposal/reuse of the old fire station should be considered in

the context of an overall development of that area and could include the provision of a bus depot including café.”

Clr. McGonagle noted that there was considerable traffic chaos at present in the Diamond area of Carndonagh due to the lack of a permanent bus depot.

Mr. Liam Kelly affirmed that there was no budget to develop the site at present but future development in the area could possibly, incorporate this proposal.

C/54/08

GRITTING OF ROADS GREENCASTLE TO SHROVE-
BACK LOWER ROAD GREENCASTLE.

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

“That the entire area from Crossroads to Shrove and back lower road to Greencastle be gritted like other areas by Donegal County Council when there is frost and snow.”

Members were informed that:-

“The present lorry gritting the Moville route is working at its capacity without including this extra mileage to Shrove. As this area is coastal it is not as prone to frost as other inland areas. In extreme weather conditions this area is salted after the main routes are completed. It is recommended that the route remains as it is now but that the matter is included for review when routes are next being examined.”

Mr. John McLaughlin agreed to review the matter and include the roads concerned with the list of routes highlighted during the 2008 budgetary process.

C/55/08

TAKEOVER OF HOUSING ESTATES

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

“That this Council discuss and agree a way forward regarding the take over of housing estates.”

Members were informed that:-

“The present policy of Donegal County Council on the takeover of private housing estates was adopted on 20/09/2005. The present adopted policy is:

1. That Donegal County Council take over all public services excluding open spaces, in post 1996 housing estates where there is no mechanical or electrical plant subject to compliance with planning permission.
2. Since the last C.P.G. meeting it has been determined that it would be inappropriate to take over roads and footpaths that are in housing estates that contain mechanical and electrical plant. In this way the takeover of all roads, sewers, mechanical and electrical plant etc. can be negotiated for takeover as one unit. The public lighting will be taken over. In the meantime, a case by case report is to be prepared in respect of mechanical and electrical plant in each of these estates. This report will include terms of planning conditions, likelihood of public sewerage services being available in the vicinity in the near future and so forth. The take over will then be considered by the Council on the basis of a local legal agreement.
3. That Donegal County Council do not take over holiday home estates.

Holiday homes are defined by the planning department as:

“Those developments which have specifically declared the proposal to be holiday use under question 14 of our planning application form. It would also include those developments which have signed section 47 agreements under the Planning and Development Act, 2000.

At the moment there are 252 estates affecting 5390 houses which are not affected by mechanical plant. There are 199 estates affecting 4292 houses with mechanical plant. There are 131 holiday home estates affecting 1349 houses. Each developer has been contacted by the Takeover Section of the Council and provided with a takeover application form. To date the Takeover Section has received over 40

applications for the takeover of estates. No estate has yet been taken over due to incomplete information being supplied with the applications. The Takeover Section is particularly in active negotiation with these 40 applicants.”

Clr. Conaghan noted there was a clear lack of local agreement and queried why only 40 applications for takeover had been received, he requested that an itemised list be provided showing the status of each estate listed for takeover, and it be made available on an electoral area basis. The need to enforce the relevant planning conditions before occupancy of the estate was also highlighted. Concern was expressed that there were no proposals to take over estates with mechanical and electrical plant.

Mr. John McLaughlin agreed to provide a progress report on the status of works at Woodpark and Lismonaghan.

Mr. Francie Coyle stated that the Planning Directorate would be actively pursuing enforcement over the coming months. He agreed to liase with the Town Clerk, Letterkenny in relation to Woodpark and Lismonaghan.

Clr. Conaghan called for a review of DCC policy and the adoption of a more proactive approach to the takeover of housing estates.

C/56/08

BUNCRANA/RATHMULLAN CAR FERRY

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

“That sufficient funding be earmarked to ensure that the Buncrana to Rathmullan Car Ferry will continue as normal for the Summer season 2008.”

Members were informed that:-

“Community and Enterprise are currently reviewing both the projected costs and the potential funding sources, both internal and external with the objective that the costs and income for this years seasonal ferry service between Buncrana and Rathmullan be agreed and finalised as quickly as possible.”

Clr. Blaney stated that the provision of adequate funding was necessary for the overall tourism development of the area. He noted that general perception was that the Buncrana/Rathmullan Car Ferry Service was in doubt and the message needed to go out that the service would resume for the summer season so as to counteract the current negative publicity.

Clr. Donaghey called on Letterkenny Town Council to support the service through the provision of €10,000 funding. She also asked that the ferry operator concerned show some goodwill in terms of the €35,000 deficiency in operating costs.

C/57/08

NATIONAL CLIMATE CHANGE STRATEGY 2007-2012

The following motion was proposed by Clr. MacLochlainn, and seconded by Clr. McDaid:-

“That Donegal County Council in the context of the National Climate Change Strategy 2007-2012 draw up and implement a five year strategy (with an associated review mechanisms) so as to ensure that all policy developed by Donegal County Council is environmentally and ecologically proofed to meet the highest international standards, and that an interdepartmental group involving the Management, Councillors and Civic Groups be established by June 2008 to oversee this motion, including a period of public consultation and its implementation.”

Members were informed that:-

“Most of the major developments carried out by DCC are subject to either EIA or SEA.

The establishment of mechanisms along the lines proposed would require careful consideration of such issues as terms of reference, membership, etc, as well as how it would fit with our existing policy making structures, including the Strategic Policy Committees and the Corporate Policy Groups. Consideration should also be given to the possibility of this being more appropriately a matter for the County Development Board, as this would facilitate wider engagement on this agenda by a range of statutory agencies

and could utilise existing mechanisms for consultation and engagement with the community and voluntary sector.”

It was agreed to take the following motion submitted by Clr. Slowey in conjunction with Clr. MacLochlainn’s motion; the motion was duly proposed by Clr. Slowey and seconded by Clr. Gallagher:-

“That this Council put in place, with immediate effect, a measurable performance of energy conservation in all our buildings, in addition a mechanism be put in place for energy production i.e. wind turbines, so as to reduce our dependence on imported fossil fuels.”

Clr. MacLochlainn outlined the need for an effective climate strategy framework within Donegal County Council coupled with an appropriate review mechanism. Such a strategy, he affirmed, would take into consideration forward planning, the use of renewable energy sources, policy improvement and ongoing co-operation between the various departments. The onus now, he advised, was on Donegal County Council to lead by example.

Clr. Brogan stated that while he agreed with some elements of the motion he could not fully support such a wide ranging strategy given the Council’s current budgetary position. He called on the Council’s own Environment Section to produce a report on the matter.

An amendment was proposed by Clr. Larkin and seconded by Clr. Brogan:-

“That Ms. Toni Needham, Energy Conservation Officer address the Council and outline the methodology and strategic aims of the Energy Forum in relation to climate change over the coming years.”

Clr. Slowey advised that he was agreeable to the amendment of his motion as per the Amendment.

In accordance with Standing Orders a recorded vote was taken on the amendment.

This resulted in 12 voting for with 3 against and 2 abstentions.

Those voting in favour were:-

Clrs. Alcorn, E. Bonner, Brogan, Byrne, Crawford, Donaghey, Larkin, McBride, McDonald, McGowan, Reid and Slowey (12)

Those voting against were:-

Clr. Gallagher, McDaid and McLochlainn.

Clrs. McGarvey and McGuinness abstained.

The Mayor declared the amendment carried.

The Amendment was then put as a Substantive Motion and a recorded vote was taken.

This resulted in 13 voting for with 3 abstentions.

Those voting in favour were:-

Clrs. Alcorn, E. Bonner, Brogan, Byrne, Crawford, Donaghey, Larkin, McBride, McDonald, McGarvey, McGowen, Reid and Slowey. (13)

Clrs. Gallagher, McDaid and MacLochlainn abstained.

The Mayor declared the motion carried.

C/58/08

WORK OF COUNCIL STAFF OVER THE CHRISTMAS HOLIDAYS

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

“That this Council recognize the work done by Council staff over the Christmas holidays especially the people gritting the roads.”

Members were informed that:-

“The cooperation of the roads workforce over the Christmas period certainly deserves to be recognized. The dedication of

the snow and frost gritting squads and road supervisors deserves special mention. They do this work early on frosty mornings and late on dark winter nights and often get little notice due to the nature of the weather patterns.”

It was agreed that a letter should issue to all staff who has worked over the Christmas period thanking them for their cooperation and dedication. Members requested that the “out of hours service” be reviewed and that this be facilitated by the Corporate Services S.P.C.

C/59/08

PHASE 2 OF THE COUNTY HOUSE

On the proposal of Clr. Crawford, seconded by Clr. Larkin, the following motion was adopted:-

“That this Council discuss what plans it has to progress Phase 2 County House.”

Members were informed that:-

“Work has been ongoing in identifying the precise office accommodation requirements in Lifford based on further work carried out in 2007 in respect of the existing office accommodation, existing staffing and options whether in Lifford or in the Public Service Centres to enable a costed options for County House Phase 2 to be completed. It is intended that proposals will be prepared by the Senior Management Team for consideration and submission in the first instance to the Corporate Policy Group with a view to bringing it before the Council during the first quarter of 2008. The issue of funding sources to address the financing of the proposal will be tabled as part of an overall proposal in the context also of a report being prepared on the use of proceeds from disposable assets.”

Clr. Crawford highlighted the fact that €300,000 was being spent annually in respect of rental accommodation and that no progress had been made in terms of providing accommodation for the Archives Centre.

The lack of facilities for members and members of the media in the Council Chamber was also cited. Facilities for the Planning and Finance Directorates were also deemed unsatisfactory.

Calls were made for clarity in relation to the refurbishment process and clear direction on how the works were to be financed.

Clr. Crawford, in conclusion, stated that he was unhappy with the reply and would raise the matter again, as appropriate.

C/60/08

MORATORUIM ON WATER CHARGES

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

“That this Council calls on the Government to introduce a moratorium on the payment of water charges by schools and further that this Council calls on the Government to seek an exemption for levying water charges to schools under the EU Water Framework Directive.”

Members were informed that consideration should be given to the contents of Circular WSPI 018, Water Services Pricing Policy Implementation, Water Charges, Water Conservation for Schools.

C/61/08

LANDS AT BIG ISLE, LETTERKENNY

On the proposal of Clr. Brogan, seconded by Clr. Larkin, the following motion was adopted:-

“I propose that this Council conduct a Masterplan of the lands at the Big Isle, Letterkenny to include a horse racing track and development of the Council owned lands.”

Members were informed that:-

“The lands in this case were acquired by CPO to provide an airport. Funding was provided by the then Department of Communications. The lands have been rented out for grazing and a range of other purposes over the years. A Masterplan can be prepared for the land having regard to the County Development Plan 2006-2012 (Letterkenny-Derry Corridor) and the proper planning and development of the area. I will arrange to convene a workshop of the members appointed at the Annual General Meeting to consider the proposal and agree the way forward.”

Mr. Francie Coyle agreed to liaise with the Airport Committee in relation to this proposal.

Clr. Crawford advised that his previous motion in relation to the development of a driving school on the lands in question should also be taken into consideration.

The possible use of the lands for tourism/recreational purposes was also debated.

Mr. Liam Kelly, in response to a query from Clr. E. Bonner, noted that there were proposals for the development of a transient site but that this was dependent on the provision of housing for a number of families currently using the emergency transient site.

Clr. Reid asked that the original designation of the site be taken into consideration i.e. the use of the lands for the development of an airport.

C/62/08

PRIVATISATION OF WATER SERVICES

The following motion in the name of Clr. Pringle was moved on his behalf by Clr. MacLochlainn, seconded by Clr. McGarvey and adopted: -

“That the members of Donegal County Council debate the privatisation of Water Services in the county and decide a way forward.”

Members were informed that:-

“Privatisation generally involves the transfer of ownership of assets from the public sector to the private sector. This contrasts with “public private partnerships, the objective of which is to procure public services and infrastructure by contract without a transfer of ownership of assets. In recent years Government Policy has championed public private partnerships in the Water Services Sector under the Design Build Operate banner with a stated emphasis on value for money and delivering quality public services, particularly in the case of large treatment works schemes listed on the Departments Water Services Investment Programme (WSIP). Under Design Build Operate contracts private service providers (PSP’s) design, build and operate water treatment or wastewater treatment plants on behalf of local authorities for a period ranging from 10-20 years. In most cases water and sewer networks are not included in these

contracts and remain in direct charge of the Council. The DBO contracts entered into to date have not impacted materially on the Councils existing workforce nor are future DBO contracts likely to. Redeployment of some of the existing workforce to manage the ever expanding water and sewer networks is however inevitable. Nationally the experience of DBO contracts is limited on the matters of value for money, environmental compliance, and maintenance of assets can only be assessed retrospectively after a reasonable period of operation of these contracts. For the foreseeable at least it appears that the availability of substantial central government funding will be contingent on the procurement of WSIP schemes using the DBO form of contract for individual schemes and bundles.”

C/63/08

TOWN CENTRE CAR PARK, BALLYSHANNON

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

“I call on Donegal County Council to commence work on the proposed new Town Centre Car Park in Ballyshannon.”

Members were informed that:-

“Negotiations on the acquisition of lands to carry out the car park between the local area and land owners have proven to be difficult with minimum success. It would appear that the CPO route is now the final option to progress this project.”

Clr. O’Neill asked that consideration be given to the introduction of a CPO on the lands in question so as to allow the carpark to proceed.

Mr. John McLaughlin agreed to keep members fully up to date on the outcome.

C/64/08

TOWN PLAN FOR RAMELTON

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

“That this Council considers a Town Plan for Ramelton as it is a Heritage Town.”

Members were informed that:-

“It is acknowledged that Ramelton is an important Heritage Town in the county. The Local Area Plan Programme was established some time ago by members on an Electoral Area basis. In the Milford Electoral Area, Ramelton is at number 5 on the list of priorities. As the county has over 90 settlements that could merit a Local Area Plan, it would not be possible to prepare a Plan for each settlement in the immediate future, but an Electoral Area approach to Local Area Plans which will be implemented on a pilot basis this year, will examine the grouping of settlements within Electoral Areas, to produce a series of plans in a more efficient and cost effective manner. If successful, this year approach will then be rolled out to other areas.”

C/65/08

LAYING OFF OF ROADS STAFF

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

“In the future, that this Council do not lay off temporary roads staff until the projects that have commenced have been completed.”

Members were informed that:-

“Temporary/seasonal roads staff are employed for specific contract periods based on work requirement in the respective area for that year. Occasionally contracts are extended to cover periods where works have not been completed or extra money has been allocated.

The majority of temporary/seasonal staff are laid off at the end of November coinciding with the end of the financial year even though the project being worked on may not be finished. Most road works schemes are financed on an annual basis and cannot be carried forward into the next financial year and the Council must wait until January/February of the following year to receive funding notification. For this reason it is not always possible to keep staff on until projects are completed.”

C/66/08

ESTABLISHMENT OF AN EGTC FOR THE NW
BORDER AREA

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

“That this Council debate the establishment of and ECTG for the NW Border area.”

Members were asked to note the Regulation on the European Grouping of Territorial Cooperation, attached to the reply, and were informed that: -

“The aim of this new legal instrument is to facilitate cross-border, transnational and/or inter-regional co-operation between regional and local authorities. An ECTG would be invested with legal personality for the implementation of territorial cooperation programmes based on a convention agreed between the participating national, regional, local or other public authorities.

Contact has been made with European Commission representatives to assess how best this opportunity may be pursued from a Donegal perspective and an update report will be brought to the members for discussion on receipt of clarification.”

Clr. McGowan outlined the benefits and the necessity of having an ECTG set up in the North West Border area.

C/67/08

HOUSING POLICY

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

“That the Council discuss our current Housing Policy.”

Members were informed that:-

“The adopted revenue budget for the Housing Directorate in 2008 is €16.4m with a further €188m planned under the three year Capital Programme. The Budget Book provides details of Housing Policy in the extensive forms which it can take which account for the total spend as outlined above. The term “Social Housing” is now deemed to include the traditional housing programme being provided by the local

authority, housing provided under the voluntary schemes and under the rental accommodation scheme. In addition to the direct provision of social housing, there are a range of housing supports available to persons who cannot meet their own housing need without assistance.

This assistance can be in the form of a grant to improve their existing accommodation under one of the three new grant schemes, a reconstruction loan or improvement works in lieu of re-housing loan, a shared ownership loan or an affordable /ordinary loan. All applicants must be assessed against these wide ranging options to determine the most appropriate form of housing support that should be provided with regard being had to their individual specific needs and circumstances.”

C/68/08

BALLYBOFEY/STRANORLAR SWIMMING POOL

The following motion submitted by Clr. A. Bonner was withdrawn:-

“That this Council resolve to provide such funding as may be necessary to fund the balance of the cost of construction of the Ballybofey Stranorlar Swimming Pool, after the application of capital allocation of €3.8m, so as to bring the project to operational stage, and that this funding be provided by way of topslicing funds raised through the Development Contribution Scheme, commencing in 2008.”

C/69/08

ATTENDANCE OF GARDA SUPERINDENDENTS AT ELECTORAL AREA MEETINGS

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

“That this Council calls for Garda Superintendents across this county to attend Electoral Area Meetings of the Council at least twice a year to give a report on Garda activities in these areas and to address concerns that may arise from elected members.”

Members were informed that:-

“At present there are a number of linkages between An Garda Siochana and Donegal Local Authorities. Donegal County Council works closely with An Garda Siochana through the Donegal County Development Board and

through a range of related groups e.g. CDB Donegal Children's Services Committee, Letterkenny Pilot Policing Committee and the CDB High Level Travellers Group. This engagement has proved to be positive and beneficial."

Members outlined the need for the immediate establishment of policing committees.

It was generally agreed that the meetings with Garda Superintendents should take place at electoral area level so as to keep all concerned focused on issues on the ground.

C/70/08

COASTAL EROSION WORK AT TORY ISLAND

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

"That this Council write to Minister Eamonn O Cuiv to seek funding to match co-funding agreed by this Council last June to carry out coastal erosion work at Tory Island Pier, Improvements at Rannagh, Arranmore and Inish Boffin and other Marine Projects."

Members were informed that:-

"This work can be done after the motion is adopted."

C/71/08

FINAL FINISH ON ERRIGAL ROAD

The following motion in the name of Clr. Doherty, was moved on his behalf by Clr. Alcorn and adopted:-

"That Donegal County Council will put the final finish on the Errigal Road."

Members were informed that:-

"The Glenveagh-Dunlewey route is prioritised at number 1 for Glenties Electoral Area for EU Co-Financed Projects and has received monies over the last decade or more. Widening works have been completed a number of years ago. The outstanding works is laying the final pavement layer on the entire route and safety measures along the entire route. Both these items of works have commenced a number of years ago, however, due to the length of the project it is

anticipated that completion will be a number of years at current funding levels.”

C/72/08

PROCESS OF S.I. APPLICATIONS

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

“Now at the beginning of 2008, that Donegal County Council formulate a Policy that expedites the application process of S.I. applications and also expedites the time frame that contractors have on building these houses.”

Members were informed that:-

“At present when an applicant is approved for an SI cottage, only a very preliminary site assessment is involved. The applicants file is then forwarded to the Housing and Design Department in Lifford where a more detailed analysis of the site is undertaken as part of the planning, conveyancing and tender processes. These stages can lead to delays arising from inadequate vision lines, drainage issues, costs for repairs to county roads leading to the SI from future construction traffic damage, water supply, suitability of the site for the treatment and disposal of domestic effluent, title difficulties for site transfer etc. These items can be very frustrating for the applicant bearing in mind that their application has already been approved and the provision of an alternative suitable site at this stage is very difficult. It is envisaged that the application process would be a two stage one in the future.

State 1 involves the assessment of the applicants housing need by housing services and if an SI is the recommended housing solution then the applicant would receive preliminary approval subject to the provision of a suitable site.

Stage 2 would involve a detailed assessment of the proposed site and applicants name would not be formally approved for inclusion on the SI until this assessment is completed and the site is deemed suitable for the provision of an SI cottage.

This procedure will lead to quicker site assessments as major issues relating to access, vision lines, title etc. can be identified at an early stage and an alternative site identified if necessary. The suitability of a site on the basis of its ability to treat domestic effluent is becoming a major issue at present with the impending publication of a Code of Practice on this matter by the EPA which involves very stringent criteria for the treatment of domestic effluent for single houses. This matter was brought to the attention of the Housing and Building SPC in 2007 regarding its impact on potential SI sites.

The introduction of the new forms of Public Works Contracts in 2007 will now make it difficult for contractors to deviate from their construction programmes as outlined in their tender. Extensions of time on a contract will require a more formal assessment process as these delay costs will now be part of the tender analysis. It is envisaged that future contracts will run to programme and the practice of SI contracts being unnecessarily prolonged by the contractor will cease accordingly.”

C/73/08

ST. BODENS TERRACE

The following question was submitted by Clr. McGuinness:-

“Why was the car park at St. Bodens Terrace, Culdaff not resurfaced?”

Clr. McGuinness was informed that:-

“The following response was given in the September meeting – “The car park area at St. Boden’s Terrace, Culdaff is being addressed jointly by the Housing and Roads Directorate. Housing will address the drainage issue that exists and roads will make the proposal to the Electoral Area Committee to allocate CLAR Class II and III funding to bitmac the are in the 2008 allocation. If all goes to plan the work should be completed by the summer of 2008.” This is still the case.

C/74/08

PUBLIC LIGHTING-MILL GLEN HOSUING ESTATE

The following question was submitted by Clr. McDonald:-

“Please confirm why there is no public lighting in Mill Glen housing estate in Moville 3 years after they were occupied?”

Clr. McDonald was informed that:-

“It is understood that a misunderstanding has existed between the developer Mill Glen Developments Ltd and the E.S.B. According to the company secretary, this misunderstanding has now been resolved. The company is now awaiting the E.S.B. to do the connection.”

C/75/08

WORKS N13 FROM NEWTOWNCUNNINGHAM TO MANOR

The following question was submitted by Clr. Conaghan:-

“What works are proposed on the N13 from Newtowncunningham to Manor this year?”

Clr. Conaghan was informed that:-

“It is expected to prepare design and tender documents for the stretch of N13 between Newtoncunningham and the Pluck roundabout. The section of road near Veagh which was improved a few years ago will not need to be re-surfaced. However, a low cost accident project estimated at €15,000 at Veagh will be carried out. Some long standing issues regarding junctions along the Newtowncunningham stretch will also be examined and a solution developed in conjunction with local consultation.”

C/76/08

GLENEELY SEWERAGE SCHEME

The following question was submitted by Clr. McGuinness:-

“What progress has been made in solving the problem at Gleneely Sewerage Scheme?”

Clr. McGuinness was informed that:-

“The wastewater treatment plant currently serving Gleneely has limited spare treatment capacity such that further multiple development within the catchment is incapable of being treated to the required standards. Expansion of the treatment works in conjunction with and financed by new

developments may be possible subject to the receiving waters being able to assimilate the discharge. Such assessments will be carried out if it becomes clear that there is real and significant development demand to support the expansion of the existing works. It is unclear at present if there any demand for additional development.”

C/77/08

FIRE ENGINES FOR MOVILLE

The following question was submitted by Clr. McDonald:-

“Why is Donegal County Council not prioritising fire engines for Moville’s outdated Fire Brigade?”

Clr. McDonald was informed that:-

“When new fire appliances are delivered to the county the priority need is determined at that time based on a number of factors including the age and condition of the existing appliance stock and the number of callouts from the various stations around the county. The age and condition of the existing Moville appliance is noted and it has a high priority at the moment. Currently Donegal Fire Service has one new fire appliance under construction with Browns Coachworks, Belfast. A decision on its location will be made when delivery is made.

The Fire Service has submitted a five year programme of replacement and update of appliances to the Fire Service section of the DOEHLG for approval and are awaiting a reply.”

C/78/08

SEWERAGE SCHEME FOR CARRIGANS

The following question was submitted by Clr. Conaghan:-

“What is the up to date position regarding provision of a sewerage scheme for Carrigans?”

Clr. Conaghan was informed that:-

“A solution has been identified for the Carrigans scheme which involves transferring the load to St. Johnston. Some elements of the St Johnston scheme were tendered in 2007 and it is likely further works will be tendered in 2008.

Tender documents for the provision of the transfer infrastructure to service Carrigans will be progressed in 2008 in parallel with the St Johnston scheme, and work will commence on Carrigans as soon as funding/ special development charges from developers has been identified.”

C/79/08

TULLYDISH 1 GROUP WATER SCHEME

The following question was submitted by Clr. Donaghey:-

“When will Tullydish 1 Group Water Scheme be taken over as the majority of participants are becoming increasingly unhappy and planning applications cannot now be permitted as a result?”

Clr. Donaghey was informed that:-

“The file on Tullydish Group water supply Scheme indicates that they were intending to seek additional grant funding for upgrade of pumping plant under the "new and upgrade" programme. This funding is only available to private group schemes.

There is also correspondence regarding take-over of the scheme. Under the terms of the Water Services Act 2007 a group scheme can now be taken in charge with the consent of at least two thirds of their membership.

The Council will contact the Group and determine their preferred course of action.”

C/80/08

BUNCRANA SEWERAGE SCHEME

The following question was submitted by Clr. Donaghey:-

“What is the current position regarding the upgrading of Buncrana Sewerage Scheme?”

Clr. Donaghey was informed that:-

“The Environmental Impact Statement for the upgrade of the Buncrana Wastewater Treatment Plant and Sludge Treatment Facility was published in December 2007. Work will not commence on contract documents until planning consent has been given by An Bord Pleanala and Preliminary Report approval has been given by the DEHLG. A brief for the appointment of consultants for the

rehabilitation, upgrading, and extension of the Buncrana and environs sewer network was also submitted to the Department for approval in 2007. Approval is awaited.”

C/81/08

IMPROVEMENT SCHEME, CLONMANY

The following question was submitted by Clr. McGonagle:-

“When will the Improvement Scheme in Clonmany start?”

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. The Area Roads Section and the local group, Clonmany Community Group, agreed that the monies should be allocated to the enhancement of the Clonmany Market Square area and 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. P&ED are currently liaising with the Roads Directorate regarding the progression of the project so that same can be completed by Spring 2008 and allow for the successful drawdown of the Peace II funding.”

C/82/08

PROGRESS AT BARRACK HILL PROJECT

The following question was submitted by Clr. McGonagle:-

“What progress has been made with the Barrack Hill Project, Carndonagh?”

Clr. McGonagle was informed that:-

“Access Roads

a. Phase I: Part VIII approval for Phase I Access Road granted by Donegal County Council at March '07 Council meeting. Preparation of Tender documents for Phase I construction works has been finalised and will now go to tender. This will allow for the construction of the Access road into Barrack Hill from the Ballyloskey road.

b. Phase II: Part VIII approval for Phase II Continuation of Access Road granted by Donegal County Council at September '07 Council meeting.

c. Phase III: Part VIII approval for Phase III Church Access Road granted by Donegal County Council at December '07 Council meeting. Proposals for progression of Part VIII to be agreed with Inishowen EA Members in advance. Further Amendments may require Part VIII approval.

Town Park (C&E)

a. Part VIII approval for Town Park granted by Donegal County Council at December '07 Council meeting. Proposals for progression of Part VIII to be agreed with Inishowen EA Members in advance.

b. Town Park design plans are progressing through C&E - Percent for Arts Scheme.

Local Groups

a. Local Groups are continuing to develop their proposals and prepare designs in preparation of pre-planning / planning applications.

Local Landowners

a. Liaison with surrounding landowners is ongoing, where appropriate.”

C/83/08

FLOODING AT LOWER MOUNT MARION, MILFORD

The following question was submitted by Clr.

MacLochlainn:-

“Who is responsible for ensuring the prevention of further flooding at Lower Mount Marion, Milford, and what is being done to ensure this?”

Clr. MacLochlainn was informed that:-

“The Housing Section in Milford arranged for work to be carried out on this estate to both relieve a specific flooding issue and also to unblock a blocked sewer serving this estate which dealt with the specific problems which arose”

C/84/08

CIVIC AMENITY SITE, LETTERKENNY

The following question was submitted by Clr. Larkin:-

“Has work started on the Civic Amenity Site in Letterkenny?”

Clr. Larkin was informed that:-

“The contractor for the Civic Amenity Site has been appointed and we expect work to commence in February 2008. Work will initially concentrate on laying services to the site.”

C/85/08

SENIOR EXECUTIVE PLANNER FOR LETTERKENNY TOWN

The following question was submitted by Clr. Larkin:-

“What progress has been made on having a Senior Executive Planner for Letterkenny Town?”

“At present the Area Manager, Planning for the Letterkenny Electoral Area also manages the Inishowen Electoral Area.

In 2007 a total of 2756 applications were dealt with in both areas. Both areas also contain Town Councils i.e. Letterkenny our Gateway City and Buncrana the second largest town in the county. The level of planning applications in these two Electoral Area is slightly ahead of Glenties/Milford with 2693 applications for the same period. Donegal/Stranorlar had 2110 applications in 2007. The number,nature and complexity of applications in Letterkenny and its Environs requires a greater deal of consideration and input at a number of service levels which is led out by Planning. Forward Planning is also extremely important and a dedicated team of Planners are currently engaged in the review of the Letterkenny & Environs Plan which is advancing on schedule.

In 2007 the Council made additional resources available which enabled Planning to create a number of new posts most of which have been filled however two vacancies remain outstanding at present. Following the adoption of the 2008 Budget, I am reviewing the deployment of staff and the filling of the vacancies that exist. Financial provision has been made to strengthen the Planning team in Letterkenny and I will revert to the Council when the review is complete.

Pending the strengthening of the Letterkenny team, planning support is being provided by staff in Headquarters. I will keep the members informed.”

C/86/08

ROAD CONDITIONS AT BALLINDRAIT AREA

The following question was submitted by Clr. Crawford:-

“What plans does the Council have to improve the terrible road conditions in the Ballindrait area?”

Clr. Crawford was informed that:-

“Repairs to specific sections of Road are dealt with in the first instance at Electoral Area level.

Minor repairs can be carried out through the maintenance budget for the Area whereas substantial works must be prioritised through the Restoration Improvement programme.

Details of the 2008 Restoration Improvement are due out from DOEHLG shortly and it is hoped to fund a number of schemes in the Ballindrait area depending on the allocation received.”

C/87/08

ROADWORKS AT WOODLANDS JUNCTION

The following question was submitted by Clr. Brogan:-

“What is the current status of the roadworks at Woodlands Junction and when can works start as we have made this a priority for the last number of years?”

Clr. Brogan was informed that:

“The CPO to secure the land has been advertised. It is hoped that this CPO will be confirmed by late 2008 and works will then proceed depending on availability of funds most likely in 2009.”

C/88/08

IMPROVEMENT WORKS AT O'DONNELL PARK

The following question was submitted by Clr. Brogan:-

“When will improvement works at O'Donnell Park be completed and have we enough funding to complete roundabout?”

Clr. Brogan was informed that:-

“The programme of works for the roundabout at O' Donnell Park shows that the roundabout will be substantially completed by end of March 2008. The surface at that stage will probably be surface dressing as extra funding will be required to bitmac and asphalt. Even if extra funding is identified it is unlikely that the surfacing contracts will be in place until summer 2008.”

C/89/08

FLOODING PREVENTION IN RAPHOE

The following question was submitted by Clr. Crawford:-

“In view of investigations and survey undertaken by this Council in relation to flooding in Raphoe, where does this Council now stand in relation to future prevention?”

Clr. Crawford was informed that:-

“Donegal County Council have held a number of meetings with the Office of Public Works in relation to flooding in Raphoe. The most recent meeting took place on Thursday 25th January 2008. DCC have issued relevant information, data collected, reports and maps relating to flooding in Raphoe to the OPW, who are now managing the project. Consultants are being commissioned by the OPW to conduct a Pre-feasability Study which involves:

- An outline examination of catchment area
- Preparation of a Hydro Model
- Collection of Lidar Data (identification of flow channels and topography using aerial surveys)
- Hydrological investigation
- Assessment of Annual Average Damage
- Development of a Cost Envelop for possible solutions
- Environmental Impact of various solutions

The OPW are hoping to appoint the consultants in April 2008, with a programme for delivery of the consultant's Report by Q3 2008.

The cost of the pre-feasibility study is €25-30,000 and is being funded by the OPW.”

C/90/08

GUIDE FOR PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES

The following question was submitted by Clr. McDaid:-

“What progress has been made by this Council in accessing funding to produce a guide for people with disabilities that promotes universal accessibility?”

Clr. McDaid was informed that:-

“This has been included in Donegal County Councils 2008 submission to the Department of Environment, Heritage and Local Government with a view to securing funding to carry out this task. In addition, there may also be an opportunity to explore this proposal in the context of the Peace and Reconciliation Action Plan which is currently being initiated. The partnership body to oversee this process will meet for the first time in early February and will, following consultation with the public and key stakeholders, agree priority areas for inclusion in the plan.”

C/91/08

SCHEME OF LETTING PRIORITIES- NON RESIDENT FATHERS

The following question was submitted by Clr. McDaid:-

“Will this Council confirm that it has been awarding points, as per the Scheme of Letting Priorities, to separated/non resident fathers where there is a legal agreement in place, as agreed at Council Meeting of 30th May, 2005.”

Clr. McDaid was informed that:-

“This matter was considered by the Housing Strategic Policy Committee in 2006 and the following was agreed

“Credit for children to be given to separated \ non resident fathers where there is a legal agreement in place”.

During the discussion on the matter, the Committee enquired if it was perhaps being too onerous requiring a legal agreement to be in place. It was however pointed out that unless there was an agreement which clearly illustrated that a person was providing for children, it would be inappropriate

to be providing a house to cater for their needs where it was not clearly demonstrated that they were actively contributing towards the maintenance of a child.

I am to confirm that arrangements are in place to give such credit as was agreed.”

C/92/08

FROSSES/INVER WATER TREATMENT WORKS

The following question was submitted by Clr. Pringle:-

“When will the upgrading work be completed on the Frosses/Inver Water Treatment Works?”

Clr. Pringle was informed that:-

“The Water Treatment Works Upgrade at Frosses Inver is nearing completion and the plant will be commissioned early in 2008.”

C/93/08

SEWERAGE TREATMENT AT CARRICKBOY,
BALLINDRAIT

The following question was submitted by Clr. O’Neill:-

“Will Donegal County Council proceed with works to provide Sewerage Treatment at Carrickboy, Ballyshannon with the provision of a pumping station to serve the houses inside the town boundary that have been excluded from the new multi million euro town scheme?”

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. As noted a pumping system would be needed to connect these houses to the main sewers. The cost of providing a pumping station, rising main, and collection network is of the order of €100k, giving a unit cost per dwelling in excess of €16k which exceeds the limit of funding deemed economic by the Department.

Unfortunately, therefore, as there is no funding available, the works in question cannot be carried out.”

C/940/08 FOLLOW UP OF SECTION 183'S

The following question was submitted by Clr. O'Neill:-

“Will Donegal County Council please follow up on Section 183's that have been passed at Donegal Electoral Area level in 2007. It's disappointing that when a Section 183 is passed at Electoral Area level, that there is no follow up or no contact with the Councillor who proposed them, 6 months later?”

Clr. O'Neill was informed that:-

“Maps are being sought for the land in question purchased by water services. When these come to hand the matter will be followed up.”

C/95/08 KILLYBEGS PHASE 2 ENVIRONMENTAL IMPROVEMENTS

The following question was submitted by Clr. Pringle:-

“When will the Killybegs Phase 2 Environmental Improvements be tendered?”

Clr. Pringle was informed that:-

“The Planning & Economic Development Directorate is currently progressing an EIS project for Killybegs (Phase II). The Part VIII process has been completed and the Team is currently liaising with the Water, Environment and Emergency (WEE) Services Directorate regarding a proposed Sewerage Scheme for the town. The WEE Directorate is currently seeking approval from the Department for the Sewerage Scheme and, upon approval, will commence the preparation of the necessary tender documentation. Consultation with the WEE Directorate will continue to ascertain the possibility of completing the Sewerage Scheme and EIS works along the Main Street in tandem. Thereafter, the EIS tender documentation will be finalised to allow construction to commence in Autumn 2008.”

C/96/08 ALTERNATE LAYOUT FOR BRADY'S CORNER,
KILLYBEGS

The following question was submitted by Clr. Byrne:-

“Can this Council examine alternate lay out/design for Brady's Corner, Killybegs with emphasis on pedestrian safety?”

Clr. Byrne was informed that:-

“The Safety Engineer for the Council has been requested to examine this situation at last week.”

C/97/08 ACCESS TO SILVER STRAND BEACH, MALINBEG,
GLENCOLMCILLE

The following question was submitted by Clr. Byrne:-

“Can this Council examine proposals to improve access to Silver Strand Beach, Malinbeg, Glencolmbkille?”

Clr. Byrne was informed that:-

“The Marine Section will examine this beach access and submit a report with options, costings and recommendations and discuss at a future Electoral Area Meeting.”

C/98/08 RESERVOIR AT MILFORD

The following question was submitted by Clr. McGarvey:-

“Have all the arrangements been put in place to allow reservoir at Milford to go ahead?”

Clr. McGarvey was informed that:-

“Both the location and cost of the site for the proposed reservoir at Milford have been agreed with the landowner. The maps are complete and the land agreement will be sent to him shortly with a view to completing the land transfer as quickly as possible. Payment cannot be made until all of the legal documents are in place. The tender process for the work commenced week ending 18 January 2008 and funding will be from the Rural Water Small Capital Schemes Programme and council matching funds.”

C/99/08 SITE FOR RESERVOIR AT MILFORD

The following question was submitted by Clr. McBride:-

“Why has the site for the reservoir at Milford not been paid for yet?”

Clr. McBride was informed that:-

“Both the location and cost of the site for the proposed reservoir at Milford have been agreed with the landowner. The maps are complete and the land agreement will be sent to him shortly with a view to completing the land transfer as quickly as possible. Payment cannot be made until all of the legal documents are in place. The tender process for the work commenced week ending 18 January 2008 and funding will be from the Rural Water Small Capital Schemes Programme and council matching funds.”

C/100/08 HARBOUR AT DOWNINGS

The following question was submitted by Clr. McBride:-

“What is the up to date position on the development of the harbour in Downings?”

Clr. McBride was informed that:-

“Downings harbour is included in the 2008 application for funding recently submitted to the department of agriculture, fisheries and food. This department has now responsibility for harbour development.”

C/101/08 OBSTRUCTION AT PROPERTY AT BRIDGEND,
RAMELTON

The following question was submitted by Clr. McGarvey:-

“When does Donegal County Council propose to remove obstruction (boulder) placed on entrance to their property at Bridgend, Ramelton?”

Clr. McGarvey was informed that:-

“It is understood that the matter concerned may currently be the subject of legal proceedings. In these circumstances, I have decided that it would not be appropriate to publish a response at this time.”

C/102/08

SUPPORT FOR TOWNS WHICH ARE CLOSE TO
GATEWAY TOWNS

The following question was submitted by Clr. McGowan:-

“What, if any, strategy has the Council for supporting towns which are in close proximity to the Gateway of Letterkenny and Derry as it becomes clear areas like the Twin Towns will suffer if no action is taken to sustain businesses and develop facilities?”

Clr. McGowan was informed that:-

“The County Donegal Development Plan 2006 -2012 , sets out , a Spatial Strategy for the County. This Strategy has emerged from both the National Spatial Strategy and the Regional Planning Guidelines. The Ojectives of the Strategy include proposals to create a vibrant and fully functioning Gateway between Letterkenny and Derry, but also to create through Urban Strengthening measures ,a strong urban structure at sub Gateway level, to support the Gateway,and also to ensure that the benefits of this strategy are spread evenly throughout the County. The implementation of the strategy is provided through a number of initiatives such as improving the quality of the built environment and regeneration of run down areas. Also by upgrading communications through improvement of road linkages and public transport, supporting retail activity through the Retail Strategy. Other aspects of the strategy relate to working towards the economic, social and cultural development of the County, the identification of Key Interest Centres, to encourage economic development, the development of the Tourism Product, the enhancement of the public service function, the upgrading of infrastructure and developing cross border linkages through the development of cross border economic development corridors. These principles are also strongly articulated in the adopted Local Area Plan for Ballybofey / Stranolar, and the forthcoming extensive

amendment to the Local Area Plan to be shortly presented to the County Council.”

C/103/08 PROGRESS ON STRANORLAR CARPARK

The following question was submitted by Clr. A. Bonner:-

“What is the up to date progress on the Stranorlar Playground?”

Clr. A. Bonner was informed that:-

“The tender documents for this proposal are being prepared at present and it is expected that the Council will proceed to tender stage in mid February.”

C/104/08 STRATEGIES FOR CASTLEFINN BRIDGE

The following question was submitted by Clr. McGowan:-

“Please give a detailed progress report on both strategies as agreed for Castelfinn Bridge including estimated costs?”

Clr. McGowan was informed that:-

“Castelfinn Bridge - "The New Bridge" - Donegal County Council has made an application to the Department of Transport for a strategic funding grant for the design and construction of a new bridge at Castlefin. Furthermore it is the intention of the County Council to make an application for an Interreg IV grant during the next call for projects in the spring. In the meantime, the Road Design Forward Planning team has commenced work on the Route Selection Process with respect to the location of the proposed new bridge for Castlefin (as per commitment at public meeting in Sept 2007). The time frame for the RS Process is generally as follows : Completion of Constraints Study Phase including public consultation by end of April 2008, Identification of Route Options including public consultation by end of October 2008 with Route Selection Report with recommended route presented to Elected Members for adoption in early 2009. On adoption of the Recommended Route and subject to securing of funding, it is then proposed to procure a Consultant Engineer to design the new bridge and complete all associated statutory processes, prior to

tendering for a contractor to construct the works. It is estimated that this project will cost in the region of €6.5million.

Subject to confirmation from the DoT, it is anticipated that €300,000 from EU Cofinanced Grant will be allocated to the existing Castlefin Bridge for strengthening works in 2008 (as per agreed at the public meeting in September 2007). The strengthening of the existing bridge will negate the need for a weight restriction and relieve the burden placed on the residents of this area. Strengthening options are currently being assessed and once engineering decision has been made as to optimum solution, contractor will be procured and work shall commence. Based on nature of the work, health and safety issues, and necessity to preserve the long term integrity of the bridge, the final cost estimate has yet to be determined but may range from €400k to €700k. Update will be provided through the Stranorlar Area Manager once details and estimate have been finalised.”

C/105/08 TWIN TOWNS BYPASS

The following question was submitted by Clr. Reid:-

“Leaving aside CPO’s will any further objections or changes to the proposed route delay the proposed start date of the Twin Towns bypass?”

Clr. Reid was informed that:-

“Procedure is as follows;
An Bord Pleanalla are expected to convene an Oral Hearing. Following this they will decide on whether to approve, modify or reject the scheme. There is no time limit on the Bord for making a decision. Current programme is based on the Bord issuing a decision before the end of this year and will change if this does not happen. As always progress on the scheme is fully dependent on adequate funding being made available when needed.”

C/106/08 WOODLANDS DOOISH N15 JUNCTION

The following question was submitted by Clr. A. Bonner:-

“Has Stranorlar Electoral Area identified funding from NRA Budget or Roads Budget (Stranorlar Electoral Area) to provide clearance at road side from Woodland Dooish N15 Junction down to Roadhouse Junction for pedestrians as this is a very dangerous part of the road with young and old walking to local shop etc?”

Clr. A. Bonner was informed that:-

“This refers to the National Primary road from the Roadhouse Bar in the direction of Donegal Town and would involve land purchase and road widening. At the recent Stranorlar Electoral Area the NRDO engineer identified Mc Clays corner towards Lifford as the only likely NRA project other than the By-Pass CPO to progress in 2008 in the Stranorlar Electoral Area.”

C/107/08 PROPOSED SWIMMING POOL FOR BALLYBOFEY/STRANORLAR

The following question was submitted by Clr. Reid:-

“Is the Council committed to any shortfall in maintenance and running costs of the proposed swimming pool for Stranorlar/Ballybofey?”

Clr. Reid was informed that:-

“In the annual BUDGET adopted by the Elected Members of the Council there is an annual allocation of revenue funds towards the operational costs of Leisure Centres. In BUDGET 2008 there is a provision of €182,000 in respect of Ballyshannon Leisure Centre and €60,000 in respect of Buncrana Leisure Centre. It will therefore be a matter for the Elected Members to make provision for subsidising operational costs of the proposed Ballybofey Stranorlar Leisure Centre in future annual Budgets when the Centre is operational.”

C/108/08 AREA PLAN FOR ARDARA

The following question was submitted by Clr. Slowey:-

“When will an Area Plan for Ardara be put in place? What planning mechanisms do Donegal County Council have in

place to ensure orderly development where there is no Area Plan for small heritage towns such as Ardara?”

Clr. Slowey was informed that:-

“The Elected Members of the Glenties Area agreed a Programme for Local Area Plans in 2004. this placed Ardara at No 7, on the priority listings, below settlements such as Dunfanaghy and Dungloe.

I will however, be developing proposals during this year, on a pilot basis as set out in the Budget book text, to progress a new approach to the preparation of Local Area Plans at an Electoral Area level. In control points centres such as Ardara planning management staff work closely with conservation and heritage staff.”

C/109/08

GLENTIES, DUNGLOE AND GWEEDORE SEWERAGE SCHEME

The following question was submitted by Clr. Slowey:-

“What will be Donegal County Council’s funding requirements to progress the Glenties, Dungloe and Gweedore Sewerage Schemes with particular reference to the contribution required by the County Council coming from the Glenties Electoral Area to progress the respective projects taking into consideration the likely start starts?”

Clr. Slowey was informed that:-

“The Departments determination of Water Services Pricing Policy attached to the letter approving the Preliminary Reports for the Glenties and Dungloe Sewerage Schemes in May 2007 indicated a requirement for matching funding of 27.1% and 22.5% respectively. Applying these percentages to the total estimated planning & construction costs for both schemes of €3.942m and €5.787m gives estimated figures for matching funding of €1.068 and €1.302 respectively or a total of €2.370m. Taking into account likely start dates for the schemes the requirement could exceed €2.8m. It should be noted that the Department can review the Water Services Pricing Policy implications of any scheme right up to the final account stage of the scheme.”

C/110/08 NUMBER OF HOUSES BEING BUILT TO SATISFY HOUSING NEED

The following question was submitted by Clr. Gallagher:-

“What is the number of houses needed to be built to satisfy the housing need presently?” (number of houses not people).”

Clr. Gallagher was informed that:-

“There are presently 2893 open applications for Local Authority Housing assistance in County Donegal, including the Town Council areas. There are however a number of means of meeting the housing need as opposed to the direct building of houses by the Local Authority. For example, under the current housing action plan, during the period 2007 – 2009, it is planned that direct housing assistance will be provided to almost 5400 households during the period under the various forms of assistance available with almost 2900 of these being targeted to meet the needs of persons on the waiting list through a combination of direct builds, acquisitions, RAS transfers, casual vacancies, voluntary accommodation, part V and shared ownerships. Council officials are due to meet Department officials in March this year to review the plans contained in the current Social and Affordable Action Plan which is now done on the basis of a three year rolling programme.”

C/111/08 NUMBER OF HOUSING APPLICATIONS 2006 & 2007

The following question was submitted by Clr. Gallagher:-

“What was the number of applications for housing in 2006 & 2007?” (number of houses not people)?”

Clr. Gallagher was informed that:-

“The number of open service applications for the years in question are as follows:

2006	667
2007	713”

C/112/08 FOOTPATH IMPROVEMENTS AT LOUGHANURE AND DORE

The following question was submitted by Clr. E. Bonner:-

“When will the footpath improvements be carried out at Loughanure and Dore?”

Clr. E. Bonner was informed that:-

“Funding for both these schemes was allocated during summer 2007 and forms part of the 2007/2008 Programme. Dore : A number of meetings have taken place with the local committee with a further meeting scheduled for later this month. Land acquisition is in progress with a successful outcome expected. Following all the land being acquired it is hoped to deliver this programme by direct labour in the first quarter of this year.

Loughanure : Contract Documents are currently being prepared. It is also envisaged that this project will be delivered in the first quarter of this year.”

C/113/08 REPAIROF BRIDGES IN GLENTIES ELECTORAL AREA

The following question was submitted by Clr. E. Bonner:-

“What plans have the Roads Service to repair all bridges in the Glenties Electoral Area and improve the 3 bridges on Meenaroy Regional Road, these bridges are presently safeguarded by cones and barriers?”

Clr. E. Bonner was informed that:-

“Unfortunately, funding is not available to repair all the Bridges in the Glenties Electoral Area. Bridges are repaired on a priority basis , with priority lists being agreed at the various EA Meetings.

It is acknowledged that a number of Bridge Parapets are damaged in the Glenties Electoral Area. Funding for Works of this nature is contained within the limited general maintenance allocation. Parapet repair/ replacement competes against pothole repair, street cleaning, drainage and other maintenance tasks for funding.

As in previous years the proposed expenditure of the general maintenance monies will be decided upon by the Elected Members following presentation by the Local Roads Staff. This document is normally presented in late February / Early March. In the interim the Bridges highlighted shall be costed to allow a decision to be taken by the Members.”

C/114/08 ROADS PROJECTS TO MAGHERARORATY PIER

The following question was submitted by Clr. O’Dochartaigh:-

“When will Donegal County Council finish the agreed roads project to Magheraroarty Pier?”

Clr. O’Dochartaigh was informed that:-

“This route has received funding from Roinn na Gaeltacht under the strategic Road funded Programmes. Substantial Widening Works and Pavement Overlay have been undertaken from the N56 to the top of the pier Road. Design options are currently being considered for the section at Dan Beags Bridge.”

C/115/08 MAIN ROAD FROM MEENALECK TO DONEGAL INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT

The following question was submitted by Clr. O’Dochartaigh:-

“What plans has the Council to develop and finish the main road from Meenaleck to Donegal International Airport?”

Clr. O’Dochartaigh was informed that:-

“This Strategic Route has been receiving funding from Donegal County Council and Roinn Na Gaeltachta over the last number of years. Works on some sections have been completed with other sections still outstanding. Work is currently in progress acquiring land for this scheme. When this years allocation from Roinn na Gaeltacht is known the Local Roads Area Manager will brief the Glenties Elected Members on this years programmed Works.”

C/116/08 ARDARA – ARDAGHEY ROAD

The following question was submitted by Clr. Alcorn:-

“What funding has been spent on the Ardara-Ardaghey Road since 1999?”

Clr. Alcorn was informed that:-

“Total expenditure on the Ardara - Ardaghey road since 1999 amounted to approx €870,000. This was made up of allocations under the Restoration Improvement programme and and Eu - Co Financed scheme during the years 2001 to 2004.”

C/117/08 ESTIMATES FOR BOITHRE AISE SCHEMES TO AN ROINN EALAION AGUS GAELTACHTA

The following question was submitted by Clr. Alcorn:-

“Why is there such a long delay in Donegal County Council preparing estimates for Boithre Aise Schemes to An Roinn Ealaion agus Gaeltachta?”

Clr. Alcorn was informed that:-

“During November this year local Roads Personnel met Roinn na Gaeltacht with a view to streamlining this process. One item discussed at length was that schemes submitted from the Roinn to DCC for costing should be prioritised, thus avoiding the costing of schemes that may never be funded. It should be noted that a strong link exists between Local roads staff and RNG and if schemes are highlighted costings are expedited. Also, only 1 number scheme received funding in 2007.”

The following motions from other Councils were noted:-

C/118/08 BALBRIGGAN TOWN COUNCIL

“Balbriggan Town Council call on the Minister for the Environment to bring in legislation to close the loophole in the law, whereby drivers with foreign or otherwise invalid licences who break the road traffic laws are not being given penalty points.”

- C/119/08 SOUTH TIPPERARY COUNTY COUNCIL
“That the Manager explain the system operating for cyclists at roundabouts and where traffic calming measures have been put in place, from a safety viewpoint.”
- C/120/08 GALWAY CITY COUNCIL
“That Galway City Council request the Minister for the Environment to introduce a ban on all detergents, powders etc. containing phosphates as a result of the damage this is doing to fish, plant life and Lough Corrib in general.”
An amendment to this motion was passes as follows:-

“That Galway City Council requested the Minister for the Environment to introduce a ban on all detergents, powders etc containing phosphates as a result of the damage this is doing to fish, plant life and Lough Corrib in general and that this Council call on the Minister of the Environment to carry out a full investigation into what other discharges are currently going into Lough Corrib and leading to serious pollution of the water and that this investigation be completed as a matter of urgency.”
- C/121/08 MACROOM TOWN COUNCIL
“In view of recent crisis in the Health Service that we call on the Minister for Health to introduce a system of reporting in the Health Service which will ensure that when problems arise, they are brought to the attention of the relevant persons, up to and including the Minister and that the response is pro-active rather than re-active.”
- C/122/08 WATERFORD COUNTY COUNCIL
“That Waterford County Council calls on the Minister for the Environment, Heritage and Local Government now that he is aware that an anomaly exists with the Mortgage Subsidy Scheme where an approved applicant under Affordable Housing who obtains their loan from an outside lending agency is not entitled to the above mentioned scheme. This Council calls on the Minister to immediately implement changes to the Affordable Housing Scheme so that all approved applicants whether they get their loan from the Local Authority or an outside lending agency are entitled to this scheme.”

C/123/08 OFFALY COUNTY COUNCIL
“That Offaly County Council start the process of preparing a Roll of Honour for those who are buried in Flanders.”

C/124/08 WATERFORD CITY COUNCIL
“(a) That this Council deplores the Governments record on hospital acquired infections. The provision of a safe health care environment for patients in our hospitals, nursing homes and health care settings is a basic patient expectation and a fundamental human right. It is a national disgrace that in 2005 586 patients got a hospital acquired blood stream infection in this state.

Therefore, this Council supports the call of MRSA and Families Central Council for the following objectives to be supported and implemented by central Government:

- (1) A judicial inquiry into the non-implementation of the national guidelines contained in the 1995 “Control of Methicillin Resistant Staphylococcus Aureus, (MRSA) in the Irish Health Care Setting,” the non compliance by hospitals and health care settings with the 2005 Strategy for the control of Antimicrobial resistance in Ireland SARI, and the failure to supervise the full implementation of that strategy
- (2) Given that the Sate, the Minister for Health and the HSE failed in their duty of care to provide a safe health care environment for patients to which they are entitled that the Irish Government set up a redress board to compensate MRSA victims and their families.
- (3) That the Irish Government set up a National Directorate on a statutory basis for the inspection prevention and control of MRSA and other hospital acquired infections.

C/125/08 MONAGHAN COUNTY COUNCIL
“That Monaghan County Council support the campaign to accord national honours to Thomas Kent and have his remains re-interred in a more appropriate and significant location. As Irishmen and women we are all aware of the significance of 1916 yet for 90 years the remains of Vol Thomas Kent, who was executed in Cork prison on the 09th May 1916 as part of the justice afforded those who took part in the Easter Rising are still buried within the walls of the prison.”

- C/126/08. LIMERICK COUNTY COUNCIL
“That Limerick County Council request the Minister for Agriculture and Food to enable it to provide Well Grant to applicants involved in organic production irrespective of the fact that they may already have a public water supply.”
- “That Limerick County Council calls on the Supermarkets of Ireland to curtail their opening hours and days over the Christmas period.”
- C/127/08 BALLINASLOE TOWN COUNCIL
“That this Council highlight the present inadequacies in the planning system whereby An Bord Pleanala can approve planning applications that are not in line with proper planning and development as stated by their own planning Inspector.
- C/128/08 CLONMEL BOROUGH 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 Grant” applications and that this motion be circulated to every Local Authority for their consideration and to the East Galway Oireachtas members.”
- C/129/08 FINGAL COUNTY COUNCIL
“That Fingal County Council, on foot of the discovery of unsuitable building materials used in the construction of floor plinths in residential dwellings within our jurisdiction, write to the Minister for the Environment, Heritage and Local Government with regard to creating additional regulation for chemical/petrographic analysis of all backfill materials used in excavations, floors, road bases etc. and that the relevant technical guidance documents of the Building Control Act, 1990 and 2007 be altered to reflect same.”

This concluded the business of the meeting.