

**MINUTES OF STRANORLAR ELECTORAL AREA
COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON
TUESDAY 12TH JULY, 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
Brendan Porter, Area Engineer, Water/Environment/Emergency Services
Gary Martin, Divisional Manger, Community & Enterprise
Tommy Doherty, Assistant Engineer, Housing
Peadar Thomas, Area Manager, Roads
Claire McGeever, Area Engineer, Roads
Mary Hannigan, Area Manager, Housing
Rodney Irwin, National Road Design Office
Paul Christie, Executive Planner

Youth Councillors Present

Andrew McNulty, Project Officer
Jessica Stag

Apologies

Michael Breslin, Area Manager, Water/Environment/Emergency Services
Denis Kelly, Area Manager, Planning & Economic Development

SEC 29/00 ADOPTION OF MINUTES

On the proposal of Cllr McGowan, seconded by Cllr Bonnar the minutes of the meeting held on 9th June 2005 were adopted.

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

SEC 30/00 COMMUNITY & ENTERPRISE

30.1 Report on Community & Enterprise

Twin Towns Platform Group

Mr McLaughlin advised Members that following a recent meeting he was awaiting feedback from the group on the model of a Community Enterprise Company presented to them at the meeting.

Stranorlar Interagency Initiative

Mr McLaughlin advised Members that the development worker Susan Gibbons, was due to leave on 22nd July and discussions are ongoing with Letterkenny Institute of Technology regarding a replacement.

Youth Council

Jessica Stag updated Members on the various projects and issues the youth councillor's have been involved with recently.

She made particular reference to the Intergenerational Committee that had been established by Susan Gibbons to fill the need for more co-operation between the elderly and young people. One of the main concerns raised at an intergenerational meeting was problems being experienced with anti social behaviour in the area behind the Balor Theatre leading into St Vincent's Close housing estate. The laneway was badly lit, covered in broken glass and there was also a problem with graffiti.

Ms Stag submitted that a recommendation from the intergenerational committee was to light up the area and requested Members support. She

further advised that the Balor Theatre had agreed to fund an Art Project for the side of the building.

Cllr Bonnar referred to possibility that this building may be sold however she confirmed that Members fully supported the Youth Councillors proposal.

Research & Policy

Mr McLaughlin advised Members that the audit of community infrastructure had been completed.

Task Force Funding

Mr McLaughlin advised Members that an extension of the Task Force funding had been announced. Information Sessions and a call for applications will be made in September and it is hoped that allocations will be made in November/December 2005. Mr McLaughlin stressed that reconciliation would be the key factor when considering applications for funding.

Local Area Teams

Mr McLaughlin advised that the first meeting with Castlefin Local Area Team would be held in September.

30.2 Tourism

Garry Martin, Divisional Manager gave a presentation in relation to tourism within the County.

Mr Martin also circulated a copy of the Irish Tourist Industry Confederation (ITIC) study at the meeting and requested Members to examine the document in advance of the forthcoming Tourism Workshop to be held in September.

Members thanked Mr Martin for his presentation and welcomed this opportunity to discuss tourism in the county. Members made reference to various issues relating to the Finn Valley area. Mr Martin advised that all these issues would be noted and would be discussed at the forthcoming workshop.

30.3 Cultural Services

Library

As requested at the previous meeting a report was circulated with the agenda outlining the opening hours of the various libraries throughout the county. Mr McLaughlin advised that the opening hours in the Ballybofey library had been increased from 6 hours to 16 hours per week.

Cllr Bonnar submitted that Ballybofey / Stranorlar was the third biggest town in the county however there were 12 other libraries countywide with longer opening hours. She also referred to the fact that there was no 'internet' access available in the library. Members expressed their dissatisfaction at the level of service being provided in the Ballybofey/Stranorlar area submitting that yet again the area was being neglected.

Cllr McGowan suggested that a proposal be made at the Budget Meeting to finance full opening hours for the library in Ballybofey / Stranorlar from 2006.

Cllr Reid again referred to the fact that 20 years ago Ballybofey /Stranorlar was second priority for a new Library building behind Letterkenny. He questioned how this priority had since been reduced.

Members requested that Eileen Burgess attend the next electoral area meeting to discuss the matter further. Mr McLaughlin agreed to pass on the request to Ms Burgess.

30.4 Members Development Fund

Members noted the report circulated with the agenda outlining expenditure to date under the Members Development fund.

Mr McLaughlin recommended that Members consider funding the lighting at the Balor Theatre already referred to by the Youth Council from this fund.

30.5 County Fora

Members noted that at the recent AGM an interim board was elected until election time in October.

SEC 31/00 WATER/ENVIRONMENT/EMERGENCY SERVICES

Mr Brendan Porter conveyed apologies on behalf of Mr Michael Breslin, Area Manager, who was unable to attend today's meeting. Members expressed their annoyance that this was the second meeting that Mr Breslin had not attended and expressed their dissatisfaction with the service provided by Water and Environment. Members highlighted a number of issues including lack of progress in relation to the proposed Leisure Centre, Capital Schemes such as Convoy and also recent problems with the Treatment Works in Stranorlar. The benefit of continuing with this agenda item was questioned. Following a short discussion it was agreed to continue with the Water and Environment agenda however it was also agreed that an urgent meeting with the County Manager to consider these issues be requested before the end of July, and that Mr Jim Holohan the Director of Services, Mr Paul Kilcoyne, Mr Michael Breslin and Mr Donal Casey, also attend.

31.1 Ballybofey/Stranorlar Leisure Centre

In the absence of Mr Breslin, Mr Porter advised Members that the consultants report was due in July 2005.

Mr Porter advised that Mr Breslin would be available next week to meet with Members to discuss any issues arising from the meeting.

Members requested an urgent meeting with Mr Holohan & Mr Kilcoyne.

31.2 Capital Programme

Lough Mourne

Mr Porter advised Members that the Council was currently awaiting approval from the Department to commence the advanced works at the lake.

Convoy Wastewater

Mr porter advised that the contractor's insurances have been received in the office and it is hoped that works will commence in 6-8 weeks.

Members expressed their frustration at the lack of progress with this project submitting that they were told many times that the scheme would start in November 2004.

31.3 Group Schemes Programme

Members noted the report circulated with the agenda.

Cllr Bonnar referred to houses on the Creggan GWS that had not yet been connected as the ESB had not connected the pump. Mr Porter advised that it was the responsibility of the scheme promoters to arrange for the ESB connection.

Cllr McGowan referred to the proposed Halftown/Skelpy scheme that did not proceed, as the cost was proving prohibitive. He requested that Mr Breslin contact the promoter again to re examine the scheme.

31.4 Restoration Programme

Members noted the report circulated with the agenda.

Capital Works Programme.

Cllr Bonnar submitted that she had a serious problem with the Major Capital Works Programme for the Stranorlar area. €30m has been approved for Donegal for the 2004 - 2006 programme and only one scheme - Lough Mourne, has been approved within the Stranorlar Electoral Area for 2005. Members submitted that the upgrade of Lough Mourne was more important to the Letterkenny area than to Stranorlar.

Cllr Bonnar also submitted that funding for Convoy had been secured in 2004 however it had now slipped to a 2005 project.

She also expressed her concern that the network extension for Ballybofey/Stranorlar Sewerage Scheme didn't even appear on the Capital Programme even though the system was already being used to its full capacity.

Members again referred to the need for an urgent meeting with the County Manager to discuss the Major Capital Works Programme for the Stranorlar Electoral Area.

SEC 32/00 ROADS & TRANSPORTATION

32.1 Dreenan Bridge - Phase II

Mr Thomas advised Members that the Roads Section were proposing to have the house re valued and enter discussions with the householder.

Following a query from Members Mr Thomas advised that it would take approximately €1m to complete the approach roads to the bridge. This funding will have to be sought from the EU Co Funding Programme over the next few years.

32.2 2005 Road Works Programme

Mr Thomas advised that work was ongoing satisfactorily under the programme. The current budget was €4.37m.

Mr Thomas referred to the proposed works for Galwolie Bridge at Cloghan. He advised that land negotiations were at a very early stage and it is possible that the funding may not be spent before the end of the year. If it appears that this will be the case Mr Thomas advised that the money could be reallocated to Elactagh Bridge and Galwolie Bridge would be completed next year.

32.3 LIS Allocation

Mr Thomas advised that an allocation of €325,000 had been received from the Department. Further funding had been received from CLAR and including the local contributions the overall allocation will be €390,000.

Mr Thomas advised that the Draft 2005 LIS programme would be sent to Members in the post the following day.

32.4 2006 - 2008 Multi Annual Road Works Restoration Programme

Mr Thomas advised that funding of €3m was available under this programme. He submitted that he would prepare a draft programme for the Stranorlar Electoral Area and would present it to the Members for approval at a special roads meeting in 2-3 weeks time. He advised that when all electoral areas have approved their programme a countywide priority list would then be approved at a full council meeting.

32.5 Other Matters Arising

Speed Limits/Flashing Lights

Members confirmed to Mr Thomas that they had no proposals to increase speed limits within the Stranorlar Electoral Area.

In relation to flashing lights Members submitted that they wished all schools to be visited in this regard.

2006 EU Co Funded Priority List

Mr Thomas circulated copies of the priority list for 2004 and advised that the list must be reaffirmed for 2005.

Members were in agreement that the main priorities within the Stranorlar Electoral Area were Dreenan Bridge, Link road from Mulrine's to Glenfin road.

Other projects, such as the Ballybofey / Welshtown Road, Castlefin Bridge and Logue's Bridge, were also discussed.

Following a short discussion the first and second priorities were agreed:

1. Dreenan Bridge
2. Link Road from Mulrine's to Glenfin road

It was further agreed that the Roads Area Manager would prioritise the remaining projects on the basis of information available from existing technical reports.

Cllr Bonnar referred to a discussion that had taken place at an earlier Council meeting in relation to funding for Marine projects. She had made

the point that as the Stranorlar area didn't have any piers/harbours it was losing out on its share of this funding. She had suggested the members pursue the possibility of securing some of this 'marine funding' for bridges within the Stranorlar Area. Cllr Bonnar submitted that the option of securing funding for Logue's bridge should be pursued through this avenue.

Cllr McGowan reiterated his request that special funding should be sought for Castlefin Bridge.

Ballybofey/Stranorlar Bypass

Rodney Irwin, NRDO joined the meeting to update Members on the up to date position in relation to the proposed Ballybofey / Stranorlar By Pass. He advised that the CPO & EIS had now been finalised and the CPO would be published next week.

He also advised that the NRA had that morning approved the cost estimate for the link road, which the Council had agreed to fund.

Stranorlar Car Park

Members were advised that the Road Design office is currently preparing plans for the upgrade of the Car Park. Ms McGeever advised that the roads area staff were currently tidying up the area as an interim measure however no funding was currently available to progress the upgrade of the Car Park at this time.

Again Members expressed their dissatisfaction at the lack of progress in this matter. Cllr McGowan again proposed that the small strip of land adjoining be disposed of to fund the upgrade of the Car Park.

Brogan's Arch

Cllr Bonnar referred to complaints of antisocial behaviour at this location in Ballybofey and requested the Roads section to look into the practicality of putting up gates at the entrances, which could be locked at night. Ms McGeever agreed to investigate the matter.

Loading Bays in Ballybofey

Cllr Bonnar referred to two businesses in the town that had no parking spaces outside their premises to allow for loading/unloading. Ms McGeever submitted that she had discussions with one of the businesses regarding this matter and requested that the other business make contact with her.

Walls at Stranorlar

Cllr Bonnar requested that the walls outside the houses at the top of Stranorlar be faced in stone.

Pothole Repair

Following a query from Cllr McGowan regarding funding for pothole repair Mr Thomas advised that any requests should be submitted to the area roads office and they will be dealt with.

Cleaning of Gullies

Following a query from Cllr McGowan Mr Thomas advised that the road sweeper cleans the gullies annually.

Road Markings at Stranlongford

Cllr Reid referred to the road at Stranlongford that had not yet been lined. Ms McGeever advised that this project had been submitted to the road design office in Lifford to be considered under the Low Cost Accident project and she was hopeful funding would become available from this source.

Blocked Drains at Carrickshandrum

Cllr Reid referred to blocked drains at this location. Ms McGeever agreed to follow up.

32.6 Deputation from Navenny Residents Association

Cllr Reid welcomed Celine Deeney, Theresa O'Connell, Joseph McGilloway and Plunkett McIntyre to the meeting.

The issues raised by the deputation were as follows -

- Need for measures to reduce excessive speeding
- Lack of footpaths
- Lack of proper Signage
- Lack of enforcement of Speed Limits
- Need for Gardai with speed cameras
- Need to upgrade road due to high density of new development
- Danger when exiting from house entrances

The deputation made a detailed presentation in relation to the above issues. They also expressed their disappointment and frustrations that no actions had been taken by the Council in the area since their previous attendance at an electoral area meeting and these were the same concerns they were expressing again today.

Mr Thomas acknowledged the concerns expressed by the deputation and advised that that no action had been taken, as there was no funding available to carry out any works in the area. He also submitted that there was a speed limit in force in this area and enforcement was a matter for the Gardai. He added that all motorists also had a responsibility to drive with due care.

He advised the deputation a proposed funding package was being sought to carry out works in the area at an estimated cost of €37,000, for which he was awaiting Departmental approval. If the proposal is approved the works would involve footpaths, street lighting, signage, surface dressing and the widening of the bridge in conjunction with the developer in the area.

Members empathised with the residents and acknowledged their frustration that no progress had taken place. It was however submitted that the residents had been given an undertaking today that these issues would now be dealt with.

Cllr Reid thanked the deputation for attending.

SEC 33/00 PLANNING & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Mr Christie attended the meeting in the absence of Mr Kelly who was on annual leave.

33.1 Local Area Plans

Members noted the report circulated with the agenda and agreed the Local Area Plan programme as follows:

1. Convoy
2. Killygordon/Cross
3. Drumkeen
4. Cloghan
5. Liscooley
6. Doneyloop

Cllr McGowan referred to Peace II funding received by the Council in previous years for border villages for the purpose of preparing local area plans. He submitted that almost all of the funding for 2004 appeared to have been allocated to the Inishowen area therefore funding should be sought under this initiative for the local area plans for Convoy & Killygordon/Crossroads.

33.2 Recent Refusals

Members noted the report circulated with the agenda.

33.3 Planning Enforcement

Members noted the report circulated with the agenda.

33.4 Planning Statistics

Members noted the report circulated with the agenda.

33.5 Other Matters Arising

County Development Plan

Cllr McGowan referred to the 'quota for development' set out in the County Development Plan to counteract the overflow of development in border towns/villages from demand from Northern Ireland. He pointed out that the limit set out in the plan for Killygordon has now been reached therefore all further development has been stopped at present. Cllr McGowan expressed his view that this demand had not come from the North and was not the reason for Killygordon reaching its quota, and proposed an increase.

Mr Christie advised the Members that ultimately any change to the County Development Plan was a decision for the full Council however he submitted he wished to discuss the matter in more detail with his Divisional Manager as this issue would have implications for the Development Plan countywide. He advised Members he would keep them informed.

Footpaths

Members welcomed the fact that works on the footpaths in Killygordon had commenced.

Members again expressed their concern at the fact that works had stopped on the footpaths at two locations in Convoy. Mr Christie agreed to follow up.

Casual Trading

Mr Christie advised Members that he was hopeful the case would be heard at the next court sitting.

Drumboe Master Plan Area

Mr Christie advised Members that works had commenced in the C.P.U. on this project. When completed the proposal would be presented to members and go to public consultation.

Butt Hall Planning Application

Following a query from Members Mr Christie advised that the decision on this application was not due yet.

Blue Cedars Residents Association

Mr Christie advised Members that Mr Kelly had met with the developer and advised him of the outstanding issues that had to be dealt with urgently i.e. traffic calming and open spaces. Work was currently ongoing on the open space and it was agreed that the Planning and Roads sections would work together regarding the traffic calming measures.

SEC 34/00 HOUSING & BUILDING

34.1 Matters Arising from Previous Meeting

Housing waiting list for Ballybofey/Stranorlar

Ms Hannigan advised Members that there were 141 applicants in total with a first preference for Ballybofey and Stranorlar. To meet this need there were 47 houses available under the turnkey development at Donegal Road, Ballybofey, 39 under the Council's own development at Mullindrait, Stranorlar and 7 under construction under the Part V initiative making a total of 93 houses. It was expected that additional houses would be realised under further Part V proposals. With these figures in mind she felt that the acquisition of a further substantial turnkey proposal in the area would be surplus to requirements however if Members wished the matter could be reviewed.

Cllr Reid raised a query in relation to how much funding would be available after the 93 houses mentioned above would be purchased and proposed that the balance of monies should be used to purchase land in the area rather than purchasing a further turnkey development. Cllrs McGowan and Bonnar were in agreement with this additional Turnkey project being purchased. Members also submitted that the development of a playground in conjunction with the turnkey development at Donegal road should be pursued.

Cllr Bonnar referred to the Council site at Mullindrait currently being designed. She submitted that this was a very valuable site and that the Council should consider utilising its full value by disposing of it and buying additional land elsewhere in Ballybofey /Stranorlar. It was agreed that this site be re valued and depending on the outcome of the re valuation progress of the current development be reviewed.

34.2 Housing Capital Programme

Members noted the report circulated with the agenda.

34.3 Social Housing

Members noted the report circulated with the agenda.

34.4 Casual Vacancies

Members noted the report circulated with the agenda.

34.5 Traveller Accommodation Programme

Members noted the report circulated with the agenda outlining a proposal to purchase a dwelling for a traveller family at the Beeches housing estate, Navenny, Ballybofey.

Following a short discussion on the matter Members recommended that the Council consider the option of purchasing a detached house for the family rather than in a large housing estate. Ms Hannigan agreed to follow this matter up and keep Members informed.

34.6 Other Matters Arising

Proposed Convoy Resource Centre

Ms Hannigan circulated a copy of correspondence received from the Convoy & District Development Association at the meeting. The correspondence referred to their earlier request in relation to a portion of the site in Convoy currently being developed by the North and West Voluntary Housing Group. The Development Association have proposals for the erection of a Community Resource Centre, including a childcare

facility and were seeking the agreement of the Council to allow them enter negotiations with the Voluntary Housing Group to progress a joint project.

Cllr McGowan referred to a proposal to transfer land to the Convoy Playgroup to progress a childcare facility however this could not proceed at the time as the land was not in Council ownership and had only recently been acquired by the Voluntary Housing Body. He submitted that the childcare facility should not be delayed while considering other projects and proposed that an early meeting take place with the Playgroup, North & West Housing, Council Members and the County Childcare Committee to progress the childcare facility. Cllr Bonnar seconded the proposal and submitted that a playground should also be developed as part of the childcare facility.

Cllr Reid expressed his annoyance at what he saw as a lack of support for a Resource Centre in Convoy and called on members to support this project. He submitted that Cllrs McGowan & Bonnar fully supported the development of Resource Centres in Castlefin & Killygordon and questioned their motives in relation to the Convoy proposal. He submitted that this project was realisable and would be of great benefit to the Convoy area and that the group had assets to help finance the project.

The proposal to meet with the playgroup was carried.

34.7 Office Accommodation

Ms Hannigan advised Members that Mr Fitz Howard was arranging a meeting with Eileen Burgess to progress the inclusion of the Library/Library Administration building in the Stranorlar Public Service Centre.

Ms Hannigan also referred to various council properties being disposed of shortly for which the Council hope to raise a significant amount. Members welcomed this news.

Following a query from Members Ms Hannigan confirmed that the Department had not yet formally sanctioned the Public Service Centre for Stranorlar.

34.8 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The next meeting to take place at 2pm on Tuesday the 6th September 2005 in the Regional Training Centre, Stranorlar.

Mr Gilroy advised Members that a request had been received from Mr Aidan Mc Nicholas to facilitate a Budget Workshop in late September/early October.

It was agreed to hold the Budget Workshop just before the Electoral Area meeting scheduled for 18th October 2005 at 1pm with the meeting to commence at 2pm.