

**MINUTES OF MEETING OF LETTERKENNY ELECTORAL AREA COMMITTEE,  
HELD IN LETTERKENNY PUBLIC SERVICES CENTRE, ON MONDAY, 21<sup>ST</sup>  
JANUARY 2008.**

***LEC 01/08***     **MEMBERS PRESENT**

Cllr. Ciaran Brogan  
Cllr. Gerry Crawford  
Cllr. Jimmy Harte  
Cllr Dessie Larkin  
Cllr. Tony McDaid  
Cllr. Jean Crossan, Mayor, Letterkenny Town Council

***LEC 02/08***     **OFFICIALS PRESENT**

Eamonn Brown, Road Safety Officer  
Charlie Cannon, Executive Engineer, Roads & Transportation  
Clare Cronin, Area Manager, Planning & Economic Development  
Stephen Flynn, Senior Executive Engineer, Roads & Transportation  
Jamie Gallagher, Road Safety Engineer  
Mark Gallagher, Assistant Engineer, NRDO  
Pat Gillespie, Area Manager /Senior Executive Engineer, Roads  
Jim Hyland, A/Area Manager/ Senior Executive Engineer, WEES  
Eunan Kelly, Area Manager, Corporate Services,  
James Kelly, Executive Engineer, WEES  
Patsy Lafferty, Area Manager, Housing  
Tommy McNulty, Clerk of Works, Housing  
Rose Patton, Staff Officer, Corporate Services  
Ronnie Sayers, Executive Engineer, Roads & Transportation  
Jeremy Smith, Walking Trails and Walking Development Officer

**APOLOGIES**

Aideen Doherty, Administrative Officer, Community & Enterprise

Cllr Dessie Larkin chaired the meeting.

***LEC 03/08***     **Condolences**

Cllr Dessie Larkin, on behalf of the Committee, offered condolences to Aideen Doherty, on the recent death of her father-in-law, Michael McDermott.

***LEC 04/08***     **CONSIDERATION OF THE MINUTES OF LETTERKENNY  
ELECTORAL AREA COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 20<sup>th</sup>  
NOVEMBER 2007.**

On the proposal of Cllr. Jimmy Harte and seconded by Cllr. Gerry Crawford the Minutes of Letterkenny Electoral Area Committee Meeting held on 20<sup>th</sup> November 2007 were agreed subject to an amendment of 58.04.

Cllr Larkin requested that duplication from reports to the Electoral Area Meeting be avoided where possible and also that all staff attending the Electoral Area Meetings remain for the complete Meeting

***LEC 05/08      COMMUNITY CULTURAL AND ENTERPRISE SERVICES***

***05.01      Walking Routes***

Jeremy Smith, Walking Trails and Walking Development Officer updated the Committee on progress, which is ongoing on developing Walking Routes and Cycling Routes in the Letterkenny Electoral Area.

The Committee welcomed this and Cllr Tony McDaid asked that options be explored for encouraging people to walk to work or walk their children to school to relieve traffic congestion and promote healthier lifestyles.

Mayor Crossan asked whether or not hill walking was included in the Walking Trail. Mr Smith replied that some hill walks are part of the project but that these tend to be limited to routes, which are marked on the ground and where appropriate agreements have been reached with landowners.

Cllr Brogan asked that the possibility of developing Walking Routes in Coravaddy, Glenhoagh and Woodlands be explored and also agree responsibility for clearing litter as illegal dumping was a major issue on some routes.

Mr Smith, in response, stated that Coillte had put a lot of effort into developing Walking Routes in Coravaddy and he would contact them with regard to promoting it.

Cllr Larkin asked that the route from Letterkenny to the Aura Letterkenny Leisure Complex be considered for inclusion as part of Sli Na Slainte/historic Route.

All Members stressed the importance of proper signage being erected for Walking Trails and that maps of Walking Trails be made available in local Tourist Offices etc. Mr Smith noted that a new website [www.walkingdonegal.ie](http://www.walkingdonegal.ie) has been developed in conjunction with Fáilte Ireland North West and has information on walks across the county.

It was agreed to hold a Workshop to explore potential Walking Routes on Monday 18<sup>th</sup> February at 10.00 a.m.

**LEC 06/08**     **PLANNING & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT**

**06.01**     **Ard na Mealla, St Johnston**

Clare Cronin informed the Committee that Planning Section and the section dealing with Housing Estates Takeover were working on outstanding issues including the completion of Public Lighting at Ard na Meala.

Cllr Gerry Crawford expressed his dissatisfaction with the lack of progress at Ard na Meala and urged that a follow up be done with ESB in relation to the public lighting issue and that the completion of all works be progressed.

**06.02**     **Fairways, Letterkenny**

Cllr Dessie Larkin raised the issue of non-compliance with Planning Conditions in respect of the Fairways, Letterkenny including the provision of a crash barrier and the completion of public lights and footpaths from Arena 7 to the Fairways and asked that this be followed up.

Clare Cronin advised the Committee that this application was in the Letterkenny Town Council area and that this should be raised with the Town Council.

**06.03**     **Raphoe Flooding**

Clare Cronin stated that a response has been prepared to the issues raised by the Raphoe Flood Committee and also that the Planning Office will continue to work with the Roads Directorate to follow up, through appropriate enforcement action, sites where non-compliance with planning conditions is contributing to the flooding problem.

Cllr Tony McDaid stressed the importance of listening to the advice of locals regarding problem areas and possible solutions as recent events have shown.

The Committee asked that developments in Raphoe be inspected to ensure planning conditions relating to drainage are complied with. Cllr Dessie Larkin stated that more interaction between services is required in relation to planning applications particularly in relation to flooding issues and water discharging onto public roads and requested that a Report be presented to the next LEAC Meeting regarding this.

**06.04**     **Lismonaghan Road**

The Committee requested that completion of the works on Lismonaghan Road be followed up with Developers.

**06.05**     **Consideration of Recent Refusals**

The Committee considered the report on applications refused since the last meeting, which was circulated with the Agenda.

The Committee asked that the high level of Invalid Applications in the Letterkenny Electoral Area be investigated and a report submitted to the next meeting of the Committee.

**06.06**      **Unauthorised Development Report**

The Committee considered the Unauthorised Development Report that was circulated with the Agenda.

Cllr Ciaran Brogan stressed the importance of follow up on Planning conditions to ensure compliance with same, Clare Cronin stated that the dedicated Enforcement Officer was currently dealing with a backlog of issues and agreed that co-ordination between Directorates was essential.

**06.07**      **Elmwood Downs, Letterkenny**

Cllr Dessie Larkin requested that the cause of the flooding from the Ramelton Road to Elmwood Downs be investigated.

**LEC 07/08**      **WATER, ENVIRONMENT & EMERGENCY SERVICES**

**07.01**      **Letterkenny Civic Amenity Site**

Jim Hyland informed the Committee that the site was being cleared at present and work should progress at the end of January.

The Members welcomed this progress.

**07.02**      **Letterkenny Boreholes Scheme**

The Committee were informed in the report circulated with the Agenda that work is ongoing on commissioning this Scheme and it is hoped to have water in the network by the end of February.

James Kelly stated, in reply to a query from Cllr Dessie Larkin, that the Boreholes would supply the new Rahan Reservoir which would in turn supply the Listillion Reservoir which had previously been fed from Lough Salt and that this would in turn alleviate problems with supply in the Glencar area.

Mr Kelly also stated that the consistency of the water would be monitored.

The Committee welcomed the progress to date.

**07.03**      **Glenmaquinn Group Water Supply Scheme**

In response to queries regarding the proposed extension to Glenmaquinn Group Water Supply Scheme Jim Hyland informed the Committee that part of this extension has been laid and the rest would be laid in conjunction with the Labadish/Drumoghill G.W.S.S.

The Committee welcomed this and they asked to be kept updated on any progress.

**07.04**      **Glenwood Park**

The Committee were informed that a meeting was held between the Town Council and Water and Environment staff in December 2007 to discuss emergency temporary measures to alleviate the flooding problem being experienced within the estate. The desirable solution is to divert both Foul and Storm water out of the estate along the Circular Road to the Long Lane. However, this is a major project and would have a considerable cost, with no funding available at present.

Surveying work is currently underway within the estate with a view to introducing a temporary high-level overflow from the foul sewer to an adjacent large diameter drain. This may involve laying a short section of pipeline, and it is hoped that this work will be completed by February 2008.

Mayor Crossan asked that a meeting be arranged with the Glenwood Residents Association to update them on proposals to alleviate the flooding problems on the Estate.

Cllr Dessie Larkin urged that a meeting be arranged with the County Manager to explore funding options for the €200,000 required to divert both foul and storm water out of Glenwood Park and Committee advised of the outcome.

**07.05**      **Business Park Road, Letterkenny**

James Kelly informed the Committee that a meeting was soon to take place with the IDA regarding connection to and takeover of the sewer at the Business Park and the Members would be informed of the outcome.

**07.06**      **Capital Reports**

The Committee asked that up to date Capital Reports be included with the Agendas for Letterkenny Electoral Area Meetings.

**07.07**      **Group Water Supply Schemes**

The Committee considered the Report on Group Water Supply Schemes circulated with the Agenda.

Cllr Dessie Larkin requested that the Trustees of the Rareagh/Letterleague and Dooballagh Group Water Schemes be contacted to try and progress these Schemes and also that the Trustees of the Rareagh/Letterleague Group Water Scheme be assisted in any way possible to progress the Scheme. J. Hyland informed the members that the Rareagh/Letterleague Group Water Scheme have been informed of the reduction in costs.

***LEC 08/08     ROADS & TRANSPORTATION***

***08.01     Welcome***

Pat Gillespie advised the Committee that he was moving to the Machinery Yard in Lifford in the near future and introduced Stephen Flynn, Senior Executive Engineer who was replacing him as Roads Area Manager.

The Members welcomed Stephen Flynn and wished him well in his new post. They also commended Pat Gillespie for the tremendous amount of work done during his time as Area Manager in Letterkenny Electoral Area and thanked him for his help and support during that time and wished him well in his new post.

***08.02     Trimragh Junction***

Mark Gallagher, Assistant Engineer with the National Road Design Office, updated the Committee on the proposals for Trimragh Junction and stated that a meeting was taking place on 22/01/08 with the residents in the area to inform them of the various proposals.

Cllr Dessie Larkin stated that the Dromore Road was not suited to the increased volume of traffic and stressed the importance that the view of the Dromore residents be considered if Trimragh Junction was to close. Mr Gallagher, in reply, stated that the road would be suitable with surface dressing being done and the views of the public would be heard.

Cllr Ciaran Brogan stressed that this was a very important issue and a special workshop on it would be required to discuss the various concerns of which safety was a major consideration and traffic calming should be considered from Surplus's house to the Dry Arch Road.

It was agreed that proposals for Drumardagh Junction be presented at Roads Workshop on 18<sup>th</sup> February.

***08.03     N14/N13 Manorcunningham to Lifford/Strabane Road***

Mark Gallagher informed the Committee that the NRDO had met with the landowners and additional GI was to be done. In a reply to a query from Cllr Dessie Larkin, the Committee were informed that this project would go to CPO later this year.

The Members asked to be kept updated on any progress.

***08.04     N56 Letterkenny Inner Relief Road***

Pat Gillespie informed the Committee that a Deputation had met with the NRA in Dublin regarding this Project and were informed that it is not on the list of Projects going forward.

Cllr Ciaran Brogan asked that a meeting be organised with the Oireachtas Members and Senior Roads staff to try and progress same and that funding options be explored.

**08.05**      **Raphoe Flooding**

Pat Gillespie stated that lots of issues had been addressed since the last meeting regarding the flooding problem in Raphoe.

The Committee asked that Road Design complete and circulate a Report currently being compiled on drainage in Raphoe.

**08.06**      **Workshop on Ballymacool Link/Swilly Diversion**

A Workshop was arranged between Donegal County Council and Letterkenny Town Council to discuss the Ballymacool Link/Swilly Diversion on 11<sup>th</sup> February at 6.00 p.m.

Cllr Dessie Larkin asked that the lights be turned on at Ballymacool as soon as possible and also that works at Ballymacool roundabout be progressed.

**08.07**      **Ballyholey Junction**

Pat Gillespie advised that he had been informed that funding for the junction at Ballyholey was unlikely to be forthcoming in 2008. Cllr Crawford urged that works be progressed and funding options explored.

**08.08**      **Feddyglass/Tullyrap Road**

Pat Gillespie, following queries from Committee, confirmed this road would be surface dressed this year.

**08.09**      **Road Safety**

The Committee welcomed Jamie Gallagher, Road Safety Engineer and Eamonn Brown, Road Safety Officer to the Meeting who informed the Members that a review of Safety measures at Schools had been undertaken and requested the Committee's views on the matter.

Cllr Dessie Larkin stated that the flashing lights at Lurgybrack School have been out of order for two years and needed to be repaired.

The Committee asked that the possibility of Council staff being trained to fix flashing lights or indeed traffic lights be investigated to speed up the repair process.

Cllr Dessie Larkin asked that the efficiency of Solar flashing lights as opposed to hard wired flashing lights be researched and also queried the results of the pilot Scheme introduced for installation of flashing lights on School buses.

Cllr Larkin to forward details on this scheme to Eamonn Brown for examination.

The Committee asked to be advised of progress on requests to NRA to reduce speed limits at schools on the National Primary Roads as speeding in vicinity of schools is a major problem and consideration should be given to the enforcement of speed limits at all school with speed checks done regularly.

Cllr Tony McDaid stated that the biggest risk to safety is the number of vehicles that congregate at School gates in the morning and evening and options should be explored for encouraging people to walk their children to and from school to relieve traffic congestion and also promote a healthier lifestyle.

Cllr Ciaran Brogan stated that a meeting with the School Bus operators might be useful to explore options to encourage more children to use the School Bus service.

Mayor Crossan urged that schools be visited and children encouraged to either walk to school or use bus service and also to explore options to educate children and parents on Road Safety.

**08.10**            **N56 Mountain Top to Illistrin Road**

Cllr Ciaran Brogan congratulated the Council and Contractor on work done and asked that the cause of the recent accident where a lorry overturned at the Mountain Top Roundabout be investigated.

Cllr Dessie Larkin stated that all damaged railings should be repaired at this and other locations around Letterkenny.

**08.11**            **Lismonaghan Road**

Cllr Larkin asked that Developers be encouraged to carry out works on Lismonaghan Road, as it is almost impassable at present.

**08.12**            **Gael Scoil, Glencar , Letterkenny**

Cllr Dessie Larkin asked that options be explored for improving road safety at the Gael Scoil and a meeting of the Board of Management be arranged regarding this.

**08.03**            **Hedge Cutting**

Cllr Gerry Crawford stated that the public had lost confidence in the Council clearing drains and cutting hedges and referred to the Argary area in Ballindrait in particular.

Pat Gillespie stated, in reply, that a huge programme of works was involved but work would be done.

**08.05**            **Workshop**

It was agreed to hold a Workshop on 2007 Roadworks Programme and Traffic Calming on Wednesday 23<sup>rd</sup> January at 6.00 p.m.

**LEC 09/08**     **HOUSING**

**09.01**     **Affordable Housing**

In a report circulated at the Meeting (Appendix 1), the Committee were informed that a very well attended Information Evening in relation to Affordable Housing in Letterkenny was held in Letterkenny PSC on Wednesday 28/11/07 and 50 applications are currently being examined. Applicants will be invited to discuss their applications and submit some additional information in the coming weeks with a view to a decision being made on each application next month.

The Committee welcomed this and Cllr Dessie Larkin stated that the feedback from this event was very positive.

Patsy Lafferty informed the Committee that he was awaiting Departmental approval for the site subsidy in relation to the Affordable Housing Scheme in Manorcunningham. Arrangements will then be made to advertise the details and invite applications.

**09.02**     **Remedial Works/Regeneration Programme 2007**

The Committee were informed that works in the S.I. element of this programme were due to commence shortly.

On the proposal of Cllr Tony McDaid, seconded by Cllr Gerry Crawford it was agreed that remedial works at Croaghan Heights, Lifford be included in this programme.

**09.03**     **Central Heating Programme**

Patsy Lafferty stated that the Central Heating Programme for 2007 is almost complete.

Cllr Tony McDaid asked that options be explored for improving heating and insulation in single person dwellings, as dampness was a major problem.

**09.04**     **Replacement of DPG/ERG Schemes**

The Members requested a Workshop be organised on the Replacement of the DPG and ERG Grants. It was agreed that this take place on 18<sup>th</sup> February 2008.

**09.05**     **Playground at Ard Na Rí**

The Committee were informed that Tenders had been sought for the proposed playground at Ard Na Rí and a meeting was arranged with the Residents to select the final design.

**09.06**            **Grant Report**

The Committee considered the Grant Report at 31<sup>st</sup> December, 2007 that was circulated with the Agenda.

**09.07**            **Loan Report**

The Committee considered the Loan Report at 11th January, 2008 that was circulated with the Agenda.

**09.08**            **Casual Vacancy Report**

The Committee considered the Casual Vacancy Report at 14<sup>th</sup> January, 2008 that was circulated with the Agenda.

**LEC 10/08**       **CORPORATE SERVICES**

**10.01**            **2008 Electoral Area Meeting Dates**

The Committee agreed the following dates for the Letterkenny Electoral Area Meetings for 2008.

Tuesday, 11<sup>th</sup> March, 2008 at 12.00 noon  
Tuesday, 13<sup>th</sup> May, 2008 at 9.30am  
Tuesday, 15<sup>th</sup> July, 2008 at 9.30am  
Tuesday, 9<sup>th</sup> September, 2008 at 9.30am  
Tuesday, 11<sup>th</sup> November, 2008 at 9.30am

**10.02**            **Level of Business Letterkenny PSC and Lifford**

The Committee considered the report circulated with the Agenda, on the level of business in Lifford Motor Tax Office and the Letterkenny Public Services Centre in 2006 and 2007, which showed an increase in business transacted.

The Committee welcomed the report and complimented the staff on the level of business that was provided through the office.

Cllr Dessie Larkin asked that all avenues of promoting the online Motor Tax Service be considered.

The current works underway to extend the parking facilities at Letterkenny PSC were welcomed by the Committee.

**LEC 11/08**       **DATE FOR NEXT MEETING**

It was agreed to hold the next meeting of the Letterkenny Electoral Area Committee on 11<sup>th</sup> March, 2008, commencing at **12.00 noon** in the Letterkenny Public Services Centre.



## **APPENDIX 1**

### **Appendix 2**

### Appendix 3

## **Summary Report for Members – November 2007** **Replacement of DPG / ERG Schemes.**

### **Summary of key issues:**

- Changes effective from 1<sup>st</sup> November 2007.
- DPG's replaced by Housing Adaptation Grant Scheme and Mobility Aids Grant Scheme.
- ERG's replaced by Housing Aid for Older People Scheme. Local Authorities take over responsibility from HSE for Housing Aid for the Elderly Scheme. Latter to continue until 31<sup>st</sup> March 2008.
- Applicants can withdraw current ERG's/DPG's, and re-apply under relevant new scheme. Applicants cannot apply under both.
- Increased Grant levels (to be reviewed annually).
- Standard costings to be introduced to ensure cost stabilising effect.
- Increased recoupment levels.
- Means Testing introduced (to be reviewed annually).
- Local authorities can retain services of private OT's, engage HSE OT's or make any other suitable arrangements. Applicants can retain Private OT's.
- Panels of contractors.
- Appeals Procedure

### **Housing Adaptation Grant Scheme.**

- For adaption of accommodation, extensions, downstairs toilets, accessible showers, etc.
- Max Grant - €30,000. (€14,500 for new houses).
- Covers between 30% and 95% of cost of work, depending on means, and standard costings.
- 95% applied where income is less than €30,000. No grant allowable where income exceeds €65,000.
- Potential claw back provision.
- 2 written quotations to be submitted by applicants.

### **Mobility Aids Grant Scheme.**

- For grab rails, access ramps, level access showers, stair lifts, etc.
- Max Grant €6,000.
- Covers 100% of cost, subject to standard costings.
- No grant allowable where income exceeds €30,000.

### **Housing Aid for Older People Scheme.**

- To assist older people living in poor housing conditions.
- Recommended at those aged 60+. Flexibility in hardship cases.
- Similar works to ERG plus other works such as provision of water / sanitary facilities, contract cleaning, painting, radon remediation, etc. if deemed necessary.
- Smoke alarms to be installed subject to applicant's agreement.
- Max Grant - €10,500.
- Covers between 30% and 100% of cost of work, depending on means, and standard costings.
- 100% applied where income is less than €30,000. No grant where income exceeds €65,000.