

**MINUTES OF MILFORD ELECTORAL AREA COMMITTEE MEETING
HELD IN THE MILFORD PUBLIC SERVICES CENTRE ON 17th JANUARY
2005**

MEMBERS PRESENT

Cllr Ian McGarvey, Chairman
Cllr Liam Blaney
Cllr McBride

OFFICIALS IN ATTENDANCE

Mr Brendan McFadden, Area Manager, Roads & Transportation
Mr Eunan Quinn, Area Manager, Planning & Economic Development
Mr Charles Sweeney, Community Enterprise, Development Officer
Mr John Gallagher, Area Manager, Water, Environment & Emergency Services
Mr Paul McGill, Area Manager, Housing
Ms Virginia McLoone, Area Manager, Corporate Services
Mr Jim Harley, Senior Planner, Development Control
Mr Gerry Keeney, Executive Engineer, Water, Environment & Emergency Services
Ms Mairead Shields, Staff Officer, Corporate Services

Members thanked Staff of the Milford Public Services Centre for their assistance during 2004.

**MEC01/05 CONSIDERATION OF MINUTES OF MILFORD ELECTORAL
AREA COMMITTEE HELD ON 22nd NOVEMBER 2004**

On the proposal of Councillor McBride, seconded by Councillor Blaney, the Minutes of the Milford Electoral Area Committee held on 22nd November 2004 were agreed.

Matters Arising

Councillor Blaney expressed concern at the absence of representation from the National Roads Design Office present at today's meeting to brief the Committee on the N56 Mountain Top Project as was agreed at the last Electoral Area Committee Meeting.

MEC02/05 REPORT FROM WORKSHOP WITH MEMBERS HELD ON 22nd NOVEMBER 2004

On the proposal of Councillor Blaney, seconded by Councillor McBride, the report from the workshop with Members held on 22nd November was agreed.

MEC03/05 RECEPTION OF DEPUTATION FROM RATHMULLAN BUSINESS ASSOCIATION

Councillor McGarvey welcomed the deputation from the Rathmullan Business Association to the meeting.

Virginia McLoone, Area Manger, Corporate Services outlined the criteria for receiving deputations at Electoral Area Committee Meetings in accordance with Standing Orders.

The Deputation presented a letter outlining a number of issues of concern to include:-

- Pier – not used to its full potential
- Develop assets that already exist to include the Potato Store – potential for developing same and creating employment in the area
- Carparking facilities – scope for providing more carparking in the area and the need for resurfacing works on the existing car park

The Deputation also presented a comprehensive Business Plan for the development of the Old Potato Store in Rathmullan and a proposal to provide additional car parking facilities in this area.

A copy of all correspondence from the Deputation was circulated to the Members for their information.

The Members complimented the Deputation on their work and they unanimously agreed to consider the proposal both at local and full Council levels with a response from the Planning Department in Lifford to be forwarded to the Deputation in due course.

The Deputation then withdrew from the Meeting.

MEC04/05 COMMUNITY AND ENTERPRISE & CULTURAL SERVICES

4.1 Reports on Community, Culture and Enterprise

Charles Sweeney, Community, Enterprise and Development Officer presented the progress reports on:

- Community Consultation
- Funding Update
- Inter-organisational development
- “An Straiteis” – County Strategy

Provision of Playground Facilities

Members noted that responses had been received to the advertisements seeking expressions of interest from the Community and Voluntary Sector and that the Community & Enterprise service were now in the process of compiling an Audit of Needs based on the responses received.

Members were advised that playgrounds can currently only be developed on Council owned sites to be included in the Council Insurance.

The Community, Enterprise and Development Officer, informed the Members that projects costing €50,000 - €70,000 have been funded through the Donegal County Council Led Peace II Task Force in the past.

Members queried the number of applications received from Groups in the Milford Electoral Area and expressed their concern that only four or five had been received.

The Committee requested that a detailed report on the issue would be presented at the next Electoral Area Committee Meeting.

The Chairman expressed his dissatisfaction that only €1,300 had been provided by the Cultural Committee for such types of development and he compared this to sums allocated for other Electoral Areas.

In this regard, the Committee urged the C.E.D.O. to take a more active part in contacting these Groups and offering assistance and direction as some new groups may be inexperienced in making applications for funding.

Charles Sweeney, C.E.D.O. indicated that he would welcome contacts from such Groups.

Flight of Earls Centre, Rathmullan

In response to a query, Charles Sweeney, Community, Enterprise and Development Officer advised the meeting that a Group was now set-up to explore possible funding opportunities in preparation for the Flight of The Earls commemoration to be held in 2007.

MEC05/05 WATER, ENVIRONMENT & EMERGENCY SERVICES

The Committee welcomed John Gallagher, Area Manager, Water, Environment & Emergency Services to the Milford Electoral Area wishing him well in his new position.

John Gallagher, Area Manager, thanked the Members for their good wishes.

The Committee considered the reports on:

- Large Capital Schemes
- Small Capital Schemes
- Group Schemes

Large Capital Schemes – Fanad Water Supply – Stage II

In a response to a query regarding the up-to-date position on the above water supply with particular regard to water shortages in the Glenvar area, Gerry Keeney, Executive Engineer advised the meeting that Water Services Personnel had explored two options in alleviating the water shortage problems in the Glenvar area to include:

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|----------|---|
| Option 1 | Extend the water supply from Kerrykeel |
| Option 2 | Extend the water supply from Rathmullan |

Option 1 was considered to be the most viable option to address the issue.

The Committee noted that it is anticipated that this scheme is most likely to go to construction in early 2006.

Large Capital Schemes – Fanad Water Supply – Phase 1

Members noted that it is anticipated that works will be completed on Phase 1 of the Fanad Water Supply in October 2005.

It was noted that there is a total of 23km of mains replacement required on this phase of the works and that 4km of this pipeline has been replaced to date.

Members expressed concern at the timeframe within which works would be completed and requested that details regarding contract for this work to include schedule of completion be made available to them at the next meeting.

Concern was also expressed at the impact this would have having regard to the carrying out of roadworks in the area.

Members urged that Water & Environment and Roads & Transportation Staff liase and co-ordinate works in order to prevent time delays in completing roadworks in the area.

Group Water Supply Schemes

Councillor McGarvey, Chairman highlighted the importance of Group Water Supply Schemes in rural areas and commended the work of those working in this area in a voluntary capacity.

He highlighted the need for promoters of such schemes to meet with Water Services Personnel on a regular basis.

Drumacloghan/Fawninoughan – GW1015

In a response to a query regarding the Drumacloghan/Fawninoughan Group Water Supply Scheme, Gerry Keeney, Executive Engineer agreed to provide Members with a progress report on this scheme.

Golan No. 2 GW 499

Gerry Keeney, Executive Engineer advised the meeting that he will be arranging another meeting with the promoter of this scheme in the near future to progress the scheme to the next stage.

Well Grants

Gerry Keeney, Executive Engineer, outlined to the meeting the process for drawing down monies in respect of grants for boring private wells.

Collection Fridges/Freezers/Fridge-Freezers

In a response to a query regarding a day for the collection of Fridges, Freezers and Fridge-Freezers for the Milford Electoral area, John Gallagher, Area Manager, Water & Environment advised the meeting that he will revert to the Members with the appropriate details on this collection.

Councillor Blaney advised the meeting that an interested party had contacted him having regard to the provision of such a service in the area full-time and in particular as to what the Council's interest would be in providing funding for such a service.

John Gallagher, Area Manager, advised the meeting that he would welcome contact from the interested party to discuss the matter further.

In response to a query regarding the provision of a Civic Amenity Site in the Milford Electoral Area, John Gallagher, Area Manager, Water & Environment will revert to Members with a report on this matter.

Waste Management

Members discussed the importance of educating the general public in relation to waste management and particular to the concept of recycling and home composting.

Members requested that a campaign to promote home-composting and the availability of home compost bins from the Milford Public Services Centre be intensified.

MEC06/05 CORPORATE SERVICES

6.1 Activity Report 2004

The Members considered the Corporate Services Activity Report for 2004 noting anticipated projected levels of increase in activity for 2005.

Members expressed satisfaction at the figures on activity levels presented in the report and the importance of such a centre within the Electoral Area to deliver the various services.

Members noted that the costs for the additional signage agreed for the Public Services Centre has been provided for in the Budget for 2005 and that this sign be erected without further delay.

MEC07/05 PLANNING & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

7.1 Review of County Development Plan

The Committee considered the report on the review of the County Development Plan that was circulated at the meeting.

Mr Jim Harley, Senior Planner, Development Control advised the meeting that under the Planning and Development Act 2000, there is a statutory obligation on Donegal County Council to proceed to the next phase of the County Development plan review i.e. the drafting of an initial Draft Plan.

Members noted that this Draft must be completed within 12 weeks of the County Manager's report i.e. 4th April 2005 when a period of 8 weeks will then be given to Members to consider same before the Draft Plan is presented to the public for consultation and comment.

It was also noted that the Draft County Development Plan would be published before 30th May 2005.

Mr Jim Harley, Senior Planner, Development Control advised the meeting that the policy on rural housing development constitutes a significant part of the review of the plan.

The Committee noted the recommendations contained within the report for their consideration as follows:-

- Retain the existing Control Points as there is sufficient lands available within these Control Points to facilitate future growth of the urban areas.
- Retain the Landscape categories adopted in the current plan together with their respective development implications.

Members considered maps indicating the Landscape Category areas and urban generated social housing that were circulated at the meeting.

A lengthy discussion ensued where a number of concerns were highlighted by the Members that included:-

Councillor McBride expressed concern at the amount of outstanding Development levies for developments in the Milford Electoral Area.

Councillor Blaney expressed concern at the over-emphasis placed on urban development in the current development plan and how there was a need for regenerating depopulated rural areas.

Councillor Blaney recommended that the affordable housing option be considered in these areas by the Council.

The Members unanimously agreed that there was a need to provide information to the general public on the Landscape Categories outlined in the plan highlighting the implications and possible flexibilities.

Jim Harley, Senior Planner, Development control advised the meeting that essentially, the Milford Electoral Area is a 'weak rural area' and as such 'bona fides' will not impact greatly here on applicants.

Members agreed to submit their observations on the document to Mr Eunan Quinn, Area Manager, Planning and Economic Development. The Members noted that a workshop on the review of the County Development plan would be held with full Council in the near future. It was agreed that a workshop would be held locally with Eunan Quinn on the review of the County Development Plan and Jim Harley urged Members to provide as much feedback as possible to Eunan at this workshop.

The Members thanked Jim Harley, Senior Planner, Development Control for his comprehensive presentation.

7.2 PLANNING STATISTICS

Eunan Quinn, Area Manager presented the report on Planning Statistics. The Committee noted that 1,309 planning applications were received in the Milford Planning office for the period January – December 2004 representing a substantial increase on 2003 figures.

The Committee noted that the number of planning applications decided within 2 months was significantly higher than the National Average.

7.3 CONSIDERATION OF RECENT REFUSALS

Members considered and noted the report on recent refusals of Planning Applications that circulated with the Agenda.

7.4 CONTROL OF QUARRIES – S.261 PLANNING & DEVELOPMENT ACT 2000

The report on the Control of Quarries and Ancillary Activities – Section 261 – Planning & Development Act 2000 that circulated with the Agenda was noted.

7.5 INVALID APPLICATIONS

The Committee noted the report on invalid applications that circulated with the Agenda.

Eunan Quinn, Area Manager, Planning & Economic Development advised the meeting that the work required to deal with invalid planning applications constitutes a significant part of the planning workload within the service.

PLANNING ENFORCEMENT

Mr Eunan Quinn, Area Manager, Planning & Economic Development advised that there is a legal obligation for the Planning Authority to deal with Enforcement as a priority issue and that enforcement will be a large part of the planning workload during 2005.

In a response to a query, the Committee noted that provision has been made in the Budget for an extra member of staff in the planning service for 2005.

7.6 PRE-PLANNING CONSULTATIONS

Mr Eunan Quinn, Area Manager, advised the meeting that the planning section will establish formal pre-planning clinics on an appointment basis where advice will be given on detailed proposals for a proposed development.

It was noted that details of these clinics will be forwarded to the Members in due course.

The Committee welcomed this move in attempting to address and alleviate issues surrounding invalid applications.

MEC08/05 ROADS & TRANSPORTATION

8.1 Progress report on 2004 works

The Committee noted the progress report on 2004 works that had circulated with the Agenda.

Brendan McFadden, Area Manager, Roads & Transportation advised the meeting that there is 1018km of public road within the Milford Electoral Area and approximately €6.25 million was spent on roadwork's in the Milford Electoral Area in 2004 representing 13% of the overall funding allocated to the Electoral Areas.

In a response to a query regarding funding allocation determination, Brendan McFadden, Area Manager explained that funding is allocated on road mileage basis in each of the Electoral Area.

The Members unanimously agreed that roads maintenance was a major issue within the Milford Electoral Area.

In a response to a query regarding a budget allocation for Road Strengthening Works for 2005, Brendan McFadden, Area Manager, advised the meeting that notification had not yet been received.

Members queried the application for funding to An Roinn in respect of the Portsalon – Ballylar road. Brendan McFadden, Area Manager advised the meeting that no response had yet been received from An Roinn.

He agreed to follow-up this matter with the Department.

N56 – MOUNTAIN TOP PROJECT

Members again expressed dissatisfaction at the absence of an official from the National Roads Authority to report to the meeting on progress on the N56 Mountain Top project.

LOUGH SALT

In a response to a query regarding a progress report on the provision of barriers at lough salt, Brendan McFadden, Area Manager, advised the meeting that the matter is being progressed through Road Design. The Members urged that this matter be expedited as a matter of urgency and requested that a progress report on this issue be forwarded to them.

Councillor McBride expressed concern at the hazards due to levels of surface water on the Lough Salt road and in particular around the lake area.

Mr Brendan McFadden, Area Manager, Roads & Transportation advised the meeting that this matter would be addressed as soon as possible.

CARPARK – BALLYHEERIN, FANAD

In a response to a query, Brendan McFadden, Area Manager, Roads & Transportation advised the meeting that he would look at funding options available for tarring the church carpark at Ballyheerin, Fanad using the ‘Tar & Chip’ method.

FOOTPATHS

Councillor McBride expressed concern at the lack of footpath facilities from Downings village to the school having regard to the dangers posed to children travelling to and from the school.

Councillor McGarvey expressed concern at the safety issues as a result of there not being a footpath from Milford Town to Moyle Park suggesting that the collection of outstanding Development levies could be used to carry out this work.

Councillor McGarvey also expressed concern at the poor state of repair of the footpaths in Ramelton.

AUGHNISH, RAMELTON

Councillor McGarvey requested that the drain flooding problem on the Aughnish Road in Ramelton be addressed as a matter of urgency.

ROADS RECLASSIFICATION

A discussion took place regarding the classification of the Letterkenny – Ramelton – Carrigart road. It was noted that this matter is in the control of the National Roads Authority.

On the proposal of Councillor Blaney, seconded by Councillor McGarvey, it was recommended that a submission be made for consideration by the full Council seeking the National Roads Authority to upgrade this Regional road to National Status.

SPEED LIMIT REVIEW

Members expressed concern at the 80km speed Limit signs on some of the Local Roads having regard to potential hazards as a result of the location of some of these signs.

Brendan McFadden, Area Manager, explained that this was the maximum speed limit allowed on this classification of road.

In a response to a query regarding the location of the speed limit signs at Fanavolty Church, Brendan McFadden, Area Manager, Roads & Transportation advised the meeting that these signs would now remain in place until the next speed limit review.

MEC09/05 HOUSING & BUILDING

9.1 Progress Report – Housing Capital Programme

The Members noted the progress report on the Housing Capital Programme that circulated with the Agenda.

VOLUNTARY HOUSING – KERRYKEEL

In a response to a query regarding progress on the Voluntary Housing Scheme in Kerrykeel, Paul McGill, Area Manager, Housing & Building advised the meeting that Further Information regarding the application was sought by the Department and that this information has now been forwarded.

COLMCILLE CLOSE – KERRYKEEL

In a response to a query regarding the signing of the contract for four number houses at this estate, Paul McGill, Area Manager, advised the meeting that it is anticipated that it will take 2 – 3 months before Contractor would be on site to commence development.

RATHMULLAN

The Committee noted that this scheme is at Design Stage and will be progressing to planning in the near future.

CHURCHILL

The Committee noted that the housing scheme in Churchill is at Design Stage and will be submitted in due course for planning permission.

Paul McGill, Area Manager, agreed to progress both this scheme and the Rathmullan Scheme with the Housing Construction Section.

TAMNEY

In a response to a query regarding the letting of the houses under construction in Tamney, Paul McGill, Area Manager, advised the meeting that it is anticipated that the houses would be let in May 2005.

9.2 PROGRESS REPORT – SOCIAL HOUSING

The Committee noted the report on Social Housing that circulated with the Agenda.

HOUSING GRANTS

In a response to a query regarding the processing of Grant applications, Paul McGill, Area Manager, advised the meeting that there were no delays in this area with regards payments to applicants.

9.3 CASUAL VACANCIES

The Committee considered the Casual Vacancy report that had circulated with the Agenda.

Paul McGill, Area Manager, advised the meeting that the casual vacancy in Carrigart would be let within the next 7 – 10 days.

HOUSING ASSESSMENT

Paul McGill, Area Manager, advised the meeting that in accordance with the Housing Act, 1988 a Housing Assessment on all Housing Applicants must be carried out every three years and that this is currently being carried. It will be finalised by 31 March 2005. He also advised the meeting that this will provide current information on establishing the current demand for housing within the Milford Electoral Area.

PEACE II FUNDING

Paul McGill, Area Manager, advised the meeting that funding for general maintenance works on Housing estates will be available again this year and that he was now seeking Members views on proposals for including the housing scheme in Churchill and the housing scheme at Lower Mount Marian, Milford for general Maintenance works.

The Members agreed to consider the matter and revert to the Area Manager with their decision.

DATE OF NEXT MEETING

Members agreed that the next meeting of the Milford Electoral Area Committee will take place on Monday, 14th March 2005 commencing at 10.00 am in accordance with the adopted schedule of Electoral Area Meetings for 2005.

This concluded the business of the meeting.

