

**Minutes of Meeting of Municipal District of Lifford- Stranorlar held
11.00 am, 21st January 2020 in the Council Chamber, Lifford.**

Members Present	Cllr. Frank McBrearty, Cllr. Gary Doherty, Cllr. Gerry Crawford, Cllr. Liam Doherty, Cllr. Martin Harley, Cllr. Patrick McGowan.
Officials Present	Joe Peoples, Olive Gillespie, Tony Browne, Simon Harron, Paul Gallagher, Kathleen McGowan, Claire McGeever, Adrian McCool, Tommy Doherty.

Cllr. McBrearty thanked everyone for their attendance. Items from the agenda were discussed as follows:

236 Corporate Services

236.01 Votes of Sympathy

Members passed a vote of sympathy on the passing of:

- Dermot Keelan, brother Fiontán Ó Caoláin, Inishowen Housing Section.
- Packie Mc Laughlin, father of Mairéad Gibbons, Inishowen Housing Section.

236.02 Confirmation of Minutes of Municipal District of Lifford-Stranorlar held 03rd December 2019

The Minutes were approved on the proposal of Cllr. G Crawford and seconded by Cllr. M Harley.

237. Confirmation of Date and Venue for Next Meeting and Business Prescribed by Statute

237.01 It was agreed that the next meetings of the Lifford-Stranorlar Municipal District would be held on Tuesday, 03rd March 2020 in the Regional Training Centre, Stranorlar as follows:

- Workshop 09.30 am.
- Meeting 11.00 am.

238 Consideration of Reports & Recommendations from Services

238.01 Environmental Services

Paul Gallagher was invited to address the meeting. The update report circulated with the agenda was taken as read. The following comments were made:

- Paul Gallagher confirmed that the newly appointed Litter Warden will be taking up post on Thursday 23rd January 2020 and agreed to circulate contact details to the Members.
- Cllr. P McGowan wished to highlight that the provision of bottle banks in Ballybofey & Stranorlar is being abused, with members of the public leaving boxes and other items behind them, and suggested moving the bottle banks to the Civic Amenity Centre, Stranorlar.
- Cllr. G Doherty referred to the recently announced Ballybofey & Stranorlar Flood Relief Scheme and wished to highlight that a concern has been raised regarding the possible impact on trees as a result of any works under this scheme, and requested that a compromise is agreed in this regard, between the flood relief works that are required and the protection of trees along the river bank.
- Cllr. G Doherty suggested that the Council carry out an awareness campaign in relation to waste and recycling which would highlight what items can be recycled, how these items can be recycled and the locations of the various recycling facilities. Cllr. Doherty also suggested that the Council facilitate a Waste Amnesty Week, similar to the Mattress Amnesty campaign.

238.02 Roads Services

Claire McGeever was invited to address the meeting. The update report circulated with the agenda was taken as read. The following comments were made:

- The Restoration Improvements Programme 2020 was proposed by Cllr. P McGowan and seconded by Cllr. M Harley.
- Members referred to the need for funding to alleviate the problem of restricted access and associated works at Logue's Bridge, Ballybofey in tandem with the Ten-T Project. Claire McGeever agreed to revert to Members with an update.
- Cllr. P McGowan requested an update in relation to footpath works at Trusk Road, Ballybofey.
- Cllr. G Crawford proposed that a Safety Audit/Survey be carried out on the R265 Rossgier Road leading to St. Johnston and Carrigans as there has been an increase in the number of accidents on this route, particularly at the bends in St. Johnston. This was seconded by Cllr. F McBrearty.
It was also highlighted that there is an issue at a number of locations along this route with excess water running on the road and speed restriction signs are turned in the wrong direction.

Claire McGeever agreed this was a busy road and asked if Members could let her know of specific locations that they are concerned with.

- Cllr. G Doherty highlighted that there has been numerous accidents on the Castlefinn to Castlederg road over the Christmas period and requested that this be examined to determine if there is a particular problem on this route.
- Members highlighted that residents close to Knock Crossroads are concerned about an open drain at that location and requested that this be examined. Claire McGeever advised this would need to be examined with possible works done under drainage.
- Cllr. G Doherty outlined the number of roads staff working within each of the Municipal Districts and stated that there is a clear disparity between the number of staff working in the Lifford-Stranorlar Municipal District compared to other Municipal Districts. Cllr. P McGowan stated that this matter was the subject of his motion on the agenda and the matter was discussed further during Members Motions later during the meeting.
- Cllr. L Doherty requested clarification regarding the maintenance of backlanes, roads and footpaths in Council housing estates. It was noted that a maintenance policy report was considered by the Plenary Council before the end of the last Council term in 2019.

Joe Peoples explained that it was his understanding that the Council's decision on the policy was deferred and a follow up workshop was to be held in late April 2019 to address concerns raised by Members at Plenary Council level. At the request of Cllr. Crawford, it was agreed the minutes of the April Plenary meeting be reviewed and an update provided at the next meeting of the Lifford-Stranorlar Municipal District.

- Cllr. P McGowan raised an issue highlighted previously in relation to the design of the area from McClays Corner, Stranorlar to the proposed new St. Mary's National School, including the area encompassing the Finn Valley Centre/Swimming Pool, to ensure a plan is in place for the provision of adequate road design including footpaths, junctions and car parking in the area. It was agreed to hold a workshop to update Members with the relevant staff from Road Design, Planning and Lifford-Stranorlar Roads Office.
- Cllr. P McGowan queried when relining works will be carried out at the Shopping Centre Car Park in Ballybofey and at the Church of Ireland, Golf Course Road, Stranorlar. Claire McGeever confirmed that these works are currently in the process of being carried out. Cllr. McGowan also requested that relining works be carried out at Sessiagh O'Neill Crossroads, Ballybofey.
- Cllr. P McGowan queried the number of diggers each overseer has access to for drainage works. Claire McGeever confirmed there is one digger available to each RSS Area and this is consistent throughout the County.
- Cllr. M Harley queried if works could be carried out at Glencovitt National School in relation to an area that needs to be piped and stoned.
- Cllr. M Harley requested an update in relation to the disabled bays within the Twin Towns that need relining. Claire McGeever confirmed that these works are in the process of being carried out.
- Cllr. G Crawford requested that the speed cushions recently installed in Beechwood Grove Estate, Lifford be reviewed as these are not alleviating the problem at this location.

238.03 Community and Enterprise

Cllr. F McBrearty welcomed Luke McKean and Amylee Henderson from the Donegal Youth Council and Shauna Hoey, Youth Council Co-ordinator to the meeting.

Luke McKean and Amylee Henderson gave a presentation about the Youth Council's activities in relation to Drugs & Alcohol, Mental Health & Wellbeing, Sexual Health and other activities such as working with the Donegal Road Safety Working Group.

Each of the Members commended Luke and Amylee for their presentation and the importance of the work carried out by the Youth Council, particularly in relation to drugs and alcohol, road safety and mental health.

Kathleen Browne was invited to address the meeting. The update report circulated with the agenda was taken as read.

- Kathleen Browne confirmed that ongoing discussions are taking place regarding the completion of the Drumboe Walkway and Members will be updated on progress at the next meeting.
- Cllr. F McBrearty requested an update in relation to a proposed 3G all-weather playing pitch. Kathleen Browne read out a response in this regard from James Kelly, Executive Engineer.
- Cllr. G Crawford requested an update in relation to the provision of ducting at Bridge Street, Lifford as part of the Town & Village Scheme. Kathleen Browne agreed to follow up.
- Cllr. P McGowan requested an update in relation to the potential of twinning with another suitable European location.

238.04 Planning Services

Simon Harron was invited to address the meeting. The update report circulated with the agenda was taken as read. The following comments were made:

- Cllr. F McBrearty again raised the issue in relation to Islandmore and the RTE documentary and adding, the Elected Members of this Municipal District needed an update as the documentary had indicated the Lifford-Stranorlar Municipal District had no voice on this. He pointed out the Council has an injunction in this case so the Council's solicitors should be reacting given the daily activities at Islandmore and that the Council should be following up to have the injunction enforced and the operations at Islandmore closed up, as residents were also complaining about the volume of traffic at this location. These comments were endorsed by all Members. Cllr. Frank McBrearty also made reference to the Council buying material from a third party company who are allegedly using materials that had been extracted from Islandmore. In response to this, Cllr. M Harley proposed that Donegal County Council

should cease buying product from this company. This was seconded by Cllr. F McBrearty. The other Members agreed with this proposal, but were also mindful of the sub-judiciary process.

It was agreed that Members would have a full briefing on this matter.

- Simon Harron confirmed that the upcoming planning clinics would take place on the 29th January 2020 and the 12th February 2020.
- Simon Harron advised Members in relation to County Development Plan 2018-2024 Variations in the policy areas of Wind Energy and the Ten-T Priority Roads Project. Cllr. P McGowan queried if variations, including variations to the Ballybofey & Stranorlar Area Plan, will be announced at the meeting of the Plenary Council scheduled for 27th January 2020.
- Cllr. G Doherty suggested that the County Development Plan needs to be amended in relation to anaerobic digesters because of the intense smells created as a result of the processes involved and stated that there needs to be restricted areas where such plants are not permitted to operate. Cllr. F McBrearty highlighted the importance of monitoring these plants after construction and queried how other EU countries manage this issue.

238.05 Housing & Corporate Services

Olive Gillespie reviewed her update report as circulated with the agenda. The following comments were made:

- Cllr. G Crawford queried the length of time it is taking to process housing loan applications as it appeared one of the applications was received in 2018 but the decision remained outstanding. Olive Gillespie agreed to examine this issue.
- Cllr. G Crawford stated that the Housing Policy in relation to the criteria housing transfer applicants must meet in order to be approved for a transfer to an alternative Council house, are too restrictive. In response Olive Gillespie outlined the criteria used to assess transfer applications and she explained the individual specific circumstances of each applicant/household, are also taken into consideration.
- Cllr. G Crawford referred to the Council letter issued by the Housing Section, to housing applicants when they are initially approved for housing support and in particular the section which explains the applicant/s are also approved for the Housing Assistance Payment (HAP). Cllr. Crawford stated that this is very frustrating for housing applicants as there are no properties available to rent in the Lifford area. Cllr Crawford also referred to unfinished houses in Lifford and queried if the Council can accommodate housing applicants in these properties. In response Olive Gillespie acknowledged that there is a considerable housing need in Lifford and the Housing Section are actively following on any potential housing solutions for the area and in the meantime, the HAP Scheme is available to provide financial assistance as a form of social housing support.
- Cllr. P McGowan welcomed the report in respect of the provision of social housing at Trusk Road, Ballybofey. However given the size of the site, he queried if the 19 units should be reduced to 12 units.

- Members requested an update in relation to the Windows & Doors Replacement Programme. Olive Gillespie explained the Replacement Programme is under Phase 2 of the Energy Efficiency Retrofitting Programme and the Housing Section is waiting on a funding announcement from the Department of Housing, Planning & Local Government.
- Cllr. G Doherty stated that the income thresholds for eligibility for social housing support are too low, adding this matter should be addressed at the next meeting of the Housing & Corporate Strategic Policy Committee. In response Olive Gillespie confirmed that the income thresholds are set nationally and it was agreed the relevant details would be issued to Members.

239 Members Motions

239.01 The following Motion was submitted by Cllr. P McGowan:

Motion: *"That an urgent meeting is sought with the Council CEO Seamus Neely and Director for Road's John McLaughlin to discuss the lack of funding and staff in the Lifford-Stranorlar MD compared to other MD's, roads resurfacing, footpaths upgrades, drainage works and street cleaning resources are totally inadequate."*

Reply: The funding for roads is distributed on the basis of a Council decision and is determined having regard to the mileage of roads in each Municipal District. Additional funding is currently being spent on upgrading footpaths. If the motion is passed arrangements can be made for the members to meet with the Chief Executive and the Director of Roads and Transportation.

The Motion was seconded by Cllr. G Crawford.

240 Members Written Questions

240.01 The following Question was submitted by Cllr. G Crawford:

Question: *"When will the construction of social Housing in Raphoe start."*

Reply: The tender evaluation process is now complete and the successful Contractor has been identified. It is expected that the Contractor will start on site in February.

240.02 The following Question was submitted by Cllr. G Crawford:

Question: *"Can I be updated on the existing number of LIS applications approved, cost to finish same in this MD."*

Reply:

**STRANORLAR MD
LOCAL IMPROVEMENT SCHEMES END 2019**

In 2019 a budget allocation of € 98,761 was received for the Stranorlar MD. This was 14.6% of the County budget (€ 677,456). Out of 178 eligible schemes, 6 schemes were completed.

By year end there were 172 schemes on the Stranorlar MD list. All of the original eligible schemes have not been checked against the more detailed criteria set out by the Department. There are other schemes in addition to the 172 awaiting further information. Applications are still being received by Donegal County Council.

Schemes in Stranorlar MD

RSS AREA	NO. OF ELIGIBLE SCHEMES
LIFFORD	22
CASTLEFIN	96
DRUMKEEN	54
TOTAL	172

The 172 schemes amount to an estimated budget of €3,135,347.70

240.03 The following Question was submitted by Cllr. G Crawford:

Question: *"Will someone inspect the speed cushions recently laid in Beechwood Grove, Lifford and explain how such can be effective."*

Reply: Following introduction in April 2017 of the 30kph slow zone in Beechwood Grove, Donegal County Council secured funding in 2019 for a pilot project that would introduce further speed reducing measures in this estate. Various speed measures were considered and speed cushions were determined the only workable solution. The cushions had been installed late 2019 and DCC will continue to monitor their effectiveness, and if additional measures are required.

240.04 The following Question was submitted by Cllr. P McGowan:

Question: *"Please can we have a detailed report on any plans for sewerage treatment improvement and networks for Castlefin and the Killygordon-Cross villages and please request that the reports are signed by the relevant senior staff member."*

Reply: Donegal County Council has forwarded this question to Irish Water (IW), and requested that IW respond directly to Councillor McGowan with their answer and copy it to the other Elected Members of the Stranorlar Municipal District. Any response received by the Council will be passed on to Councillor McGowan.

There are a number of avenues available to the Elected Members to raise queries/questions with Irish Water which include:

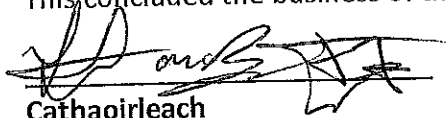
- Use of the dedicated Local Representative telephone number.
- IW has also provided a dedicated Local Representative Support Service email.
- Arranging to meet with IW Staff at the Clinics for Elected Members available in the County House, Lifford prior to the County Council Plenary Meetings

240.05 The following Question was submitted by Cllr. P McGowan:

Question: *"Can a meeting be arranged immediately between the Donegal MD and Stranorlar MD with the relevant staff to discuss advancing the greenway between Ballybofey and Donegal Town."*

Reply: Donegal County Council submitted 3 No. applications to the Department of Transport, Tourism & Sport in November 2018 for funding for potential greenway projects across the county. One of the submitted applications considered a proposal for a greenway between Ballybofey & Donegal Town. Correspondence was received from the Dept. in June 2019 stating that all three projects were unsuccessful in their bids to secure funding. While the immediate focus of the current resources within the Community Development Department is to deliver on projects funded under recent Outdoor Recreation Infrastructure Schemes, a meeting can be convened between the Stranorlar & Donegal Municipal Districts in the next few months to give further consideration to this matter.

This concluded the business of the Meeting



Cathaoirleach
Municipal District of Lifford-Stranorlar

As agreed at the Lifford-Stranorlar Municipal District Meeting held 03rd March 2020