

**Minutes of the Municipal District of Stranorlar Meeting held on Wednesday 18<sup>th</sup> May 2016 in the Regional Training Centre, Stranorlar, commencing at 11.30am.**

**Members Present:**

Cllr Gerry Crawford (Cathaoirleach)  
Cllr. Martin Harley.  
Cllr Frank McBrearty.  
Cllr Gary Doherty  
Cllr Patrick McGowan

**Officials Present:**

Joe Peoples, Director of Service, Senior Management Team  
Lynda Mc Gavigan, A/Area Manager, Housing/Corporate.  
Paul Christy, Sen. Executive Planner, Planning Services.  
Garrett Doherty, A/Senior Executive Engineer, Roads  
Paddy Doherty, Divisional Manager, Community & Enterprise,  
Suzanne Bogan, Waste Information Officer, Water & Environment.  
Martina Morris, Senior Staff Officer, Corporate Services.

**Apologies:** Cllr. Liam Doherty.

**112.00. Corporate Services.**

**112.01. Votes of Sympathy.**

Members passed a vote of sympathy on the passing of:

- **Hugo Gallagher, Braade, Annagry**, father of Annette Gallagher, Housing/Corporate, Milford..
- **Liam Mc Daid, 110 St Finians Pk, Mocville** - father of retired colleague, Bernard Mc Daid - Housing Inishowen..
- **Sheila Brennan, Hollybrook Park, Bray, co. Wicklow** - mother of Niamh Brennan, Archives Section
- **Mary Rodgers**- mother of Frankie Rodgers, Water works Inspector, Glenties.
- **Declan O' Kane** - brother of Sharon O' Kane, Library Service

**112.02. Confirmation of Minutes of Municipal District of Stranorlar Workshop held on 14<sup>th</sup> April 2016.**

On the proposal of Cllr. Frank Mc Brearty and seconded by Cllr. Gary Doherty the minutes of the Workshop Meeting held on 14<sup>th</sup> April 2016 were confirmed.

**112.03. Confirmation of Minutes of Municipal District of Stranorlar Meeting held on 14<sup>th</sup> April 2016.**

On the proposal of Cllr Frank Mc Brearty and seconded by Cllr Martin Harley the minutes of the Stranorlar Municipal District Meeting held on 14<sup>th</sup> April 2016 were confirmed.

**112.04. Confirmation of date and venue for next Meeting.**

Members confirmed that the next meeting of Stranorlar Municipal District will be held on *Wednesday 29<sup>th</sup> June 2016 @11.00 a.m. in the Council Chamber, Lifford.*

It was also agreed that a Workshop meeting would take place that day at 10.00a.m., prior to the Municipal District Meeting.

It was further agreed that the meetings of Stranorlar Municipal District would take place at 6 week intervals over the next 12 months (subject to the agreement of the members on individual dates) with the usual 'break' over the summer period.

<b>113.00. Community, Enterprise &amp; Cultural Services.</b>
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Members noted the contents of the report as circulated and presented by Mr. Paddy Doherty.

**113.01 Rural Development Programme / LEADER.**

It is hoped that approval of the LEADER Plan/Programme will be received from the Dept in the coming weeks and it is anticipated that the LEADER programme could be open for applications in July /August.

It is expected that the County will benefit from a fund of approx. € 12.9 m over the period of the Plan.

**113.02 Drumboe Walkway.**

Members queried why this project seemed to be taking so long and requested that the E.T.B. be asked to explain the delay

### **113.03 Playgrounds.**

Cllr Gary Doherty suggested that the possibility of developing a community playground in Lifford be considered, and, encouraged the Council to engage with members of the local community to discuss how the idea could be progressed and help to identify a possible location, sources of funding etc.

### **113.04 C.C.T.V.**

In response to the issue of recent acts of vandalism and anti- social behaviour in the area, it was agreed by the Members that a report on the possibility of having C.C.T.V cameras installed at more locations in the Twin Towns should be presented at the next Workshop meeting of the Stranorlar Municipal District.

<b>114.00. Environmental Services.</b>
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Members noted the content of the report circulated with the Agenda.

### **114.01 Refuse collection - 'Pay-by -Weight'.**

Members felt that there is a general lack of awareness among the Public regarding the details of the proposed, new 'Pay by Weight' charges for refuse disposal to be introduced nationwide. There is a lot of confusion about the introduction of the charges and how the charges will operate and whether or not there will be a 'standing charge' put in place as part of this new system.

They requested a presentation be made to the Members, at the next Municipal District Meeting on Wednesday 29<sup>th</sup> June 2016, in relation to the 'Pay by Weight' scheme.

### **114.02 Misc.**

In response to various queries raised by the members Ms. Bogan, Waste Information Officer, Water & Environment made the following comments:

- **Dog Fouling Bins** - the possibility of providing dog fouling bins at certain locations could be discussed at the next Workshop Meeting. However, currently the Council may issue an on the spot fine of €150.00 (under the Litter Pollution Act) to someone for failing to pick up their dogs excrement.

The Council will consider running an awareness campaign over the Summer.

- **Re-cycling facilities** - it is standard practice for receipts to be issued at all the recycling facilities operated on behalf of D.C.C.  
New signs have been put in place in relation to the various charges for the disposal of bulky items.

## 115.00. Roads & Transportation

Members noted the contents of the report as circulated and presented by Mr. Garrett Doherty.

### **115.01 Roadworks Programmes.**

Members were advised that works have started on projects in the Roads Improvement (RI) and Maintenance (RM) programmes and most projects are about 10% complete at this stage.

Works under the Severe Weather Programme are also progressing well.

While the members welcomed the commencement of these works, they expressed their disappointment at the level of funding being allocated to the Road works programmes, and, again highlighted their concerns in relation to the way in which monies are allocated to the various Municipal Areas, under the current system.

It was agreed that, a previous proposal to meet with Director of Services for Roads and the Chief Executive of the Council to highlight this issue should be pursued, with Members expressing their disappointment that such a meeting had not already taken place.

It was further agreed that the Divisional Manager for Roads - Mr. Brendan O' Donnell and the Area Engineer - Mr Garrett Doherty- should also attend the proposed meeting to allow a full discussion on this issue and various other matters giving rise to concern at local level, such as staffing, work practices, complaints processes etc.

### **115.02 Upgrading of Roads from Local Primary to Regional Road Status.**

Members were advised that in relation to the two roads identified by them for proposed re-classification:

1. Back Road from Ballybofey to Clady( via Dooneyloop)

## 2. Back Road from Castlefin to Convoy

It would appear that they do not meet the current criteria (as set out in Dttas Circulars: RA241/16 August 1973 and Circular RW12/95 October 1995) for re-classification, in that they are not:

- Roads servicing as main feeder routes to the national roads
- Main Spurs roads leading to cities and large towns
- Roads serving as connecting links to national roads
- Roads serving highly productive agricultural or industrial areas
- Roads connecting principal towns in a county or counties
- Roads serving a very special type of public service

And neither route has been identified as being part of the strategic transport network within Donegal in the current County Development Plan.

Members expressed their disappointment at this response and pointed to the fact that both roads carry a large volume of traffic and are a lot busier than some Regional roads in the County.

They requested that further clarification on this issue be sought from the Director, as it had been previously agreed that a letter seeking the upgrade of these routes would be sent directly to the Dept, and it was unclear from the response received, if this had been done, or, if any reply had been received from the Dept.

### **115.03. Misc.**

The following issues were also raised by Members:

- **Local Road Signs** - Members queried the progress of the Local Road Signage Scheme in the Stranorlar Area as there seems to be an absence of Local Road Signs in the District as opposed to other Areas of the County.
- **Hedge-cutting** - Members queried what role the Council had in cases where it was obvious the landowner was not going to cut or maintain hedges along the public road, particularly where, the lack of maintenance or adequate management of these hedges may result in a danger to traffic using the public road.
- **Footpaths in the Twin Towns** - the poor condition of many of the footpaths in the Twin Towns was highlighted by the Members, and, it was proposed that, the Stranorlar Municipal District should try to identify

possible sources of funding to implement a programme to upgrade and improve the condition of the footpaths in both towns.

- **Bus Stop - Castlefin** - the need for a bus-stop in Castlefin was raised as an issue that should merit further discussion among the Members and Council staff.

## **116.00. Planning & Economic Development.**

Members noted the contents of the report as circulated and presented by Mr. Paul Christy.

### **116.01. Pre-Planning Enquiries.**

There was a discussion in relation to the merits or otherwise of applicants submitting a Pre-Planning Enquiry to the Planning Office prior to making a formal application for Planning Permission.

While the Members agreed that this can be a very useful and informative process to go through, the length of time it took the Planning Office to reply to some of these queries was a concern.

The perceived delay in obtaining a response from the Planning Office simply acted as a deterrent to some applicants.

In response, Mr. Christy pointed to the fact that this service was being provided daily 'on the phone' on a less formal basis, and that often a short conversation on the telephone can be very productive and positive exercise for both the intended applicant and the Council.

He acknowledged that in some cases there are delays in relation to issuing a response to pre-planning applications, but, on the whole he felt it was a very useful service and stated that he would present a full report on Pre-Planning Enquiries to the Members at the next Municipal District Meeting.

## **117.00. Housing Services.**

Members noted the contents of the reports circulated with the Agenda and presented by Ms. Lynda Mc Gavigan, Acting Area Manager, Housing /Corporate.

### **117.01. Casual Vacancies Report.**

Members requested an update on the following houses identified as 'Funding sought under LTV ' Programme:

- 300 Coneyburrow, Lifford

- 19 Dromore Park, Killygordon
- 11 Liscooley Villas
- 17 Liscooley Villas
- 18 Liscooley Villas.

In relation to the 3 vacant houses in Liscooley, it was suggested that these houses be offered to applicants seeking houses in Castlefin/ Stranorlar as some of these applicants may be willing to accept a house in Liscooley given the option.

Ms. McGavigan confirmed that the Council is looking at this idea and will consider offering these houses to people who have applied to be housed in neighbouring towns and villages.

### **117.02. Provision of Social Housing.**

Referring to the Council's recent advertisement in the Press seeking offers for land to develop Social Housing Schemes at various locations throughout the County, concerns were expressed that members of the public are becoming anxious about the possibility of Social Housing Schemes being constructed adjacent to existing Private developments, particularly as there is a perception among the general public that there is a problem with anti-social behaviour in many Council Housing Schemes.

In response Ms. McGavigan stated that Social Housing Schemes are developed on the basis of 'demand' in a particular area, and, if the Council does not own a suitable land bank in that area for development, then, the only option is to publicly seek to acquire suitable land if possible.

While acknowledging Ms. McGavigan's response some members queried why more development was not being promoted in existing towns such as Raphoe and Lifford, where there are existing services such as shops, schools etc rather than seeking to develop 'green field' sites.

<b>118.00. Members Written Questions.</b>
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### **118.01. The following question was submitted by Cllr. P. Mc Gowan.**

Has Donegal Co Council made an application to Irish Water for a sewerage connection on behalf of Flax Fields estate in Convooy, please give details?

Cllr. Mc Gowan was informed that D.C.C. has not made an application to Irish Water for a sewer connection on behalf of the residents of Flaxfield estate. That said the planning authority is working with the developer to develop a site resolution plan for the development and has discussed the possibility of a

gravity sewer connection that by-passes the Flaxfields treatment plant as part of this overall site resolution. IW has indicated that it is agreeable to the principle of this proposal however the developer will need to demonstrate to the satisfaction of the planning authority and the Water Services engineer through submission of design proposals that this course of action is physically possible.

**118.02. The following question was submitted by Cllr. Mc Gowan.**

Can the Stranorlar Roads office outline what plans there is for providing new streets lights and upgrading existing lights in our towns and villages?

Cllr. Mc Gowan was informed that the Council in its Annual Budget 2016 has provided monies in the order of €2.1million for energy and normal maintenance of the existing lighting stock across the county. In addition, this year it has provided for the drawdown of a loan of €500,000 for a small programme of upgrading some of the lighting stock in terms of energy saving measures and in some cases replacing existing lights that have been severely corroded. There is no particular budget for the installation of new street lights.

**118.03. The following question was submitted by Cllr. Mc Gowan.**

Please outline when exactly road upgrade works (€750,000 in 2011 deferred) will begin on the NP road at Ard McCarron Ballybofey , has IW agreed to fund replacing the water mains and please give details of how and when all this work will be carried out?

Transport Infrastructure Ireland (TII) is committed to funding a Pavement Strengthening Contract on a 1.6Km stretch of the N15 Donegal Road which would address the current maintenance issues at Ard Mc Carron as well as other maintenance issues along this stretch of National Primary Road. The TII and the Donegal National Roads Office (DNRO) have been liaising with Irish Water to fast-track design and construction of a proposed watermain which must be installed along this stretch of road in advance of the proposed pavement strengthening contract. In that regard Irish Water will commence site investigation works required to design the proposed watermain at the end of June. A design and procurement process will then follow with a view to commencing construction of the proposed watermain before year end or early in 2017. Once the watermain has been installed the DNRO will be in a position to proceed with the required pavement strengthening contract.

**This concluded the business of the Meeting.**

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Area Manager,  
Municipal District of Stranorlar.

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Cathaoirleach,  
Municipal District of Stranorlar.