

4<sup>th</sup> December 2013

TO ALL MEMBERS OF DONEGAL COUNTY COUNCIL
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The Adjourned November Meeting of Donegal County Council, will be held on Monday 9<sup>th</sup> December, 2013, at 2.00pm, in the County House, Lifford to consider the unfinished business listed at Items:-

14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 20 (d), 21, 30 – 53 and the following Emergency Motions:-

- Public Right of Way at Aghadachor Beach.
- Variation of Donegal County Development Plan 2012 – 2018, Chapter 7, Page 108, Page 109, Page 111 and Chapter 10 Page 142.

Please ignore the correspondence circulated on 3<sup>rd</sup> December, which incorrectly listed the starting time for the meeting as 10.00am.

I wish to apologise for any inconvenience caused.

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Meetings Administrator

MINUTES OF ADJOURNED NOVEMBER MEETING OF DONEGAL  
COUNTY COUNCIL, HELD IN THE COUNTY HOUSE, LIFFORD ON 9<sup>th</sup>  
DECEMBER, 2013.

C/603/13    MEMBERS PRESENT

Clrs Ian McGarvey, Mayor, D Alcorn, L Blaney, J Boyle, C Brogan, B Byrne, P Canning, G Crawford, G. Doherty, M Doherty, P Doherty, R Donaghey, M Farren, M T Gallagher, M Harley, D Larkin, F Mc Brearty, M McBride, N Mc Bride, S McEniff, P Mc Gowan, B Mc Guinness, J Murray, S O' Domhnaill, B O' Neill, M Quinn, J Ryan.

C/604/13    OFFICIALS IN ATTENDANCE

Mr Seamus Neely, County Manager, Mr Liam Ward, Director of Housing and Corporate, Meetings Administrator, Mr. John Mc Laughlin, Director Roads & Transportation, Mr Joe Peoples A/Director of Water and Environment, Mr Michael Heaney, Director of Community, Culture and Planning, Mr Garry Martin, Head of Finance and Director of Emergency Services, Mr. E. Canney, Senior Engineer, Roads & Housing Design, Ms Anne Marie Conlon, Communications Officer, Ms Anne Marie Crawford, Staff Officer, Corporate Services.

C/605/13    APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from Clr Campbell who was unable to attend the meeting.

C/606/13    MAYOR'S BUSINESS

The Mayor informed Members that a Book of Condolence in memory of the late Nelson Mandela would be available for signing at the County House, Lifford and in all Public Service Centres over the coming days.

A minutes silence was observed in honour of all those who perished in the Glasgow Helicopter Crash.

C/607/13    DISCUSSION ON THE IMPLICATIONS OF IRISH WATER ON  
DONEGAL COUNTY COUNCIL

Members unanimously agreed to consider the motion in conjunction with Item No 21.

On the proposal of, Clr Brogan, seconded by, Clr Mc Gowan, the following motion was adopted:-

"To Discuss Irish Water and the implications for Donegal County Council as a Local Authority and the implications for staffing."

Members were informed that:-

"A presentation is being made to the Council on the transfer of the water function to Irish Water under Item 21 on the agenda which will deal with the implications for the Council including the implications for staffing."

Clr Brogan outlined the need for clarity, advising that many questions regarding the takeover remained unanswered.

He queried the role, if any, of the Elected Members following the takeover in January and whether Donegal County Council would have any reporting role with regard to the Elected Members.

It was essential, he said, that the Mayor lead a delegation to meet with Irish Water to ascertain the logistics regarding out of hours service provision and on going investment practicalities.

A number of Members alluded to the fact that there had been little consultation with staff and expressed concern in relation to the lack of clarity on the process to date.

A lengthy debate ensued with Members raising a number of issues namely:-

- The implications for businesses paying water charges.
- Need for clarification regarding customer service and access issues.
- Provisions made for future investment in water services. Concern expressed that this might not be to Donegal's advantage.
- Fear that the service would be eventually be privatised.
- Whether there were any specific plans for the upgrading of pipes and reservoirs.
- There was necessity to debate the matter in conjunction with the Council's own Budget provisions for 2014.

- Noted that county boundaries were being crossed and that Irish Water (a national organisation) would shortly be responsible for local service delivery.
- Plans for Group Water Schemes(private and Council owned)
- Implications for those living in unfinished private estates.
- Provisions being made for Council owned assets in the transfer process.
- What percentage of fixed overheads would be charged back to Irish Water?
- Whether any consideration had been given to local investment needs.

Mr Joe Peoples, Acting Director Water & Environment made a detailed presentation to update Members in relation to the proposed transfer. He advised of the current transition arrangements and noted that Local Authorities would from the New Year act as agents for Irish Water under a Service Level Agreement.

The responsibility for the provision of water services would, he confirmed, rest with Irish Water from the 1<sup>st</sup> January, 2014. The terms of the Service Level Agreement to be put in place would be for a 12 year period with specific protections in place for employees.

Donegal County Council, it was confirmed, in its role as an agent for Irish Water, would continue to operate Water Services Infrastructure, issue bills and collect non-domestic water charges for a period of time after 1<sup>st</sup> January 2014. The Council would continue to deal with customer queries and the processing of service connections. These functions, it was acknowledged, would all, through time, transfer to Irish Water.

The Capital Programme it was noted would continue to be funded at national level but decisions regarding specific priorities and the overall spend would rest with Irish Water.

Mr Peoples informed Members that strong representations had been made to Irish Water regarding Group Water Schemes in the County and specific reference made to their unique position in the overall provision of water services in the County.

Members welcomed the update and proceeded to highlight a number of issues which they felt required more detailed consideration.

These included:-

- Query as to the arrangements for the transfer of Donegal County Council assets and liabilities to Irish Water.
- Whether Donegal County Council would be paid to act as an agent.
- The nature of the arrangements in place to service DCC loans and whether the Council would be compensated in any way.
- The level of control to be exercised by Donegal County Council over the Service Level Agreement.
- Assurance required that the same level of customer service would be provided by Donegal County Council.
- Further details requested in relation to the staffing mix, the accommodation arrangements and whether rent would be paid to the Council, for office accommodation occupied by Irish Water employees.
- Necessity of having a dedicated mechanism in place to deal with Group Water Scheme Takeover.
- The impact of the takeover for private estates and whether or not Treatment Systems in some of these problematic developments would end up being handed back to the Management Companies concerned.
- Details requested in relation to Donegal County Council's role as an agent for Irish Water.

The Acting Director of Water & Environment confirmed that negotiations with Irish Water were ongoing and taking place in parallel with the 2014 budgetary preparations.

A full costing, he advised, would be detailed for the 2014 Budget. It would be possible also; he added, to provide a breakdown of staffing numbers, whole-time equivalent posts etc. It was acknowledged that a regional office would be located in the Donegal Public Service Centre, though this arrangement was separate to the Service Level Agreement.

Mr Peoples said that engagement had taken place with Irish Water regarding the unique circumstances in Donegal and that the concerns raised would be communicated to the relevant personnel.

Responding to an earlier query, he stated, that Irish Water was a Public Utility Company and not established for profit.

It was noted that Call Centre arrangements would be a matter for Irish Water but that the status quo would remain until further notice. With regard to the transfer of Waste Water Infrastructure, this, he advised, would transfer through time on an agreed basis.

He continued by reassuring Members that all reasonable costs associated with the provision of water services including the cost of borrowing had been provided for.

In conclusion, he confirmed, that it would be possible to seek an opportunity for a delegation to meet with Irish Water.

C/608/13 MOTIONS UNDER URGENT BUSINESS

Responding to a number of queries the Mayor informed Members that the motions submitted under urgent business at the November Council Meeting would be dealt with prior to the close of business.

C/609/13 DISCUSSION ON TIDAL WAVE POWER GENERATED ELECTRICITY IN DONEGAL

On the proposal of Clr N McBride, seconded by, Clr Mc Guinness, the following motion was adopted:-

"That this Council discuss the idea of tidal and wave power generated electricity in Donegal."

Members were informed that:-

“Donegal County Council is actively exploring the potential of this resource on a number of fronts. The proposed Killybegs centre of

Excellence for Renewable Energies will have this as a central area of research and development. Discussions are opening with ORPC (Ocean Renewable Power Corporation) from Maine, with regard to a possible research centre/pilot project in Donegal.”

Clr N Mc Bride extolled the benefits of pursuing this type of energy given the significant resources available along the County’s coastline. Recent discussions with the Ocean Renewable Power Company in Maine, had, he advised, demonstrated the possibility for piloting an ocean wave/tidal device for the production of energy off the coast of Donegal. This activity, it was acknowledged, offered opportunities in terms of job creation and the possibility also of exporting electricity to England and Mainland Europe. It was essential, he confirmed, that this activity was supported and promoted thus allowing the Community, Culture & Planning Department to continue developing contacts at national/international level.

Members outlined the need to look at all possible options with a number highlighting the potential for harnessing tidal energy at Mulroy Bay.

There was a call also for the Council to engage with Sustainable Energy Ireland with a view to commissioning a detailed assessment of the potential for this type of energy production off the Donegal coast. The need for a long-term strategy developed in conjunction with the EU funding options was also highlighted with a view to maximising the overall county gain.

Clr Mc Brearty suggested that the presentation on tidal/wind Energy delivered to the Members of the Boston delegation by the Ocean Renewable Power Company be presented to full Council.

Mr Michael Heaney, Director Community, Culture and Planning said that his department would be following up and looking at all aspects of this potential, following which a report would be presented to the Elected Members.

C/610/13

CALL FOR THE COUNCIL TO ENSURE THAT THE RATHMULLAN/BUNCRANA CAR FERRY IS OPERATIONAL FOR SUMMER 2014

On the proposal of Clr Blaney, seconded by, Clr Donaghey, the following motion was adopted:-

"That this Council explore all avenues to ensure that the Rathmullan/Buncrana car ferry is operational for summer 2014."

Members were informed that:-

"This issue can be dealt with in the context of potential 2014 DFI allocation as was done in the past. Subject to agreement of members, tenders for provision of service can be sought."

Clr Blaney expressed concern that it would be March before the DFI allocations could be looked at and asked that every effort be made to obtain funding so as to ensure the continuation of the service. He asked that operational figures for the service from its instigation to date be provided and called on the Council to look at the possibility of providing its own service.

It was noted that the service had been beneficial to the whole region and that its value could not be measured in monetary terms alone.

Members advised of the need for a more permanent operating contract so that the public could on an annual basis be assured that the Buncrana/Rathmullan Ferry was operating.

There was a suggestion also that suppliers be contacted with a view to submitting ideas regarding the operation of the service going forward.

There was some concern that as the ferry boat itself had been sold by the current operator and that this coupled with the abolition of Town Council's funding in 2014, would see the service curtailed into the future.

The need to source a smaller vessel was highlighted. Members advised of the need for a dedicated marketing strategy to promote the region as a whole in tandem with the ferry services on offer.

Mr Michael Heaney, Director Community, Culture and Planning advised however that it would be prudent to see what came out of the 2014 budgetary process in light of the changing situation with the ferry company.

C/611/13

CALL FOR A DISCUSSION ON THE LETTERKENNY RELIEF ROAD PROJECT AND REMEDIAL WORKS TO ENSURE THE SAFETY OF THE FOUR LANE INTO AND OUT OF LETTERKENNY

On the proposal of Clr Mc Brearty, seconded by Clr Ryan it was resolved to amend the designation to county-wide.

On the proposal of Clr Larkin, seconded by, Clr Blaney, the following motion was adopted:-

"That this Council discuss the Letterkenny Relief Road Project and what remedial measures can be employed to ensure the safety of the four lane into and out of Letterkenny."

Members were informed that:-

“The Letterkenny Relief Road project did not receive an allocation from the NRA in either 2011, 2012 or 2013 and remains suspended until such time as funding becomes available.

In 2010 and 2011 the NRA made funds available to implement a significant road safety and traffic calming scheme between the Pole Star Roundabout and the Dry Arch Roundabout. This scheme was in response to previous requests from Donegal County Council to review the road and make improvements. As the reasons for that request were primarily safety issues generally rather than pavements or other issues the NRDO Safety Section took the lead in developing the proposal.

Based on the known collision history and their pattern and nature due to the effect the numerous junctions and volumes of turning movements along this 100kph section of road the Safety Section concluded that the ideal solution would involve the elimination or minimising of turning movements and a reduction in the speed limit. Due to the nature of the road, being four lanes wide and with hard shoulders along one side it is conducive to high speed travel and therefore the provision of a speed limit alone would have little effect on the speed of traffic without either considerable enforcement or the provision of traffic calming facilities.

The resultant proposal involved the elimination of the right turn movements as far as reasonably possible, the provision an 80kph speed limit and a high quality central median to reduce the

apparent width of the road to assist in the reduction of speeding. The development of the project was hindered by various issues including the ability to reduce the number of junctions facilitated by right turning movements. Traffic slowing to turn right onto and from the Four Lane Road was one of the main causes of conflict on the road.

A recent Road Safety Inspection (not yet finalised) has identified a number of road safety concerns along this section of the N56.

While not specifically discussing the cause of these concerns, that is not the purpose of the Inspections, the fact remains a number of issues were identified. Most of those issues would have been resolved had the proposed scheme been completed.

The Safety Section is still prepared to implement reasonable, practical measures to reduce the risks along this section of road provided they can be agreed.

The collision history for the N14 (N56) for 2002 to 2011 includes 25 injury crashes reported to and recorded by the Gardaí in 10 years.

This road is kept under review by the Collision Prevention Programme, comprising Donegal County Council, the Gardaí and the NRA.”

Clr Larkin expressed disappointment at the fact that proposals for the Relief Road had been suspended on what was a major access point into the west of the County. It was imperative, he added, that funding was put in place for the completion of the geological survey and design and flood studies. He acknowledged the need to reignite and progress the argument for the development of the Relief Road.

He asked that the issue of the four lane road into and out of Letterkeny be included on the agenda of the forthcoming meeting with the National Roads Authority. A request was made also for the Road Safety Engineer to come back and examine options for making the present four lane road into a safer travelling experience.

A lengthy debate ensued with Members advocating the need to reduce the speed limit on this stretch of road.

Members acknowledged the need to put forward a proposal for funding to the Minister's office as soon as possible.

Issues raised included;

- Dangers associated with turning right on the four lane stretch of road.
- The possibility of constructing a barrier up the middle of the road.
- The need to reduce speed limits at other locations including the Port Road, Bluebanks, and on the outskirts of Kilmacrennan .
- That the proposals outlined in the motion be brought to the attention of the National Roads Authority.
- Letterkenny's position as a Gateway Town warranted the funding of both projects.
- That the Gardaí needed to be consulted regarding any proposed safety options.

Clr Mc Brearty alluded to the Relief Road Project and asked that the Minister conduct a full independent enquiry into the NRA land purchases for this stretch of road.

A number of Members outlined their support for the motion, but were of the opinion that this should not be at the expense of similar and other high profile projects across the county.

Mr. John Mc Laughlin, Director Roads & Transportation advised that the issue of the Bonagee Link could be included for discussion at the forthcoming meeting with the NRA. He confirmed that a speed limit survey could be carried out again, but alluded to the fact that there had been limited support for previous proposals of this nature.

Mr Mc Laughlin said that he would circulate details of the costing for the UNIFI site and the other land purchases involved, following which the Council could then decide if an investigation was warranted.

He agreed also to consult with the Gardaí on safety issues, though he confirmed that liaison did occur on a regular basis.

Clr Larkin thanked Members for their support but acknowledged that many of the issues identified fitted into different funding categories.

He reiterated the need for the Road Safety Engineer to look again at the various safety options. Acknowledging Letterkenny's status as a Gateway Town and recent deliberations by the Minister for Transport on the status of the A5 Project, he asked that every effort be made to advance the sections of the road on the southern side.

Concluding the debate he advised of the need to progress the four lane route from a safety point of view and also to bring the Relief Road to design stage now that land costs had been significantly reduced.

C/612/13 EXTENSION OF THE MEETING

Clr Mc Brearty called an extension of the meeting and advised that he was also seeking to proceed with the meeting in committee.

Acknowledging that there were still a number of items to be completed, the Meetings Administrator advised that the finishing time of the meeting was 6pm as outlined in Standing Orders but that there was provision under Standing Order 29 to suspend Standing Orders and extend proceedings beyond 6pm.

Clr Mc Brearty proposed, seconded by Clr Farren in accordance with Standing Order No 29 to suspend Standing Order No 3 and extend the meeting beyond 6pm. so as to allow the Council to complete the remainder of the agenda.

Mr. Liam Ward, Meetings Administrator reminded Members that it was not possible to discuss an item which had not been included on the November agenda or introduced at the meeting on the 25<sup>th</sup> November.

C/613/13 PRIORITISATION OF THE FOOTPATH FROM BALLYMACOOL TO THE AURA IN THE 2014 PROGRAMME

On the proposal of Clr Quinn, seconded by, Clr Brogan, the following motion was adopted:-

"That Donegal County Council prioritises the footpath from Ballymacool to the Aura in the 2014 Programme."

Members were informed that:-

“Donegal County Council have been in discussion with Letterkenny Town Council regarding improving this footpath. Currently, it is proposed to complete re-kerbing of sections early in 2014.

Construction of a complete new footpath for the entire stretch was examined and would cost in the region of €70,000 and such a budget has not been identified when the other competing road maintenance/upgrade activities are taken into consideration.”

Clr Quinn outlined the necessity of implementing remedial works, advising that there were problems also accessing and departing from the Aura.

It was imperative, he said, that monies were provided in the 2014 Budget. He noted that both Donegal County Council and Letterkenny Town Council had agreed to replace kerbing on this stretch of road.

It was generally acknowledged that the footpath in question was too narrow and that the public lighting at Ballymacool Terrace needed to be improved. Calls were made for this to be listed as the number one priority in Letterkenny for footpath improvements and progressed in conjunction with other proposed remedial works in the locality.

C/614/13

TAKING OF DECISION WITH REGARD TO THE  
CONSTRUCTION OF AN INTEGRATED CONSTRUCTED  
WETLAND FOR THE PRIMARY TREATMENT OF SEWAGE  
THROUGH A SERIES OF SHALLOW, INTERCONNECTED  
EMERGENT-VEGETATED, SURFACE FLOW WETLAND  
COMPARTMENTS AT ARDMORE, MUFF, CO DONEGAL

It was acknowledged that there had been huge opposition by local residents to the project and thus a number of Members expressed the opinion that the matter should be deferred at this juncture.

Mr Joe Peoples, A/Director Water and Environment asked members to be mindful of the fact that deferral would result in the project becoming the responsibility of Irish Water post December 2013, and that there would be implications also from a planning point of view.

Clr Murray proposed, seconded by, Clr Farren not to proceed with the approval.

Clr M. Doherty, proposed, seconded by Clr Canning that the carrying out of works under Part XI of the Planning & Development Act, 2000 (as amended) and Part 8 of the Planning & Development Regulations 2001 (amended) , with regard to the the construction of an Integrated Constructed Wetland for the primary treatment of sewage through a series of shallow, interconnected emergent -vegetated surface flow wetland compartments at Ardmore, Muff be approved.

He advised that the project was viable and alluded to the fact that a similar type project was operating in Cavan. He acknowledged also the considerable effort that had gone into getting the project off the ground.

A number of Members cited the need to be mindful of local opposition to the project. It was noted that the residents in question had commissioned a report, which had highlighted a number of reservations regarding the project and the fact that the proposed development was too close to a number of houses.

It was noted that there had been no objections to the project at Electoral Area level, and that it would be somewhat inconsistent now to hand it over to another body to make the decision. This type of development, it was acknowledged, could significantly benefit other towns and villages across the County.

The need for ongoing engagement with local residents was noted.

Mr Joe Peoples, Acting Director Water & Environment acknowledged that it was an emotive issue, but confirmed that there had been and would be ongoing engagement with the residents concerned.

The County Manager said he was appreciative of the emotive nature of the discussion, but affirmed, that there was a constant demand on the Council to be innovative in a manner which was reasonable and cost effective. He noted that up until now it had been open to the Council to look at the issue generally in its capacity as a Planning & Waste Water Authority.

He said, he was of the opinion, that it was a workable proposal, advising that this was the last opportunity that the Council would have to make a decision in relation to the matter. The existence of the planning permission alone it was acknowledged could not guarantee the completion of the project.

Following the Mayor's call for a vote in relation to the matter, Mr. Liam Ward Meetings Administrator informed members that they were now obliged to vote for or against the approval of the construction of an Integrated Constructed Wetland for the primary treatment of sewage through a series of shallow, interconnected emergent -vegetated surface flow wetland compartments at Ardmore, Muff.

A recorded vote taken by the Meetings Administrator resulted in 13 voting for with 8 against.

Those voting in favour included:-

Clrs Alcorn, Blaney, Boyle, Canning, Crawford, M Doherty, P Doherty, Donaghey, Larkin, N Mc Bride, P Mc Gowan, B McGuinness, and O' Domhnaill. (13)

Those voting against included:-

Clrs G Doherty, Farren, Gallagher, Mc Brearty, M Mc Bride, Murray, Quinn and Ryan (8)

Clr Mc Garvey abstained.

The Meetings Administrator confirmed that the carrying out of works under Part XI of the Planning & Development Act, 2000 (as amended) and Part 8 of the Planning & Development Regulations 2001 (amended), with regard to the construction of an Integrated Constructed Wetland for the primary treatment of sewage through a series of shallow, interconnected emergent -vegetated surface flow wetland compartments at Ardmore, Muff had been approved.

C/615/13

## MAYORS BUSINESS

### *Visit of the Korean Ambassador*

The Mayor informed Members that the Korean Ambassador would be visiting the County on the 17<sup>th</sup> December, 2013.

### *Civic Reception*

It was noted that the Civic Reception to honour Michael Murphy would be held in the County House, Lifford on Monday 16<sup>th</sup> December, 2013.

C/616/13 MOTION UNDER URGENT BUSINESS – RIGHT OF WAY  
AGHADACHOR BEACH

On the proposal of Clr Quinn, seconded by, Clr Larkin it was resolved to defer the matter to later in the meeting.

C/617/13 MOTION UNDER URGENT BUSINESS – DRAFT VARIATION  
OF THE DONEGAL COUNTY DEVELOPMENT PLAN RE SET  
BACK DISTANCE AND THE FRESH WATER PEARL  
MUSSEL

Mr. Liam Ward, Meetings Administrator read into the record the attached motion which Members had agreed to consider at their Meeting on the 25<sup>th</sup> November, 2013 (Vide Appendix 1)

Clr Gallagher on behalf of Clr Campbell who was unable to attend the meeting proposed that the variations as outlined be sent out for public consultation.

Mr Michael Heaney, Director Community, Culture & Planning advised that the matter had been considered at the recent Planning SPC and that it had been agreed that the presentation as delivered be circulated to all Members for consideration.

Clr Mc Guinness asked for clarification in relation to the SPCs recommendations. He noted that the revised national guidelines were due to issue shortly and suggested that both matters be dealt with simultaneously.

Clr Mc Brearty enquired as to the legal status of the motion given that national legislation would overrule any decision at local level.

Clr Brogan in his capacity as Chair of the Community, Culture & Planning SPC said that it had been agreed at the SPC Meeting to circulate the presentation by Mr Denis Kelly, Senior Executive Planner to all Members and that a workshop be held in January at which this could again be considered in conjunction with the new guidelines. He reminded Members of the cost implications involved in pursuing a variation at this juncture.

It was acknowledged that public consultation had not been particularly successful in the past with limited engagement from the public. Thus it was suggested that a public consultation process be initiated on all aspects of alternative energy including wind turbines as soon as the revised national guidelines became available.

The Director of Service said that if the issue of set back distances was addressed in the new guidelines then there was a possibility that the variation as submitted would have to be undone.

He advised also that there was an objective in the current development plan to protect the Fresh Water Pearl Mussel.

Clr Larkin proposed, seconded by, Clr Gallagher that the matter be put to the floor.

Following a lengthy debate Clr P Doherty proposed, seconded by, Clr O' Neill that consideration of the variation be deferred until after the workshop in January and the publication of the new Planning Guidelines following which an agreed package could be sent out for public consultation.

Mr Liam Ward, Meetings Administrator advised that a show of hands would be taken firstly in relation to the amendment as proposed by Clr Doherty.

This resulted in 12 voting for with 8 voting against.

As the amendment was carried, he declared, that it was now become the substantive motion and proceeded to put it to the floor.

A show of hands resulted in 18 voting for with 1 against.

Thus the motion was carried.

It was unanimously agreed to hold the workshop on Monday 20<sup>th</sup> January, 2014 at 10.00 am in the County House, Lifford.

C/618/13

MOTION UNDER URGENT BUSINESS- RIGHT OF WAY AT ROAD LEADING TO AGHADACHOR BEACH

Mr Liam Ward, Meetings Administrator informed Members that the following motion submitted under urgent business had been deferred from the November Council Meeting:-

“In accordance with the fact that Donegal County Council are unable to confirm from their records, that the road leading to Aghadachor Beach, which has been travelled by many generations of local people is a Public Right of Way, we the undersigned request the Local Authority to immediately commence the process with the aim of determining this road to be a Public Right of Way”

Clr Quinn outlined the background to the motion. He advised that local residents had become concerned when a steel gate blocking access to the beach was erected.

Clr Blaney confirmed that the Letterkeny EA Members together with Mr Eunan Quinn, Senior Planner had met with the residents concerned on two occasions. They had also, he confirmed, met with the developer in question.

He advised that engagement was ongoing and suggested that it might not be in the best interests of all concerned to go ahead with the motion at this juncture.

It had just been confirmed, he added, that the developer was prepared to open the gate and that both sides were prepared to sit down and discuss the situation.

A number of Members urged caution in relation to the matter and expressed concern that the issue if progressed could prove costly for the Council.

Clr Mc Brearty asked why legal advice had not been given and whether or not the residents were now in favour of the motion being passed.

The Mayor, confirmed, that he had passed on the relevant legal advice to the Letterkenny Electoral Area Members.

The way forward, he advised, was through discussion and negotiation rather than confrontation.

Clr Mc Brearty alluded to the fact that a precedent had been set in the Supreme Court regarding Right of Ways and that this needed to be taken into consideration. He asked if the residents concerned were happy for the motion to proceed.

Clr Blaney advised that the emphasis had been on negotiation and that he did not have any detail as to whether they wanted the motion to proceed at this juncture.

Clr Mc Brearty thus withdrew his support for the motion and asked that his name be removed from the list of signatories.

Clr Quinn stated that he had spoken to the group and they were happy for the motion to proceed.

There were, he noted, a number of issues to be clarified including:-

- Issue of changing access rights to the Beach
- The fact that there was an apparent intent to charge for access.
- The assertion that the developer concerned was not aware of anybody being ordered off the beach.

There was some concern at this juncture that further deliberation on the motion might jeopardise the ongoing negotiations between the developer and the residents concerned.

It was acknowledged that consideration needed to be given also to the legal consequences of proceeding with the matter.

The County Manager stated that any further discussion on the pros and cons of the matter or in relation to the Council's rights could possibly prejudice the outcome of the ongoing discussions.

Clr Mc Garvey proposed, seconded by, Clr Brogan to defer the motion pending the conclusion of the current negotiations between the residents and the developer in question.`

Mr Liam Ward, Meetings Administrator thus proceeded to put the following motion to the floor:-

“In accordance with the fact that Donegal County Council are unable to confirm from their records, that the road leading to

Aghadachor Beach, which has been travelled by many generations of local people is a Public Right of Way, we the undersigned request the Local Authority to immediately commence the process with the aim of determining this road to be a Public Right of Way”

A show of hands was then taken by the Meetings Administrator resulting in 4 voting for with 11 against.

He thus declared the motion defeated.

### **Members noted the following questions**

C/619/13

#### **PROVISION OF INFORMATION ON THE CUSTOMER CONTACT CENTRE IN MILFORD PSC**

The following question was submitted by Clr Campbell:-

"In relation to the Customer Contact Centre established in 2012 in the Milford PSC can the Manager provide the following information and statistics:

- a) Numbers of persons assigned to the dedicated unit including breakdown of whole time equivalents.
- b) Are staff assigned to this unit dedicated solely to customer contact or do they perform other duties at the same time.
- c) Total numbers of calls made to the unit on a monthly basis since fully established in tabular form.
- d) Percentage of calls that are being answered during working hours. (as a percentage of total calls made)
- e) An outline of the systems in place (if any) to allow monitoring of customer queries to ensure follow up by council."

Clr Campbell was informed that:-

“Donegal County Council established a Customer Contact Centre in October, 2012. The purpose of the Centre was to provide a central point of contact for all customer telephone calls for the entire County, supported by a Customer Relationship Management System (CRM). Initially the Centre dealt with calls from the Letterkenny Electoral Area and over the period from October 2012, this was gradually extended until we reached the situation earlier this year, where the Customer Contact Centre is now dealing with all telephone calls received by Donegal County Council which

were previously made to Lifford HQ and the five PSCs in the County.

Experience to date has shown that this has been a very positive and beneficial initiative. The Council has received very positive feedback in relation to the standard of service being provided by the Centre. It is evident from the statistics available, that the Centre is in a position on an ongoing basis to deal with customer queries in their entirety in over 50 % of the calls received without the need to refer to any other department within the Council.

It is acknowledged however that on occasions, members of the public have experienced difficulties in getting through to a member of staff who will deal with their query. This has occurred in situations where large numbers may be seeking to contact the Council on foot of correspondence received in relation to NPPR charges or Commercial Water charges etc. A particular pressure point was experienced during late September with the revised procedures being implemented relating to un-taxed vehicles with effect from 1<sup>st</sup> October, 2013. It is acknowledged that on such occasions, the level of staffing resources available may not have been sufficient to meet demand. This situation has recently been addressed with the assignment of an additional two members of staff from a current date.

Donegal County Council is committed to ensuring that the Customer Contact Centre is effective and provides a first class service to the people of Donegal. The operations in the Centre will be kept under regular review to ensure that any difficulties experienced during the first year of operation are highlighted and addressed.

In terms of the specific questions asked, please find detailed responses below. It is important to note that with respect to the statistical information provided, the Customer Contact Centre was established utilising the existing Telephone System, which carries with it certain limitation in terms of Management Information. The figures provided are therefore approximate and result from analysis of the telephone system and the cases entered on the CRM system.

**a) Numbers of persons assigned to the dedicated unit including breakdown of whole time equivalents.**

In the period from November 2012 to October 2013, there were 10 employees assigned to the Customer Contact Centre. Given absences due to various forms of leave including Worksharing and Parental Leave arrangements, the staffing complement available would have equated to 6.5 persons during the period in question. This complement of staffing will be increased with the assignments of an additional 2 members of staff from a current date.

**b) Are staff assigned to this unit dedicated solely to customer contact or do they perform other duties at the same time.**

The employees assigned to the Unit also have responsibility for delivery of the Motor Tax, Cash Receipting and Front Line Reception duties in the Milford PSC. For the employees concerned, this is regarded as positive as it affords the option for employees to be rotated, which provides opportunities to gain experience in other areas of work.

**c) Total numbers of calls made to the unit on a monthly basis since fully established in tabular form**

The attached table Vide Appendix 1 provided details of the number of contacts logged on the CRM system during the period in question. Please bear in mind that these figures are approximate. The number of calls received is higher as detailed at d) below:

**Period: October 2012 – October 2013**

The headings on the various columns in the above table are as follows:

**Call Connected:** This is where the caller requested to be put through to an individual member of staff

**Call Connected:** This is where the caller requested to be put through to a specific section of the Council

**Information Provided:** This is where the customer query was dealt with by the Customer Contact Centre at the initial contact with no further referral necessary.

**Service Request Initiated:** This is where it is necessary to pass the query on to a member of staff or to a department for action.

**d) Percentage of calls that are being answered during working hours. (as a percentage of total calls made)**

The information provided at c) above indicates that approximately 90 % of calls received were answered during the period in question. The Council is committed to increasing this figure and is targeting 100 % response rate. The assignment of the additional staffing resources is regarded as critical in this regard.

**e) An outline of the systems in place (if any) to allow monitoring of customer queries to ensure follow up by Council.**

As detailed in the table above, where the Customer Contact Centre is unable to deal fully with the customers query, a Service Request is initiated. Arising from this an email is automatically sent to the appropriate staff member for follow up. Where the follow up has taken place, the staff member involved is requested to inform the Customer Contact Centre. This allows the CRM system to be updated and the case closed out. The system also provides the detailed analysis of situations where cases are not being closed out. This information is available at an appropriate level to allow for further follow up action, where necessary.

C/620/13 INFORMATION BREAKDOWN BY ELECTORAL AREA OF COMMERCIAL RATES

The following question was submitted by Cllr Campbell:-

"In relation to rates can the Head of Finance provide a breakdown in tabular form of the following information on an Electoral Area basis:

- a) Total number of commercial rate accounts and the valuation attributable to them.
- b) Number of commercial rate accounts considered vacant, derelict or similarly uncollectable and the evaluation attributable to them.
- c) Number of commercial rate accounts excluding those at b for which no payment has been received in 2013 and the valuation attributable to them.

d)Total commercial rates collected in 2013 excluding arrears."

Clr Campbell was informed that:-

“The total number of commercial rates accounts in 2013 is 2889. Some rate accounts may receive a demand for more than one property. The total number of properties in the County that received a demand rate in 2013 is 4006. The total value of the warrant in 2013 is €21,625,187.98. The breakdown of these issues is presented in Table (A) below. Vide Appendix 2.

In relation to the number of commercial rate accounts considered vacant, derelict or similarly uncollectable and the valuation attributable to them, this information is not available until the RA16 Process has been carried out in early 2014. The RA16 Process cannot be carried out until the 2013 financial year has ended on the 31<sup>st</sup> December 2013.

The outcome of the RA16 process will provide the detail sought and a report will be presented to the Elected Members at a future Council meeting in 2014 in accordance with the statutory provisions and as provided in all previous years.

In relation to the number of commercial rate accounts excluding those considered vacant, derelict or similarly uncollectable for which no payment has been received in 2013 and the valuation attributable to them, will be represented in the RA16 Report as the amounts to be carried forward for collection in 2014. It is normal practice that any monies received in respect of an account are receipted to the oldest debt on the account. Therefore, if the current year's rates are outstanding this could not be taken that no payments had been made in 2013 but rather, any payments made would have been receipted against any aged debt on the account in the first instance.

C/621/13

CLARIFICATION ON THE NEED TO USE OUR OUTDOOR STAFF TO DO NRA WORKS

The following question was submitted by Clr Harley:-

"Why at a time when outdoor staffing levels area at a minimum are we using our outdoor staff to do NRA works and cross-border projects given that there are two Electoral Areas in this county that

do not touch the border and are not affected by this policy of this Council?"

Clr Harley was informed that:-

“The Council as Roads Authority is responsible for all public roads in Donegal other than Town Council’s Local Roads. We maintain these roads through a combination of our own limited resources and national grants. The balance between what we outsource versus what do using our own staff is a function of the activity and our capacity to carry it out along with the available funding we have in our adopted budget both at a county level and at a local level. Our adopted 2013 budget allowed for a significant element of roads outdoor staff wages to be sourced from grants provided by cross border projects and the NRA as well as other sources. The exact extent of these types of work in 2014 will continue to be determined by our available own resources and our capacity to carry out types of work.

The types of special Capital Projects that the Roads Section have been assisting with include:

Donney Loop in Stranorlar  
Inch Levels in Inishowen  
Sliabh Laig in Donegal  
Wild Atlantic Way  
Malin Head in Inishowen”

C/622/13 PROVISION OF THE LATEST TRAFFIC FIGURES FOR THE N14 AND THE N15

The following question was submitted by Clr Harley:-

"Can this Council give me the latest traffic figures on the N14 and the N15?"

Clr Harley was informed that:-

Based on the NRA permanent traffic counters, the latest traffic figures (AADTs) are as follows:

N14 (Drumbuoy, Lifford, Co. Donegal) - 11,576 AADT.

N15 (Inchenagh, Lifford, Co. Donegal) - 4,934 AADT.

The count at Drumboy, beside the main Letterkenny Road also includes traffic coming from St. Johnston and Carrigans, the Ballindrait and Raphoe traffic and the Galdonagh Road traffic.

The Count at Inchenagh includes most of the main N15 traffic. However, some traffic use the Clady junction for long distance journeys and this would not be picked up at the Inchenagh count.”

C/623/13 FUNDING FOR THE CONSTRUCTION OF A FOOTPATH ON TRUSK ROAD BALLYBOFEY

The following question was submitted by Clr McGowan:-

"Can Donegal County Council begin work on designing and identifying funding for the construction of a footpath on Trusk Road Ballybofey from the Weavers Estate to Sessiagh O Neill School, Chapel And Parish Graveyard?"

Clr McGowan was informed that:-

“Road Design Lifford will be requested to include this design on their 2014 programme.

We will then work up an estimate of costs for the full length, including land purchase etc. We will then be in a position to consider what funding sources will be available to help undertake construction.”

C/624/13 INCLUSION OF A CYCLING/RUNNING LANE DESIGN AROUND BALLYBOFEY – STRANORLAR IN THE AREA PLAN

The following question was submitted by Clr McGowan:-

Please can the Council include a cycling/running lane design around Ballybofey - Stranorlar in the new Ballybofey and Stranorlar Area Plan and undertake to install such a cycle/walk lanes at every opportunity as and when presented?"

Clr McGowan was informed that:-

“Donegal County Council will seek to develop cycling lanes as tourism and recreational amenities throughout the county in as far

as possible, as part of our overall efforts to develop all aspects of tourism and to improve quality of life for the Donegal community.

This work will be advanced in the context of our County Strategy and the County Donegal Development Plan 2012-2018 which was adopted in June 2012 and incorporated as a core strategy, which provides a co-ordinated framework for the development of the County through an Urban Settlement Hierarchy. Letterkenny is identified as a Tier 1 settlement and Bundoran, Bunrana, Ballybofey-Stranorlar, Ballyshannon, Killybegs, Dungloe, Bridgend, Donegal Town, and Carndonagh are identified as Tier 2 Settlements.

The implementation of the settlement hierarchy and distribution of population targets was to be delivered through land use zoning in Development Plans, Local Area Plans and Settlement Frameworks. The plan committed to the preparation of variations to the Development Plans for Letterkenny & Environs, Bunrana & Environs and Bundoran & Environs and it also committed to the preparation or amendment of Local Area Plans for Tier 2 Settlements.

The variation of each of the Town Development Plans has now been completed, with the adoption being made in June 2013 by Donegal County Council and the respective Town Councils. (The draft Bunrana and Environs Development Plan 2014-2020 is currently being made, with the public consultation stage being completed in October 2013).

The preparation of a single Local Area Plan for all Tier 2 settlements within the functional area of Donegal County Council (i.e. excluding Letterkenny & Environs, Bunrana & Environs and Bundoran & Environs) was discussed at the Planning and Economic Development SPC in September, whereby the potential advantages offered by a single LAP were referenced. Work has commenced on the preparation of the Tier 2 Local Area Plan (i.e. Ballybofey-Stranorlar, Ballyshannon, Bridgend, Carndonagh, Donegal Town, Dungloe and Killybegs) and it has been screened for an Appropriate Assessment and a Strategic Environmental Assessment, in accordance with legislative requirements. It has been decided that both are required and the appropriate work on these strands is ongoing in tandem with work in respect of each settlement. The LAP making process will require significant

consultation and assessment through 2014 and it is intended that Members will be updated regularly through both the SPC and Electoral Area meetings.

The issue raised with regard to the cycling/running lane will be considered within the context of the above programme of work and will also be considered within the context of ongoing work on the development of action plans for the Ballybofey/Stranorlar Development Centres/Hubs, subject to funding etc.”

C/625/13 COLLECTION RATE FOR THE 2012 HOUSEHOLD CHARGE IN COUNTY DONEGAL

The following question was submitted by Clr Alcorn:-

"Regarding the 2012 Household Charge what was the final % Collection in Donegal, and how much arrears is still owed to Donegal County Council?"

Clr Alcorn was informed that:-

“A total of 48,590 properties registered in Donegal in respect of the 2012 Household Charge, paying a total of €5,335,882 in the process. This represented a 74.38% compliance rate based upon a total liable figure of 65,331 properties.

Nationally, a total of 1,304,883 registered paying a total of €137,340,414 and reflecting a national compliance rate of 80.51%.

The responsibility for the pursuance and collection of arrears in respect of non-compliant householders with regard to the Household Charge, now rest with the Revenue Commissioners.”

C/626/13 DONEGAL COUNTY COUNCIL STAFFING DETAILS FOR 2014

The following question was submitted by Clr Alcorn:-

"How many full time staff will Donegal County Council have from 1/1/14 and how many people retired during 2013, and have any of these staff members been replaced?"

Clr Alcorn was informed that:-

“It is not possible at this time to say for certain how many full time employees, Donegal Co. Council will have from the 1st January, 2014.

The most recent return on Staffing Numbers made by the Council to the Department of the Environment, Community & Local Government was at the end of September, 2013. For Donegal Co. Council only (not including the Town Councils), the Whole Time Equivalent number of employees at that time was 828. This does not include the Retained Fire Service which stood at 151 Retained Firefighters at the end of September.

The reason why it is difficult to be certain about the Council's employee numbers at the end of the year is that there is currently a Voluntary Retirement Scheme available in the Local Government Sector. It is not clear at this time how many employees will avail of this scheme before year end. Overall the Council had 65 applications under the scheme, with a number seeking to retire in 2013 and the balance seeking to retire early in 2014. Employees who have applied under the scheme have up to the beginning of December, 2013 to confirm their intentions in this regard.

To date in 2013, a total of 16 employees have retired from service with Donegal Co. Council. It is anticipated that at least a further 2 employees will retire between now and year end. Arising from the ongoing moratorium on recruitment in the Public Service, none of the 16 retired employees have been directly replaced.”

C/627/13     MEASURES TO DEAL WITH SEWAGE PROBLEMS IN  
ESTATES SUCH AS NAOMH CONAILL CLOSE GLENTIES,  
ALTAN BURTONPORT AND GORT NA MONA, DUNGLOE  
The following question was submitted by Clr Gallagher:-

"What measures have been taken by this Council to have sewage problems dealt with in the following Council Estates:-

Naomh Conaill Close Glenites  
Altan Burtonport  
Gort Na Mona Dungloe?"

Clr Gallagher was informed that:-

“The position with regard to the three Council Housing Estates identified is as follows:

Naomh Conaill Close, Glenties:

This scheme is served by a Wastewater Treatment Plant on site, where primary treatment is carried out prior to discharge to main sewer. It is accepted that the Treatment Plant is not functioning to the levels required and an alternative option needs to be considered. The proposal is that effluent discharging from this estate will be picked up by the new Glenties Sewerage Scheme, which is at an advanced stage. The existing Tank will be decommissioned thereafter.

Altan Burtonport:

There have been ongoing difficulties in relation to the Wastewater Treatment Plant serving this scheme for some time. These difficulties have been complicated arising from a dispute with a local landowner in terms of accessing the site of the treatment plant etc. The Council is currently awaiting advice from its legal agent in terms of the most appropriate course of action to pursue to address this ongoing issue.

Gort na Móna, Dungloe

The concerns of residents in relation to an odour emanating from the Treatment Plant serving this scheme were recently brought to the attention of the Director of Services. Arising from this, a detailed report has been requested and will be made available to the Elected Members at an Electoral Area meeting. The investigation is at an advanced stage and the preparation of the report is being prioritised.”

C/628/13 CORRESPONDENCE FROM THE DEPARTMENT RELATING TO THE PROGRESSION OF THE SEWAGE SCHEME AT BURTONPORT

The following question was submitted by Clr Gallagher:-

"Following passing of motion regarding the Burtonport Sewage Scheme, could I receive correspondence issued by the Council to Department to have this scheme progressed?"

Clr Gallagher was informed that:-

“The Council meets routinely with the Department of the Environment and Local Government in relation to the water services capital investment programme to review progress and raise relevant issues in relation to projects and schemes on the programme including the inclusion of new projects.

Following the decision of Council in relation to the Burtonport scheme it was decided to raise this with the Department at the next meeting and highlight the concerns raised by the members. The next meeting is scheduled before the end of November. It is intended to raise this with the Department at this meeting.”

C/629/13 CLARIFICATION ON THE NEED BY DONEGAL COUNTY COUNCIL TO APPLY FOR FORESHORE LICENCE IN RELATION TO MOVILLE GREENCASTLE WASTEWATER TREATMENT PLANT

The following question was submitted by Clr Murray:-

"Why was Donegal County Council exempted from applying for a foreshore licence in its plan for the Moville Greencastle Wastewater Treatment Plant?"

Clr Murray was informed that:-

“Sections 226 and 227 of the Planning and Development Act 2000 prescribe that where an application for a development under section 226 (development on the foreshore) has been granted by An Bord Pleanala and the foreshore has been compulsorily acquired then the foreshore acts do not apply (and a foreshore licence is not required).”

C/630/13 DETAILS OF THE INTERNSHIP PROGRAMME OPERATED BY DONEGAL COUNTY COUNCIL

The following question was submitted by Clr Murray:-

"Can this Council provide a detailed report on all JobBridge interns taken on by the Council, detailing what roles the interns carried out, if any of the roles were previously carried for a full-time wage and if any of the interns have received a full-time position in the public sector since completing their internship?"

Clr Murray was informed that:-

“The aim of the JobBridge Internship Scheme is to assist in breaking the cycle where jobseekers are unable to get a job without experience, either as new entrants to the labour market after education or training or as unemployed workers wishing to learn new skills. The Scheme gives people a real opportunity to gain valuable experience to bridge the gap between study and the beginning of their working lives, and to gain valuable experience in a working environment.

The Council has participated in the Scheme in this regard. The Scheme is not used to displace or replace any employees. To date, 74 Internships have commenced, 27 during the course of 2013. The interns have been provided with experience in a wide variety of roles such as health & safety, promotion & marketing on various developmental projects, technical experience in areas such as renewable energy, communications, and so forth.

It is not always possible to get details of employment secured by an Intern unless they obtain employment while their Internship is still active. Therefore, while exact numbers are not available, quite a few Interns have found full time employment in the private sector while their Internship was active and some shortly afterwards. Feedback in relation to same would indicate that their internship with the Council played a key role in assisting their search for employment. A good example of this would be four internships in the area of Health & Safety. All four secured full time employment, two during their Internship and two very shortly afterwards. We have no record of employment being secured in the public sector, which is to be expected due to the current moratorium.”

C/631/13

CLARIFICATION ON THE CONSTRUCTION OF A SALT BARN AT BARRACK HILL CARNDONAGH

Clr McGuinness submitted the following question:-

"When will the Council construct a Salt Barn at Barrack Hill Carndonagh?"

Clr McGuinness was informed that:-

“We currently rent salt storage facilities with a capacity of 350T in Carndonagh. In the early part of the decade the Council Members resolved that a new development comprising a salt barn and associated welfare facilities would be constructed at Churchland

Quarters. The Senior Engineer has on a number of occasions (most recently in 2011) recommended to Council Members that that a purpose-built salt barns be built at Carndonagh and Milford. We have also sought funding for a regional barn in the county. In 2012 the Senior Executive Engineer for Inishowen EA discussed the possibility of locating the barn and facilities at Barrack Hill with Members of the EAC. This would require public consultation and rezoning of land along with a new resolution from members.

Both Carndonagh and Milford depots are located on the Non National Road Network and exclusively service that network . As such they do not attract National Roads Capital Funding which has funded other barns in the county. The DATTS have not provided capital funding for projects such as this in the past and are unlikely to do so in the current financial climate. If the Council are desirous of constructing a barn in Carndonagh it is likely that capital provision will have to be made for this from our own resources. It might be possible to provide the funding over a two-year period and this would need the agreement of the Members.”

C/632/13 BREAKDOWN ON THE STAFF COMPLIMENT OF THE MACHINERY YARD AND THEIR AREAS OF RESPONSIBILTIIY

Clr McGuinness submitted the following question:-

"With regard to the Machinery Yard, please give a breakdown of all staff and their specific areas of responsibility?"

Clr McGuinness was informed of the following:-

Vide Appendix 3

C/633/13 UPDATE ON THE NEW PIPE WORK BEING INSTALLED LEADING TO RATHMULLAN

Clr N. McBride submitted the following question:-

"What is the update situation on the new pipe work being installed leading to Rathmullan and could a further link be installed in Ballyare to further assist the supply."

Clr N. McBride was informed that:-

“The first stage of the various network strengthening measures designed to ultimately replace the Rathmullan supply is nearing completion and a small number of consumers on the Rathmullan supply will benefit from these works. While links in Ballyare were considered at one point, the preferred option now is to construct a trunk main from Kilmacrennan towards Ramelton to link the Letterkenny and Milford Supplies.”

C/634/13 UPDATE ON THE PROPOSED PIPE UPGRADES IN THE FANAD KERRYKEEL AREA

Clr N McBride submitted the following question:-

"What is the up to date situation with the proposed pipe upgrades in the Fanad Kerrykeel area?"

Clr N McBride was informed that:-

“The critical pipelines in the Fanad area identified for replacement under the Water Conservation Stage 3 Pipe Replacement programme have a ranking of priority 2 and priority 5 which are the higher priorities. Substantial preparatory work has been done with a view to executing the works by direct labour and a funding request was submitted to the Department of Environment Community and Local Government in September 2013 requesting funding for same. A response is awaited. Works are expected to progress in 2014 subject to Irish water approval.”

C/635/13 COUNCIL STRATEGY IN DEALING WITH THE SERIOUS ISSUE OF ABANDONED HORSES ON PUBLIC ROADS IN OUR COUNTY

Clr Larkin submitted the following question:-

"What strategy have the Council in dealing with the very serious issue of horses being abandoned on our public roads in our county?"

Clr Larkin was informed that:-

“When the Council receives a report of horses wandering on public roads contact is made with the Gardaí who follow up with enquiries as to ownership. In cases where ownership cannot be established and a decision is taken by the Gardaí to impound the horses under the provisions in the Control of Horses Act 1996 the Council

makes the necessary arrangements including humane disposal in situations where this arises.”

C/636/13 TIMEFRAME FOR THE ANNOUNCEMENT OF THE DONEGAL COUNTY COUNCIL SPORTS GRANTS

Clr Larkin submitted the following question:-

"When will we have an announcement of the Donegal County Council sports grants?"

Clr Larkin was informed that:-

“Advertisements inviting applications under the Council's Sports Bursary Awards Scheme 2013/2014 were placed in the local papers week beginning Monday 18th November 2013.

Individuals born or domiciled in County Donegal are eligible for consideration under the following categories:

Category 1 - Olympic /World Class / International;

Category 2 - Developmental;

Category 3 - Veterans.

Application forms are available for download at:  
[www.donegalcoco.ie/SportsBursaryAward.htm](http://www.donegalcoco.ie/SportsBursaryAward.htm) or by phoning  
(074) 91 72445.

Completed applications must be received by 1pm Friday 20th December 2013.”

C/637/13 TIMEFRAME FOR THE COMPLETION OF THE TRAFFIC CALMING MEASURES COMPLETED IN KILMACRENNAN

Clr Blaney submitted the following question:-

"When does DCC expect to have the traffic calming measures completed in Kilmacrennan?"

Clr Blaney was informed that:-

“Traffic Calming measures in Kilmacrennan are to be completed by the second week in December.”

C/638/13 TIMEFRAME FOR THE COMPLETION OF THE FOOTPATHS AT MILFORD, RAMELTON, KERRY KEEL, ROSSNAKILL AND TAMNEY COMPLETED

Clr Blaney submitted the following question:-

"When does DCC expect to have the footpaths at Milford, Ramelton, Kerrykeel, Rossnakill and Tamney completed?"

Clr Blaney was informed that:-

“The footpaths at Milford, Ramelton, and Rossnakill are programmed for completion before the end of 2013. Repairs to the footpaths in Kerrykeel and Tamney will be incorporated into 2014's programme.”

C/639/13 CURRENT POSITION REGARDING FUNDING FOR ROADS

Clr Brogan submitted the following question:-

"What is the current position with regards our funding for roads?"

Clr Brogan was informed that:-

“It is understood that this question relates to the funding for Regional and Local Roads in 2014. While the road budget for State Grants in 2014 have not been notified, the following is understood:

1. The Specific Improvement Grant Scheme is suspended. This had been notified by the Department of Transport some months ago. While it is suspended, we expect to get some monies for committed projects such as the Woodlands CPO and the Elactagh Bridge job,
2. As far as we know, the Restoration Improvement (Strengthening) Grant will be similar in 2014 to 2013;
3. As far as we understand, there will be some form of reduction in Restoration Maintenance (Surface Dressing) Grants;
4. It is not clear what effect will be had on Discretionary Grant and Winter Maintenance monies.

The Own Resources component of monies will be determined as part of the Council Budget 2014 process.”

C/640/13 DONEGAL COUNTY COUNCIL PLANS AND TIMEFRAME FOR THE RESOLUTION OF THE OUTSTANDING LIGHTING ISSUES RELATING TO AN GLEANN RUA ESTATE

Clr Quinn submitted the following question:-

"What plans (and within what timeframe) does Donegal County Council have to ensure that the outstanding lighting issues relating to An Gleann Rua are resolved?"

Clr Quinn was informed that:-

“An assessment regarding public lighting at An Gleann Rua was carried out by the County Council Planning Section as part of it's work on Unfinished Housing Developments. This assessment identified a shortfall of 9 no. lights for the developed estate. Funding has been identified to address the issue and, subject to the completion of procedural matters, it is intended that works will be carried out in the near future.”

C/641/13 CLARIFICATION OF THE PLANNING POLICIES TO ENSURE THAT ALL DOCUMENTATION RELATING TO PLANNING MATTERS ARE AVAILABLE WHEN ELECTED MEMBERS MEET WITH PLANNING STAFF

Clr Quinn submitted the following question:-

"To clarify if it is Council Policy that when a Planning Official meets with Elected Members to discuss a Planning issue, that all documentation relating to the relevant issue be available at the meeting for observation?"

Clr Quinn was informed that:-

“The practice when attending meetings is to have all relevant information available where possible, to advise professionally and accurately and to take account of issues raised.

In certain instances however files and related documentation may not be available. This can arise for example in cases of enforcement or where the documentation is not publically available.”

C/642/13 MOTIONS FROM OTHER COUNCILS/BODIES

Members noted the following motions from other Councils:-

KILDARE COUNTY COUNCIL

“That this Council write to the Minister for the Environment, Community and Local Government requesting a national equalisation scheme as part of the introduction of water charges. This scheme should seek to offset the individual costs borne by householders who need to install domestic softening systems in areas of high water hardness. This request should also go to our fellow city and county councils for support.”

BUNDORAN TOWN COUNCIL

“That this Council takes over control of the West End Boat Quay to ensure that it is properly maintained as sourcing funding for the boat quay is proving very difficult as the ownership of the same is in doubt.”

SOUTH TIPPERARY COUNTY COUNCIL

“That Council recognises that the trafficking exploitation and abuse of women and girls is taking place throughout the country as a direct result of prostitution. The Council believes human rights abuses can be ended by targeting the demand for prostitution by introducing laws which make it an offence to pay for sex and is seeking such laws. We note the success of similar laws in other European countries. The Council will convey its views to the Minister for Justice.”

CAVAN COUNTY COUNCIL

At the October meeting of Cavan County Council the elected members discussed the need to support local businesses in our towns and villages. They noted that local businesses provide important services in keeping our Parishes and Communities alive and need our support to ensure that their enterprises remain open.

The following Resolution was passed by Cavan County Council and it was agreed to circulate the Resolution to all Local Authorities, The Association of County and City Councils and Trade Organisations representing small businesses for their attention and support.

“The need to support our towns and villages”

LEITRIM COUNTY COUNCIL

“That Leitrim County Council call on the Minister for Finance and The Central Bank to ensure the protection of the structures and local branches of the Credit Union movement throughout the Country and to give every support to the members and officers who work tirelessly on behalf of the people for a better and fairer Ireland.”

#### WEXFORD COUNTY COUNCIL

“That this Council endorses the principle of the right to water and sanitation as a fundamental core value within Irish Society and this should be reflected as a central pillar in national water policy. As citizens of the EU we believe in the right of all inhabitants to enjoy this right and that we oppose any attempt to include water in legislation aimed at market liberalisation. This Council supports the call for the full national political commitment to ensuring that water and sanitation are publicly owned, democratically run and that all in the sector are fully accountable.”

#### LIMERICK CITY AND COUNTY COUNCIL

“That, Section 42 of the Planning and Development Acts, 2000 – 2013, and Article 45 of the Planning and Development Regulations 2000 – 2013, should be amended to allow further information to be sought on substantive planning issues and to allow conditions to be imposed on the extended permission to address planning inadequacies in the original permission.”

#### ENNIS TOWN COUNCIL

“That Ennis Town Council request the Minister for Health to revise the scheme for chronic illnesses and that people in Clare suffering from Crohns disease, Alzheimers, and Coronary Heart Disease be recognised as suffering from life long conditions and be included in the Long Term Illness Scheme. And that the fee for these people attending Accident and Emergency be immediately eliminated.”