

Minutes of Meeting of Municipal District of Stranorlar held 24th January 2018 in County House, Lifford at 11 am

Members Present	Cllr. Martin Harley, Cllr. Gerry Crawford, Cllr. Patrick McGowan, Cllr. Gary Doherty, Cllr Liam Doherty.
Officials Present	Joe Peoples, Olive Gillespie, Donna McGroarty, Joe Ferry, Kathleen McGowan, Simon Harron, Claire McGeever.
Apologies	Cllr. Frank McBrearty.

Cllr. Harley welcomed everyone to the Meeting. Apologies were conveyed on behalf of Cllr. F McBrearty. Items from the agenda were discussed as follows:

176 Corporate Services

176.01 Votes of Sympathy

Members passed a vote of sympathy on the passing of:

- **Liam Ferguson**, brother of Brenda Ferguson, Housing, Letterkenny PSC.
- **Eileen Bradley**, mother of Frances Crampsie, Central Library Letterkenny.
- **John Todd**, uncle of Margaret Todd, Milford Public Service Centre.
- **Annie McLaughlin**, grandmother of Darrell Lynch, Water Capital, Lifford.
- **Margaret Wasson (nee Hegarty)**, mother-in-law of Fiona Wasson, Information Systems, Lifford.
- **Elizabeth Jane (Betty) Sayers**, mother of Ronnie Sayers, Machinery Yard, Lifford.
- **Liam McFadden**, brother of Michael McFadden, Planning.
- **Margaret Callaghan**, wife of our retired colleague Michael Callaghan, Water & Environment, Milford.
- **Paddy Harte**, our former colleague and former TD.
- **Paddy Doherty**, father of Tommy Doherty, Area Engineer, Stranorlar, Uncle of Eileen McLoughlin, Housing Stranorlar, Uncle of Paddy Doherty, C&E Lifford and Uncle of Bridie McBrearty, Area Manager, Donegal Town.
- **Katie Ferry**, grandmother of Denis Ferry, Stores, Machinery Yard, Lifford.
- **Mollie Lucas**, grandmother of Sharleen Tinney, Income Collection Unit.
- **Elizabeth Coyle (nee Friel)**, mother of John Coyle, Stranorlar Roads Office.

176.02 Confirmation of Minutes of Municipal District of Stranorlar Workshop held 28th November 2017.

The minutes were approved on the proposal of Cllr. Gerry Crawford and seconded by Cllr. Patrick McGowan.

176.03 Confirmation of Minutes of Municipal District of Stranorlar Meeting held 28th November 2017.

The minutes were approved on the proposal of Cllr. Gary Doherty and seconded by Cllr. Patrick McGowan.

177 Confirmation of Date and Venue for Next Meeting

177.01 It was agreed that the next meetings of Stranorlar Municipal District would be held as follows:

- **Workshop** - Wednesday, 28th February 2018 at 9.30am in County House, Lifford.
- **Workshop** – Wednesday, 14th March 2018 at 10am in Stranorlar Regional Training Centre.
- **Meeting** – Wednesday, 14th March 2018 at 11am in Stranorlar Regional Training Centre.

178 Consideration of Reports & Recommendations from Services

178.01 Housing Services

The update report circulated with the agenda was taken as read. The following comments were made:

- Olive Gillespie clarified the HAP inspection process for Members and advised that dedicated staff members are currently progressing this body of work.
- Cllr. Gary Doherty requested details of the number of HAP tenants who have been offered and accepted a Council house. Olive Gillespie agreed to forward this information directly.
- In response to Cllr. Patrick McGowan's query with regard the 2 no. 1 bed units in Liscooley village, Olive Gillespie advised that offers on both properties have now been accepted.
- Cllr. Patrick McGowan requested a list of vacant SI houses for the next MD Meeting including the reason(s) for the vacancy.
- Cllr. Gerry Crawford queried what proposals were in place for social housing on Council owned lands in Lifford. Joe Peoples advised that Lifford is one of the towns included in the current advertisement for social housing through turnkey acquisition and that the Council is also reviewing its overall land bank to identify lands suitable for social housing.
- Joe Peoples advised Members that the proposed turnkey acquisition process is being conducted using a Competitive Dialogue procurement process and that the financial risk lies with the Developer. All proposals are subject to departmental approval.
- Cllr. Liam Doherty asked the Council to consider acquiring additional vacant under the House Acquisition Programme.
- Members were updated on the Habinteg Approved Housing Body proposal for Castlefin, which was submitted to the DHPLG in December 2017 for 20 no. CAS units. Habinteg is currently collating the funding application for 10 no. under the CALF scheme.
- Members were advised that the House Acquisition Programme will continue in 2018 and is primarily funded by the DHPLG.

- Cllr. Martin Harley raised concerns in respect of the behaviour of some social housing residents in private estates. It was confirmed that a request has issued to the Superintendent seeking his attendance at a workshop of Stranorlar MD.
- Cllr. Gary Doherty asked if details were available on rent levels that tenants are paying in addition to the HAP support. Olive Gillespie agreed to follow up on this and revert directly.

178.02 Community & Enterprise

The update report circulated with the agenda was taken as read. The following comments were made:

- Kathleen McGowan advised Members that a decision on the Riverine application is expected in February 2018.
- Cllr. Gary Doherty advised that the new Donegal Tourism brochure is to be launched on the 29th January 2018 and that there is a lack of focus on the tourism potential of the Finn Valley and East Donegal regions.
- Cllr. Patrick McGowan requested that an update report on the acquisition of lands at Drumboe, Stranorlar be brought to the next meeting of Stranorlar MD.
- Kathleen McGowan confirmed that the Community Facilities Scheme will be repeated in 2018.
- In response to Members comments with regard mainstreaming funding to the Finn Valley Centre and the Balor Theatre, Joe Peoples advised that significant is allocated to both organisations annually and both organisations also benefit from DFI allocations on an annual basis. Cllr. Patrick McGowan requested that the Balor Theatre, Ballybofey be incorporated into Council services and this was supported by Cllr. Gary Doherty.
- Cllr. Martin Harley suggested that the Area Roads Office work in conjunction with Coillte to develop an application for the Town and Village Scheme to provide a walkway, cycleway and resurfacing works at Drumboe. Cllr. Patrick McGowan seconded this proposal.

178.03 Environment

The update report circulated with the agenda was taken as read. The following comments were made:

- Cllr. Gerry Crawford stated that he had attended a presentation by the HSE on the 23rd of January at which the audience was informed of the potentially fatal and antibiotic-resistant superbug known as CPE. Joe Peoples advised that it would be very helpful if the HSE could provide further information or carry out an awareness raising campaign in relation to same.
- Cllr. Patrick McGowan requested that an update report on public conveniences for Ballybofey / Stranorlar be brought to the next meeting of Stranorlar MD.
- In response to Cllr. Patrick McGowan's concerns in respect of raw sewage in estates and flowing into rivers / streams, Joe Ferry advised that emergency action is being taken to de-sludge the tanks and that DCC is working to address these issues.
- Cllr. Patrick McGowan sought confirmation of agency responsibility to be addressed with regard flooding on the River Finn.

- It was agreed that DCC would liaise with Irish Water to establish a solution for Dromore Park, Killygordon taking into consideration the recent planning application for an extension to Dromore National School which includes a new pumping station. Joe Ferry agreed to prepare costings for a possible connection of Dromore Park to this pumping station.

178.04 Roads

The update report circulated with the agenda was taken as read. The following comments were made:

- The Roads Service had a very busy winter taking into consideration LIS's, the Clár Programme, Development Charges works, repairs to potholes etc.
- The Local Improvement Scheme is continuing and to date 30 LIS's have been completed.
- The Clár Programme is 90% complete with minor works remaining.
- The 2018 Roadworks Programme will be discussed at the workshop to be held on the 28th of February 2018.
- Claire McGeever advised Members to contact the RSS directly in relation to salting and where possible, assistance will be provided to businesses. Cllr. Martin Harley recommended that an additional salt lorry be brought in to the county for the next winter maintenance season to cover routes not currently gritted and also additional salt / grit bins throughout the MD.
- Progress to the footpath programme has been delayed due to the weather. Works to Navenny St. are due to be completed next.
- Members were advised that an application is being prepared by the Council and the DNRO for submission to the TII proposing emergency works on the main Ballybofey / Stranorlar road.
- Claire McGeever invited Members to contact the Area Roads Office directly to provide specific details of surface water on roads and coming on to private driveways.
- Claire McGeever agreed to assist Elected Members in preparing a submission to Minister Shane Ross TD seeking funding for priority projects for the Stranorlar MD. Joe Peoples advised that John McLaughlin, Director of Service would be integral to any meeting with the Minister.
- Members voiced concerns regarding the reduction in Roads Maintenance Funding and also the process used for allocating roads funding. Cllr. Gary Doherty suggested that funding be based on the road condition rather than the length of the road. Joe Peoples reiterated that the allocation of funding for non-national roads is a Reserved rather than Executive function.
- Members were advised that flooding remediation works at Raphoe have been approved and a working group has been established. Designs are currently being progressed and will be available for public consultation in due course.

178.05 Planning

The update report circulated with the agenda was taken as read. Cllr. Martin Harley queried the number of planning decisions which have been deferred. Simon Harron advised that by requesting further information on a planning application, architects and agents have the opportunity to positively resolve the queries raised.

In response to Members queries regarding the erection of neon billboards, Simon Harron advised that the erection of neon billboards is considered unauthorised development and dealt with by the Enforcement unit.

179 Notice of Motion

179.01 The following Motion was submitted by Cllr. Patrick McGowan:

Now that the Council has for the first time included a separate chapter in the Draft County Development Plan that recognises people and communities that are impacted on a daily basis by the border, can we invite Local Government Agency's and Community groups representing the Finn Valley & East Donegal area to attend a special meeting in order to establish a forum which can highlight the many challenges this area has unlike other areas.

The border impacts in a very unique way on people who live close to the border and not just on a day to day basis but hour by hour. The EU has always recognised challenges facing border areas but Government Departments and agency's do not.

Reply: It is acknowledged that the impact of the Border on the lives of the communities which exist in close proximity to same is indeed significant and may be further impacted upon as the fall out from the Brexit negotiations becomes clear.

The establishment of a forum to give a voice to these communities, may indeed be an appropriate mechanism to further highlight these issues which arise on a day to day basis, and will require careful consideration in advance of calling a special meeting.

It is envisaged that such a forum, if established, should be representative of the entire Border area and would have direct implications for a number of Municipal Districts, Inishowen, Letterkenny, Stranorlar and Donegal. The Terms of Reference for such a Forum needs to be clearly set out in advance, which would include such issues as the status of the Forum, the reporting relationship of the forum into Council structures and the servicing of same.

It is recommended that these matters be fully explored and understood in advance of calling of a Special Meeting.

The Motion was seconded by Cllr. Gerry Crawford.

180 Members Written Questions

180.01 The following Question was submitted by Cllr. Gerry Crawford:

Following from many representations and my earlier Motion in relation to the condition and safety requirements of this Rossgier to St Johnston road it's accident record the most recent 10th Jan 18 . What is this being done to address the problems?

Reply: In relation to road resurfacing and strengthening the 3 Year Multi-Annual Restoration Improvement Programme was drawn up and agreed by elected members in February 2017. The programme included a section of the R265 for strengthening in 2019. A workshop will be arranged with elected members to agree the 2018 Restoration Maintenance Programme in the coming weeks. The Restoration Improvement and Restoration Maintenance are the current funding avenues for road improvements for non National Roads.

Under the Low Cost Accident Remedial Scheme funding initiative two schemes per Municipal District are considered for funding per year. The accident database is examined when considering the potential schemes.

A submission in respect of a scheme for Safety works at Porthall and a scheme for improvements to Pedestrian Crossing facilities at Raphoe Diamond has been submitted from the Stranorlar MD for funding consideration for 2018. It is expected that a funding announcement will be made in the coming weeks.

180.02 The following Question was submitted by Cllr. Gerry Crawford:

What works are planned for improvements at Tullyrap - Freddy Glass?

Reply: The NRO office has advised that plans for N14 between Letterkenny and Lifford at Tullyrap relate to developing a short to medium term design solution to safety issues. An allocation has been received in respect of Tullyrap (High Accident Location) for the procurement of design consultants. The procurement of consultants is currently underway to develop preliminary design options for 2018.

180.03 The following Question was submitted by Cllr. Gerry Crawford:

When might families on the Council housing lists in Lifford, Raphoe and St. Johnston expect to see house starts or other means to meet their needs?

Reply: The scheme of 11 units in Raphoe is scheduled to commence on-site in the second quarter of 2018 and construction will take approximately 15-18 months.

The scheme of 6 units in St. Johnston is scheduled to commence on-site in mid 2018 and construction will take approximately 9-12 months.

The Council recently advertised a new procurement procedure for turnkey acquisitions, seeking submissions for 2, 3 and 4 bedroom units for social housing purposes. Lifford is included in this procurement process. It should be noted that proposals are subject to approval from the Department of Housing, Planning and Local Government. Members will be kept informed on this process.

The House Acquisition Programme will continue in 2018 and in that regard, the Council will continue to monitor the availability of suitable accommodation in these areas.

180.04 The following Question was submitted by Cllr. Patrick McGowan:

Can the Council / TII outline a plan to address the serious condition of Ballybofey & Stranorlar Main Streets both immediately and long term and that a representative from both the TII and Irish Water attend this meeting to give a verbal report and take questions from members. The public are getting very frustrated and angry at the lack of action and the incorrect statements as to when works will be carried out?

Reply: The following report was submitted to The Stranorlar MD meeting in November which outlines the long-term proposals for the N15 at Stranorlar/ Ballybofey.

2018 schemes currently at site investigation and preliminary design stage

TII have requested that the Donegal National Roads Office (DNRO) carryout detailed site investigation and preliminary design at the following locations within Stranorlar MD with a view to developing pavement strengthening schemes for delivery during 2018/19, subject to resources and TII approval.

2018 Schemes at Detailed Site Investigation and Preliminary Design Stage	
Location	Length (km)
N15 Ballybofey / Stranorlar	1.2*
N15 Ballybogan	0.5
N14 Ballyholey	1.5

* Irish Water has confirmed that they intend to install a sewer along N15 Stranorlar Main Street; Irish Water currently has a programmed construction commencement date of Q1 2019. TII have confirmed that the proposed N15 Ballybofey/ Stranorlar Pavement Strengthening Scheme will not commence on site until after this sewer has been installed.

Donegal County Council are currently exploring the options available for applying for short term funding for patching of the N15 by contract. In the interim routine maintenance will be carried out at regular intervals.

180.05 The following Question was submitted by Cllr. Patrick McGowan:

Can the Garda Superintendent be invited to attend a Stranorlar Municipal District workshop in early 2018 to discuss policing in general and anti social behaviour in some estates.

Reply: This request has been forwarded to the Garda Superintendent seeking his attendance at a workshop of Stranorlar Municipal District. When a date has been agreed by the Members, this will be referred to the Garda Superintendent for confirmation.

This concluded the business of the Meeting.

**Cathaoirleach
Municipal District of Stranorlar**

As agreed at the Stranorlar MD Meeting held 14th March 2018.