

Minutes of the Municipal District of Ennis Committee Meeting held at 3.30pm on Tuesday 1st March 2016, in the Council Chamber, Áras Contae an Chláir, Clare County Council, New Road, Ennis, Co. Clare.

Present:

Councillors: P. Daly, J. Flynn, M. Howard, C. Colleran Molloy, A. Norton, J. Breen, P. Murphy and T. McNamara.

Officials: Ger Dollard, Director of Services; Eamon O’Dea, Senior Executive Engineer; Tom Tiernan, Senior Engineer; David Leahy, Executive Engineer; Catherine O’ Hara, Meetings Administrator & Fiona Whelan, Staff Officer.

Item No. 1. Minutes of the February 2016 monthly meeting held on the 2nd February 2016.

It was proposed by Cllr. P. Murphy and seconded by Cllr. Tom McNamara that the Minutes of the February 2016 monthly meeting, held on the 2nd of February, 2016, as circulated, be agreed and adopted.

Matters Arising from the February 2016 monthly meeting.
Following a brief discussion it was agreed to refer to the CPG as to how the work of what was the River Fergus Drainage Committee (statutory) can or should be incorporated within the existing Local Authority Structures (SPC).

Item No. 2. Adoption of the Clare County Council Local Economic and Community Plan 2016-2021.

Ger Dollard informed members that the role of the Municipal District Committee was for members to consider that the economic and community elements of the Draft Clare County Council Local Economic and Community Plan (LECP) are consistent with the core statutory and objectives contained within the Clare County Development Plan 2011 - 2017, the Ennis & Environs Development Plan 2008 – 2014, the Kilrush Town & Environs Development Plan 2014 – 2020, the Draft Clare County Development Plan 2017 – 2023, and the Regional Planning Guidelines and further that both elements (economic and community) are consistent with each other. Mr Dollard confirmed that B Mc Carthy, Senior Planner had confirmed that this is the case as per report circulated to the members, and that the adoption of a statement on the draft of both elements of the LECP by the Municipal District members was a reserved function. Following the adoption by the Members of the Municipal District Committee the draft LECP will then be brought to the full Council for adoption.

This item was proposed by Cllr. J. Breen, seconded by Cllr. J. Flynn and agreed by members.

Item No. 3. Establishing of Town Teams

Ger Dollard explained the core idea and concept of Town Teams is a town partnership involving all the relevant stakeholders comprising representatives from the public, private, voluntary & community sectors as well as the business community. The Local Authority would also be involved as a member.

He added that it is recognised that since the abolition of the Town Council Structure that a dedicated focus on major towns no longer exists under the new Local Government Structure within the Local Authority functional area. The Town Team structure may offer an approach to creating such a key focus on needs and issues relating to town centres.

In the event that the Council decides to proceed to establish Town Teams in selected Municipal Districts, it needs to have regards to:

- The financial resources required to underpin such a structure;
- The staffing resources required to maintain and support a Town Team Structure.

Following a discussion, it was noted that while some members supported the establishment of Town Teams while other members suggested that the introduction of a new Urban & Village Renewal Scheme would have the same effect. It was also suggested that the existing Ennis Municipal District Team could work with the business community and drive the development of the town but acknowledged that a Town Team may be more appropriate in Kilrush Municipal District because of its geographical spread.

G. Dollard confirmed that all Municipal Districts are to consider this proposal. The CEDRA Working Group will review the findings from each Municipal District following which a recommendation will be made to the full Council in relation to the development of Town Teams.

Item No. 4. Draft 2016 Schedule of Municipal District Works for Ennis:

T. Tiernan, Senior Engineer, outlined the key elements of the Draft 2016 Schedule of Municipal District works for Ennis which had been circulated to Members. Following a discussion on the proposal of Cllr A. Norton, seconded by Cllr T. MC Namara the draft 2016 Schedule of Municipal District Works for Ennis Municipal District was agreed.

Item No. 5 Notices of Motion:

Notice of Motion submitted by Cllr C. Colleran Molloy was seconded by Cllr A. Norton:

That the approach road from Ennis to the Knockanean School be straightened and footpath works be included in necessary upgrade of this road especially in light of the expansion of the Knockanean School.

Eamon O'Dea, Senior Executive Engineer replied as follows:

There is no project at present to widen the Knockanean Road. Projects of this type were previously funded from the Specific Improvement Grant in the Road Works Programme or a combination of the Road Works Programme and Development Levies. There is no funding available in this year's Road works Programme for this work. Resources within the Road Design Section are prioritized towards works where funding is available in the 2016 RWP.

Notice of Motion submitted by Cllr P. Daly was seconded by Cllr C. Colleran Molloy:

I request Municipal District of Ennis to give an update on progress in relation to encouraging vacant business properties reopening in Ennis, in particular Parnell St.

Gerard Dollard, Director of Services, replied as follows:

The Council has had engagement with the Parnell Street Traders Association and has received many representations on its behalf. The Council has also involved the Association in discussions regarding parking and other significant items affecting Ennis. As part of the launch of the County of Culture on 2nd January last, Parnell Street was a key area for street entertainment forming part of the launch.

It is accepted that revitalization of this area is required and the Council through the Rural Economic Development Zone pilot project funding is currently conducting a number of surveys which will hopefully lead to a number of initiatives that will bring about improvements on this street. The Council will also be encouraging all building owners to improve appearances of buildings, where necessary, in advance of Fleadh Cheoil na hEireann 2016.

Notice of Motion submitted by Cllr A. Norton was seconded by Cllr J. Flynn:

Can Clare County Council update us on the cycle path through Corrovorrin.

Ann Cronin, Senior Executive Engineer, Road Design Office, replied as follows:

The Road Design Office is not pursuing the design of a cycle/pedestrian route on Kevin Barry Avenue, adjacent to Corrovorrin or adjacent to Fionuisce at present. The purpose of this proposal was to link the residential Tulla Rd area to the industrial/schools area of Gort Rd and funding has been received from the DTTAS under the Ennis Active Travel Town scheme 2014 to 2016 for this and two other routes.

An Information session was held by the Road Design Office in October 2015 to present all three proposed routes. This took place in the Mall in Dunnes and was well attended. Opposition was expressed by residents of Kevin Barry Ave./Corrovorrin to the Tulla Rd /Gort Rd proposal presented for consideration and subsequently a petition was received from residents saying that they are opposed to the proposal. Therefore the proposal has not been developed to Part 8 stage.

In general the information session feedback was positive in favour of some link from the Tulla Rd to the Gort Rd and therefore the Road Design Office is proposing a link through existing housing areas of St Senans Road and Ivy Hill by provision of a signed route without provision of actual off road paths or on road cycle tracks. These roads are public roads and are already linked via an access point. Therefore the proposal now is to enhance this existing facility to link the Tulla Rd to the Gort Rd.

The objective of Active Travel Town schemes is to replace short car journeys with walking or cycling with the consequent health benefits of exercise as well as environmental benefits such as pollution and noise reduction due to lower traffic volumes.

Notice of Motion submitted by Cllr J. Flynn was seconded by Cllr J. Breen:

I request that Irish Water's contractor properly carry out repairs of roads, footpaths, grass verges, cleaning out of surface water drains, removal of grit, etc prior to completion of contract.

Sean Ward, Senior Engineer, Water Services replied as follows:

The contract includes for reinstatements and cleaning of sites, and that the resident engineering staff cover these in their supervision of the works on behalf of Irish Water.

If there are specific instances of sub-standard performance in this regard, they can be brought to Clare Co. Council's attention and we will pass on to Irish Water.

Notice of Motion submitted by Cllr P. Murphy was seconded by Cllr C. Colleran Molloy:

During the numerous storms of recent years a number of trees in public green areas of Clarecastle have become uprooted or have needed to be felled. I am requesting that Ennis Municipal District remove the resultant tree stumps and replace these with strong trees that are the same as what was already there. The affected areas being the green areas of St. Flannan's Avenue, Church car park, St. Michael's Terrace, Maddens Terrace and St. Joseph's Terrace. Could this be done during National Tree Week, March 6th-13th 2016?

Eamon O'Dea, Senior Executive Engineer replied as follows:

The Municipal District will arrange the removal or grinding of the tree stumps in Clarecastle and make arrangements with the Gardening Section regarding suitable replacement trees.

Notice of Motion submitted by Cllr T. Mc Namara was seconded by Cllr A. Norton:

I call on Clare County Council to identify the cause of the flooding on the Ballyogan road in Barefield which has occurred on an annual basis for the past eight or nine years making this road impassable for long periods of time during the winter months and take whatever steps that are necessary to rectify this problem.

Eamon O'Dea, Senior Executive Engineer, replied as follows:

The Municipal District Roads Office are examining the planning files and will contact the land owner(s) in regard to drainage requirements in the Roads legislation to make arrangements to remove materials that were previously placed in a hollow – swallow hole area adjacent to the Ballyogan Road.

Notice of Motion submitted by Cllr J. Breen was seconded by Cllr P. Murphy:

How many small flood defence schemes has this Municipal District applied for?

Eamon O'Dea, Senior Executive Engineer, replied as follows:

Clare County Council applied for and has completed Small Flood Defence Works under Minor Flood Mitigation Works and Coastal Protection Scheme at Lough Girroga / Gort Road Industrial Estate and Watery Road / Elm Park. Works at Fior Uisce and Aughanteeroe Embankment Extension are being contracted by Clare County Council but fully funded by OPW as part of the Lower Fergus Certified Drainage Scheme. The Council will be making an application under the Minor Flood Mitigation Works and Coastal Protection Scheme for works at Cusack Road however this is dependent on funding being received for storm drainage at this location and for coastal flooding work at Thomand Villas Clarecastle. An outline for a further Small Flood Scheme at Cloughleigh is being examined.

Notice of Motion submitted by Cllr P. Daly was seconded by Cllr T. Mc Namara.

I request the Municipal District of Ennis to arrange for the upgrading of the footpaths at Ballyallia Lake

Eamon O'Dea, Senior Executive Engineer, replied as follows:

The Municipal District Roads Office using resources provided under the Gateway Scheme working with the Gardening Section of the Council are in the process of upgrading hedgerows and planted areas at Ballyallia. The Municipal District Office will examine the condition of the footpaths and confirm work required and seek a funding stream for the works.

Notice of Motion submitted by Cllr A. Norton was seconded by Cllr J Flynn:

Can a traffic survey be done at the exit of Corrovorrin /St Senan's Road to see is it viable for a mini roundabout.

Eamon O'Dea, Senior Executive Engineer, replied as follows:

A proposal funded by a Low Cost Safety Scheme went through a public consultation process for traffic calming as set out in the road acts and was withdrawn at approval stage at Ennis Town Council, as approval was not forthcoming from the Councillors to the proposal. The key issue in the withdrawal of the previous proposal was the position of the local shop to the junction and the requirements under road design guidelines that eliminated existing set down parking adjacent to the junction. The provision of a mini roundabout to cater for both Kevin Barry Avenue and St. Senan's Road would not be feasible due to the layout.

The traffic counts carried out for the previous application would still be accurate and that designated the junction as below the relative traffic counts for a mini roundabout.

Notice of Motion submitted by Cllr J. Flynn was seconded by Cllr J. Breen:

1. 2016 Roads Programme, proposal for works to Fergus Park, Ennis.

I ask that the following be carried out at Fergus park under the 2016 Roads programme:

- 1) green areas and utility boxes be kept in clean condition
- 2) footpaths and surface water drains to be repaired
- 3) additional length of double yellow lines be provided at entrance to the estate from New Road to deal with unsafe Carparking close to the junction.

Eamon O'Dea, Senior Executive Engineer, replied as follows:

The Municipal District Roads Office will examine the surface water drains & footpaths at Fergus Park and will discuss the provision of double yellow lines with the Gardai and Traffic Section. There is an ongoing issue with the utility boxes at the entrance to Fergus Park and the MD Office will contact the utility provider. The utility boxes on the entrance road were in good condition at time of inspection last week.

Notice of Motion submitted by Cllr P. Murphy was seconded by Cllr J. Flynn:

What control, if any, does Ennis Municipal District or Clare County Council have over the provision of the many clothes recycling bins that are a common problem throughout the Municipal District?

Paul Moroney, Senior Engineer, Environment Section, replied as follows:-

Clare County Council have no control over clothes banks that are located in private land, unless such banks are causing a littering nuisance, at which point the littering laws will be enforced.

Banks that are under Clare County Council's control are operated under contract with a private contractor and are monitored regularly by Clare County Council staff.

Clothing and recycling bins for clothing do not fall under the remit of the Waste Management Act.

Notice of Motion submitted by Cllr J. Breen was seconded by Cllr A. Norton:

That a yellow turning box be put on the road (N85) at Kilnamona Cross.

Eamon O'Dea, Senior Executive Engineer, replied as follows:

The existing road alignment and widths are not suitable for the provision of a ghost island turning lane at the Kilnamona Cross. The Council is seeking additional maintenance funding to repair the margin of the N85 opposite the Kilnamona junction which will permit drivers to pass inside a vehicle

turning right to Kilnamona. There is a temporary road works 60kph speed limit in this area and the Council sought funding for additional signage on this section of the N85 from the TII. The Kilnamona junction is included in the design process that is being undertaken by the TII at present.

Any Other Business:

The Members welcomes the fact that a number of properties in the town were included in the CPO process under Derelict Sites Act.

The Members welcomed the recent announcement of funding for the upgrading of Roads & Bridges in Co. Clare and noted that the specific allocation for Co. Clare is to be announced shortly.

The Mayor and other Elected Members congratulated Mr Michael Mc Namara SEO Corporate Services on his retirement after 42 years service within Local Authority Sector most of which was with Clare Co Council. They acknowledged his kindness, sincerity and helpfulness to the Elected Members, members of the public and the staff throughout his career and wished Michael and his family every goodMunicipal wish for a long and happy retirement.