

MINUTES OF PROCEEDINGS AT MEETING OF THE MUNICIPAL DISTRICT OF ADARE-RATHKEALE HELD AT ÁRAS SEÁN FINN, NEW LINE ROAD, RATHKEALE, CO. LIMERICK ON TUESDAY, 10TH NOVEMBER, 2015, AT 9.00 A.M.

PRESENT IN THE CHAIR: Councillor R. O'Donoghue, An Cathaoirleach.

MEMBERS PRESENT:

Councillors Keary, McMahon, Neville, O'Brien and Sheahan.

OFFICIALS IN ATTENDANCE:

Director, Regional Services (Ms. C. Curley), Senior Engineer, Mid West National Road Design Office (Mr. T. Fitzgerald), A /Senior Executive Engineer, Roads, West Division Operations (Mr. B. Noonan), Meetings Administrator (Mr. T. O'Callaghan), Executive Engineer, Mid West National Road Design Office (Mr. S. Linehan), Staff Officer (Ms. Karen Butler), Assistant Staff Officer (Ms. E. Buckley), Mr. Dermot Donovan, Roadplan Consulting.

1. Adoption of Minutes

- (a) Circulated, copy of draft Minutes of Meeting of the Municipal District of Adare-Rathkeale held on 14th October, 2015.

Proposed by Councillor Keary;
Seconded by Councillor O'Brien;
And Resolved:

"That the draft Minutes, as circulated, be taken as read, adopted and signed".

- (b) Circulated, copy of Draft Minutes of Budgetary Plan 2016 Meeting of the Municipal District of Adare-Rathkeale held on 20th October, 2015.

Proposed by Councillor Keary;
Seconded by Councillor O'Brien;
And Resolved:

"That the draft Minutes, as circulated, be taken as read, adopted and signed".

- (c) Circulated, copy of Minutes of adjourned Draft Budgetary Plan 2016 Meeting of the Municipal District of Adare-Rathkeale held on 4th November, 2015.

Proposed by Councillor Keary;
Seconded by Councillor O'Brien;
And Resolved:

"That the draft Minutes, as circulated, be taken as read, adopted and signed".

2. Regional Directorate (Mid West National Road Design Office)

Proposed N21 Adare Western Approach Improvement Scheme

Mr. Dermot Donovan, Roadplan Consulting, presented and circulated a briefing document detailing the location of the proposed works, the primary issues that had arisen from the Public Information Process and the consideration of same and maps showing details of the proposed works and Scheme milestones.

Members thanked Mr. Donovan for his presentation and the following points were made by various Members in relation to same:

- That Members should be given a costing of the various sections of the project.
- Significant delays were already experienced by road users passing through Adare at peak times and thousands of vehicles were using local roads to bypass Adare. These local roads were not constructed to carry this volume of extra traffic safely and the proposed works in Adare should not proceed until viable bypass routes had been identified and made safe for the volume of traffic that would have to avail of same.
- Efforts should be made to divert traffic as far back from Adare as possible during the works.
- The proposed works in Adare should only be planned in conjunction with the new Foynes Road or taking the agreed route for same into consideration.
- The presentation lacked sufficient detail and should take the availability of parking spaces, the limiting of pedestrian crossings to improve traffic throughput and the handling of school traffic into consideration.
- The works proposed for Adare were positive and needed but viable bypass routes would have to be provided during construction.

In response to issues raised by Members, Mr. Donovan clarified the following:

- There would be insufficient warrant for a footbridge at the school in place of the proposed pedestrians crossing.
- It was planned that works would not be carried out in the summer months during the peak tourist season and traders had requested that works be postponed until after the Christmas period.
- The capacity and condition of any proposed diversionary routes would be taken into consideration.
- No date had yet been set for the commencement of the Part VIII process as the project team wanted to meet as many interested parties as possible in advance of same.
- The footprint of a roundabout at the junction currently controlled by traffic lights had been examined and it was found that it would require land acquisition that would impact on the wall of the adjacent estate lodge and National Heritage Area.
- The proposals for a permanent car park with 33 spaces adjacent to the school would work well, the school was in favour of same and there would be no necessity to create temporary car parking adjacent to the town park.

The Senior Engineer informed the Members that the proposed works would cost in excess of €1 million. An allocation of €0.5 million had already been made by TII (Transport Infrastructure Ireland) and it was proposed to meet with TII to have the allocation increased to the projected cost of building the project. He undertook to consult with the District Members again in advance of the Part VIII process.

3. An Garda Siochána

The Cathaoirleach welcomed Superintendent Thomas O'Connor and Sergeant Frank O'Sullivan from Newcastle West District Garda Station to the Meeting.

Superintendent O'Connor outlined to Members the District's crime figures for this year compared to last year. Members thanked Superintendent O'Connor for his update and the following points were raised by various Members during discussion.

- That the elderly were living in fear and that crime may be under reported due to the closure of Garda Stations.
- The benefits of the 'Community Text Alert' scheme to rural areas were noted and it was suggested that 'Community Text Alert' groups should be linked to neighbouring towns and townlands.
- Croom Garda Station located in the centre of the District, should be opened on a full time basis to facilitate a quicker response time to crimes in the District.
- The recent increase of crime in Askeaton was a matter of concern and a police presence in the town could help curtail criminality.
- The criminal justice system needed to be reviewed, in particular in relation to free legal aid, suspended sentences and duration of sentences.
- That there was benefit in a member of An Garda Siochána attending at District Meetings as this facilitated the discussion of issues specific to the District.

In response to queries raised by Members, the Superintendent pointed out that the Newcastle West District covered a geographic area bigger than the size of County Monaghan. He encouraged citizens to report crime and indicated that there was a criminal element from Limerick City linked to rural crimes. He indicated that preventing the youth getting involved in crime was paramount and that the Gardaí were working with youth projects and transition year students in this regard. He indicated that the Gardaí were visiting elderly people in their homes and called upon local people to visit the elderly in their area.

4. Coillte

Mr. Bernard Burke, Coillte, presented an overview of Coillte activities and pointed out that Curraghchase was formerly owned by the De Vere Family. He indicated that Curragh Chase House was destroyed by fire in 1941 and the lands and house were later acquired by the State. He added that the primary management objective for the entire forest at Curragh Chase was nature conservation, biodiversity and recreation and that Coillte were committed to managing the resource through a silvicultural method of Close to Nature Forestry

In response to Members queries on the possibility of restoring Curragh Chase House and opening it as a restaurant that would rival Muckcross House in Killarney, Mr. Burke pointed out that Curragh Chase was an internationally important Special Area of Conservation (SAC) for the rare Lesser Horse Shoe Bat and the house was home to a population of Lesser Horseshoe Bats who use it as a winter and summer roost. He noted that an engineering survey of the house was being carried out and that Coillte would work in partnership with parties interested in restoring Curragh Chase House.

Mr. Burke pointed out that the erection of an electronic barrier at Curraghchase had helped alleviate anti-social behaviour. Following Members queries on whether Curragh Chase was part of the Wild Atlantic Way he indicated that Curragh Chase was not on the Wild Atlantic route, however, talks with Fáilte Ireland were taking place regarding investment for Curragh Chase.

Following Members queries on the proposed routes for the N69 Foynes to Limerick Road Improvement Scheme, Mr. Burke confirmed that none of the proposed routes would take in any lands at Curraghchase. Members queried if the adjacent proposed route could bring additional connectivity to Curraghchase and he indicated that if this route was selected further submissions could be made.

QUESTIONS

5. Question submitted by Councillor R. O'Donoghue

I will ask at the next Meeting what proposals are in place for funds to be assigned by the Council for the installation of CCTV surveillance cameras in the towns and at road junctions around the District to deter and detect incidents of anti-social behaviour.

REPLY: An Garda Síochána have responsibility for the deterring and detection of criminal activity. There are no proposals in place for funds to be assigned by the Council for the installation of CCTV surveillance cameras in the towns and at road junctions around the District.

6. Question submitted by Councillor E. O'Brien

I will ask at the next Meeting for details of the amount of available social housing in the Adare-Rathkeale Area to date.

REPLY: There are five vacant houses in the Adare-Rathkeale area, four of these are casual vacancies and one is a void which will be returned for re-letting in two weeks. The remaining four will be ready in two weeks for allocation.

NOTICES OF MOTION

7. Notice of Motion submitted by Councillor R. O'Donoghue

I will move at the next Meeting that the Municipal District of Adare-Rathkeale calls for the immediate reopening of Croom Garda Station in light of the recent increase in break-ins and robberies around the County.

The Motion was proposed by Councillor O'Donoghue and seconded by Councillor Sheahan who added that Askeaton Garda Station also needed to be reopened on a full time basis.

8. Notice of Motion submitted by Councillor R. O'Donoghue

I will move at the next Meeting that, in light of the increase in anti-social behaviour around the County, the Municipal District of Adare-Rathkeale calls for a review of the Text Alert System to ensure that all neighbouring towns and townlands are alerted in relation to reported activities.

The Motion was proposed by Councillor O'Donoghue who requested that the Council assist in the erection of poles for Text Alert signs and called for a review of response times to the erection of text alert poles. The Motion was seconded by Councillor McMahon

9. Notice of Motion submitted by Councillor E. O'Brien

I will move at the next Meeting for the Council to replace street lighting at the Ferrybridge Kildimo on the N69 with suitable LED lights, in the interests of safety.

Councillor O'Donoghue advised Members that Councillor O'Brien wished this Notice of Motion to be deferred until the next Meeting as Councillor O'Brien had to leave this Meeting early.

10. Correspondence

Correspondence was noted.

The following items were discussed at the conclusion of the Meeting.

Members sought an up-date on the works required to relieve flooding at Castlematrix and indicated that the 1993 Roads Act empowered the Council to enter lands to do works to alleviate flooding.

Members sought an update on the re-examination of the one way traffic system in Rathkeale and asked that the Fire Services be consulted in this regard.

Members raised concerns on the location of a seat, possibly erected by a Community Project, on the Main Street, in Rathkeale and the possibility of relocating this seat to a more suitable location.

With regard to plans submitted by Shanagolden NS Parents Association Safety Committee, to address concerns of public safety, Members noted that two plans had been prepared and sought advice on which plan was most suitable.

Members requested an update on the Taking-in-Charge of Asgard Cove, Loughill and in particular in relation to lands, included in the initial planning application, which had not been developed. Members requested that the most suitable site for a playground for the community of Asgard Cove be identified.

Signed: _____
Cathaoirleach

Dated: _____