

# **MINUTES OF PROCEEDINGS AT MEETING OF THE MUNICIPAL DISTRICT OF NEWCASTLE WEST HELD IN ÁRAS WILLIAM SMITH OBRIEN, NEWCASTLE WEST, CO. LIMERICK, ON WEDNESDAY, 1<sup>ST</sup> JULY, 2020, AT 10AM.**

## **PRESENT IN THE CHAIR:**

Councillor F. Foley, Cathaoirleach.

## **MEMBERS PRESENT:**

Councillors Collins, Galvin, Ruddle, Scanlan and Sheahan.

## **OFFICIALS IN ATTENDANCE:**

Director, Community Development Directorate (Mr. G. Daly), Senior Executive Engineer, West Division (Mr. G. O'Connor), Executive Engineer, Roads (Mr. P. Vallely), Acting Director, Capital Investments Directorate (Mr. S. Hanrahan), Senior Executive Engineer, Design and Delivery Services (Mr. K. O'Gorman), Acting Senior Executive Officer (Mr. D. McGuigan), Executive Engineer, Mid West National Road Design Office (Ms. D. Clarke), Meetings Administrator, Newcastle West (Ms. M. Corbett), Acting Executive Engineer, Housing (Mr. D. Toomey), Clerical Officer, Newcastle West (Ms. A. Lenihan).

At the outset of the Meeting, Councillor Foley welcomed everyone in attendance to the July Meeting of the District and all in attendance congratulated Councillor Collins on his election as Mayor of Limerick City and County Council.

## **1. Adoption of Minutes**

- (a) Circulated, copy of draft Minutes of Meeting of Municipal District of Newcastle West, held on 10<sup>th</sup> June, 2020.

Proposed by: Councillor Galvin  
Seconded by: Councillor Collins  
And Resolved:

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

- (b) Circulated, copy of draft Minutes of Annual General Meeting of Municipal District of Newcastle West held on 10<sup>th</sup> June, 2020.

Proposed by: Councillor Galvin  
Seconded by: Councillor Collins  
And Resolved:

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

At this point in the Meeting, it was agreed to take Councillor Collins' Question and Notice of Motion as he had to leave the meeting early.

**9. Question submitted by Councillor M. Collins**

*I will ask at the next Meeting (a) how many landowners were requested to cut back their hedgerows in the past 5 years (By year) in the Municipal District of Newcastle West. (b) how many replied and carried out the Council's request (c) from the landowners that didn't accede to the request what was the follow up (d) how many landowners were taken to court for not complying with the request and what was the result of the court proceedings.*

**REPLY:** (a)

2019	445
2018	445
2017	445
2016	445
2015	445

- (b) The majority of landowners/occupiers don't reply to the letter received but do cut their hedges. A maximum of approx. 20-30 persons would contact the office on receipt of the letter each year.
- (c) A notice is served on the landowner/occupier under the Roads Act 1993 Section 70(2)(b) requiring them to undertake the felling, cutting, lopping, trimming and removal of such tree, shrub, hedge, or other vegetation within 14 days from the receipt of the notice. A person on whom a notice has been served may within 14 days from the date of service, appeal against the notice to the District Court. An owner or occupier who fails to comply with a notice under this section shall be guilty of an offence. Where an owner/occupier fails to comply, the Roads Authority may take the action specified in the notice or such other action as it thinks fit.
- (d) No landowners/occupiers have been taken to court in the past 5 years for not complying with the Notice.

**13. Notice of Motion submitted by Councillor M. Collins**

*I will move at the next Meeting that speed ramps be installed at Gortboy Lane, Gortboy, to slow down traffic accessing Cluain Arra, Daar River Walk, Daar River View, Daar Lane Close and the houses on that lane in the interest of safety.*

In proposing the Motion, Councillor Collins stated that Gortboy Lane, Gortboy, is a busy roadway leading to a number of housing estates and requested that traffic calming measures be installed to slow down traffic accessing the above housing estates. A discussion followed and in replying the Senior Executive Engineer stated that a request for traffic calming must be accompanied by a Plebiscite and a detailed traffic survey, design and costing would be

required and a source of funding to be identified. Cllr. Collins also queried if soft measures such as signage on roadway to request motorists to slow down could be installed.

The Motion was seconded by Councillor Sheahan.

### **REPLY:**

In accordance with Limerick City & County Council Traffic Calming Policy, requests for Traffic Calming must be accompanied by a Plebiscite in which two thirds of the residents on the street affected have indicated that they are in favour of the proposed measures.

In addition, the policy requires detailed traffic surveys to be carried out to justify any traffic calming proposals.

A survey, design and costing will be prepared by the Council and a source of funding needs to be identified.

## **2. Physical Development Directorate**

### **To receive update on proposed works for Ward's Cross and Devon Cross.**

The Cathaoirleach welcomed the Executive Engineer, Mid West National Road Design Office to the Meeting.

#### **Wards Cross**

The Executive Engineer, gave an update to the Members on the proposed works for N21 Ward's Cross and stated that Ward's Cross was identified as having a high collision rate.

The technical consultants appointed for the scheme, Barry Transportation, have progressed the detailed design for the right turn lane at N21 Ward's Cross. To progress the detailed design a ground investigation and topographical survey have been carried out. A number of design issues arose from retrofitting a right turn lane into an existing road layout. These issues included the carriageway alignment, the location of properties in the vicinity of the junction, the topography of the surrounding land, the existing road surface drainage and the presence of a water main. Many of these issues do not conform to current road design parameters and required departure from standards from TII. The technical consultants have worked to refine the design and remove as many departures from standards as possible.

Barry Transportation have progressed the detailed design for the right turn lane and have produced design drawings and a cost estimate for the proposed works. These were submitted to TII for comments and comments have been considered.

The Executive Engineer stated that it is hoped to finalise the design process and seek TII approval to proceed to preparation of tender documents shortly. She also stated that in order to complete the design process a Road Safety Audit, Departures Application,

Preliminary Design Report and further consultations with Irish Water is required.

At this point, Councillor Collins left the meeting.

### **Devon Cross**

The Executive Engineer, Mid West National Road Design Office also gave an update to Members on the proposed works for N21 Devon Cross. She stated that the TII highlighted this junction as having potential safety issues.

Following identification and notification of the site by TII, staff from Mid West National Road Design Office (MWNRDO) carried out a further assessment of this location and safety issues raised. The MWNRDO recommended to TII that initial design stage solutions be advanced and that technical engineering consultancy services be procured to carry this out. Barry Transportation progressed the initial design stage solutions and a topographical survey and traffic survey were undertaken. A feasibility report was also submitted which outlined three options that was developed for the junction and recommends the option to create a staggered junction by realigning the local road north of the N21, the L7059 that commences from Buckley's Shop, to the east of Devon Cross.

She stated that the report has been submitted to TII for approval of the recommendation in the finalised feasibility report and allocation of funding. The MWNRDO are endeavouring to secure this funding to allow Barry Transportation to proceed with the initial design process and preparation of tender documents. It is hoped that a response from the TII will be received by August.

The Members welcomed the update and a discussion took place on a number of matters including funding and the length of time taken to progress these projects since they were first raised approximately three years ago. The cost of providing reports on these junctions to the TII was also discussed.

### **3. Physical Development Directorate**

#### **To consider Draft Municipal District of Newcastle West (Parking Places)(Amendment) Bye-Laws, 2020.**

Circulated, report of Acting Senior Executive Officer, dated 18<sup>th</sup> June, 2020, setting out details of the Draft Municipal District of Newcastle West (Parking Places)(Amendment) Bye-Laws, 2020.

The Cathaoirleach welcomed the A/Senior Executive Officer, Physical Development Directorate, to the Meeting.

The A/Senior Executive Officer stated that the purpose of the draft Bye-Laws is to extend the exemption from the requirement to pay parking fees as adopted by the Members in the Parking Place (Amendment) Bye-Laws 2018. He stated that the 2018 Bye-Laws were subject

to review after twenty four months from the date of adoption, which is due to cease on 31<sup>st</sup> August, 2020.

The A/Senior Executive Officer also stated that if adopted, the Draft Bye-Laws would also create an exemption from the requirement to pay parking fees for a maximum of four hours and that this exemption would be reviewed after a period of twenty four months from their adoption to take account of potential growth of the EV sector.

He informed the Meeting that the statutory bye-law making process required that the Council undertake a public consultation process prior to the adoption of the Draft Municipal District of Newcastle West (Parking Places)(Amendment) Bye-Laws, 2020 and that approval of the draft bye-laws for publication is a reserved function of the Council.

A discussion took place on electric vehicles in general and it was suggested that a pilot scheme should take place in large urban areas prior to preventing the sale of traditional vehicles by 2030. It was also noted that there are not enough public charging points for electric vehicles.

It was proposed by Councillor Galvin and seconded by Councillor Sheahan that the Draft Bye Laws should commence the public consultation process.

#### **4. Capital Investment Directorate**

##### **To receive update on the progress on Abbeyfeale Traffic Management Plan.**

The Cathaoirleach welcomed the A/Director, Capital Investments and the Senior Executive Engineer, Design and Delivery to the Meeting.

The Senior Executive Engineer, Design and Delivery Services, gave an update to the Members on Abbeyfeale Traffic Management Plan.

He stated that works are progressing on the design of the Abbeyfeale Traffic Management Plan. The pedestrian counts to determine the locations of pedestrian crossing points had to be deferred due to Covid-19. However drawings are being prepared for the additional parking to the rear of Main Street and discussions are ongoing with the owners of lands affected with legal agreements to acquire land progressing. It was also noted that detailed drawings for the plan are being finalised and following this discussion will take place with the TII regarding funding for the scheme.

The Members welcomed the update but stated that detailed drawings of the scheme are urgently required as comments had been given to stakeholders that the drawings would be make available and a working group had also been set up. The need to have off street parking in place before commencing work on the main streets was also highlighted. The working model of the proposed traffic lights for Joy's Corner was also raised. It was noted that there is also a fear that funding to progress the project could be lost due to the current Covid 19 crisis.

Discussion took place on the proposed off street parking plans and it was noted that the project is to cost in the region of €5m to complete. It was also noted that the TII are onboard with progressing the scheme with a landscape Architect and a Road Safety Officer designated to the scheme also.

Discussion also took place on the proposed housing development at Colbert Terrace, Abbeyfeale and the A/Director, Capital Investments, noted that as the number of houses proposed for the scheme had been reduced as part of the Part VIII planning process, the street upgrade would now take place under the main Abbeyfeale Traffic Management Plan as the cost of street works could not be absorbed by the housing development plan. The Members requested that both projects should commence concurrently.

The derelict sites on Colbert Terrace were also noted and the Director, Community Development, gave a summary of the progress on this matter. He also noted that the Council had received funding of €1.5m under the Rural Regeneration and Development Fund to tackle derelict sites in five towns and villages in Limerick and Abbeyfeale is one of these town. The aim of the project is to bring derelict properties in the core of towns and villages back into use with an emphasis on re-use for housing. Resettlement of populations in the core of towns and villages is needed for their sustainable development.

## **5. General Municipal Allocation (GMA)**

On the proposal of Councillor Galvin, seconded by Councillor Foley, it was agreed to allocate €2,000 to Abbeyfeale Community Council.

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## **QUESTIONS**

### **6. Question submitted by Councillor J. Scanlan**

*I will ask at the next Meeting that (a) the open entrance to the green area on the R522 from O'Connor Park, Ardagh be retired in the interest of safety and (b) that the hay shed and yard on the south-western side of the lands be made safe.*

- REPLY:**
- (a) The open entrance to the green area onto the R522 from O'Connor Park, Ardagh has been closed off.
  - (b) This area is in part of the land in the ownership of the Council and will be inspected in the coming days.

Councillor Scanlan asked that works be carried out at the open entrance to the green area in O'Connor Park, Ardagh in the interest of safety.

In replying, the Senior Executive Engineer stated that the open entrance to the green area has been closed off.

## **7. Question submitted by Councillor J. Scanlan**

*I will ask at the next Meeting if (a) the Council's title to the O'Connor Park land, Ardagh is Absolute or does it contain restrictive clauses and (b) what are the long term plans for these lands.*

- REPLY:**
- (a) The Council own two acres of land on adjacent Folios at O'Connor Park. There are restrictions on the area of land (circa 1.2 acres) contained in Folio LK17786. This land is used and maintained as a Green Area in the Estate.
  - (b) There is a further circa. 1.6 Acres and it is planned to develop this land for Social Housing.

## **8. Question submitted by Councillor J. Scanlan**

*I will ask at the next Meeting what steps are being taken in terms of village renewal for Ardagh.*

**REPLY:** The location of Ardagh on the Great Southern Greenway presents a significant opportunity for the village and it will benefit from the substantial upgrade works currently underway. In order to further harness this potential, Limerick City and County Council have purchased the old Ardagh Stationhouse and lands. Works to preserve the fabric of the building including a new roof will commence in 2020. The Council will discuss options for the use of the site with the elected members and community in the near future.

A key challenge facing Ardagh is the high level of derelict and vacant property in the village. Ardagh has been selected as one of 5 towns and villages in County Limerick that will benefit from a €2m project to address vacant and derelict property. This project will be funded by the Rural Regeneration and Development Fund with match funding from Limerick City and County Council.

## **NOTICES OF MOTION**

### **10. Notice of Motion submitted by Councillor L. Galvin**

*I will move at the next Meeting that a drainage and roadworks programme be put in place for the Hill Road, Abbeyfeale from Dennison's junction up to the Four Cross Roads.*

In proposing the Motion, Councillor Galvin referred to flooding and drainage on the Hill Road, Abbeyfeale and requested that a survey and costing be carried out for drainage works at this location.

At this point, Councillor Sheahan left the Meeting.

The Motion was seconded by Councillor Foley.

**REPLY:** A survey and design will be carried out on the above. Following this, the scheme will be costed and these works will be considered under the Drainage allocation 2021, subject to the availability of funding.

#### **11. Notice of Motion submitted by Councillor L. Galvin**

*I will move at the next Meeting that safety measures be put in place at Riordan's junction at Ballybehy, Abbeyfeale and that the crash barrier be extended along by the stream.*

In proposing the Motion, Councillor Galvin referred to poor sight distance and a recent road traffic accident at Riordan's junction. He requested that safety measures be put in place at this junction and that the crash barrier be extended.

The Motion was seconded by Councillor Foley.

**REPLY:** Approximately 500m of crash barrier is required for the above location. It is estimated that the installation works would cost in the region of €60,000 to complete and an application will be made under the Low Cost Safety Scheme 2021 for these works.

#### **12. Notice of Motion submitted by Councillor J. Scanlan**

*I will move at the next Meeting that our Authority take immediate steps to restore the open park area at O'Connor Park, Ardagh to the standard it had been maintained at prior to the undertaking of works by Irish Water in the interests of safety and of public amenity.*

In proposing the Motion, Councillor Scanlan referred to works carried out by Irish Water in O'Connor Park, Ardagh and requested that the open park area be reinstated in the interest of safety. He also acknowledged the work of the community in O'Connor Park, Ardagh, in maintaining the estate.

The Motion was seconded by Councillor Ruddle.

**REPLY:** The Council recently undertook a walkover survey of the green area in O'Connor Park, Ardagh. This is a large area of open ground that is overgrown with grass and scrub.

There is a significant amount of clearing works required to reinstate the green site, from removing excess material, clearance of overgrown bushes and grassed areas, followed by levelling and reseeded of the area. The Council will arrange for these works to be costed and will carry out these works in the near future.



The following items were also raised.

An update was sought on an audit of the utilities infrastructure within Newcastle West. In replying, the Executive Engineer stated that a survey of the utilities infrastructure is ongoing at present.

An update on a safety audit to be carried out on the derelict plant at Castlemahon was also raised. In replying, the Director stated that an inspection has been requested and will be carried out when the Covid-19 restrictions are lifted.

It was agreed to hold the September Meeting of the District on Wednesday, 2<sup>nd</sup> September, 2020, at 10.00 a.m., at Áras William Smith OBrien.

It was also agreed to hold a Workshop on the Burial Ground Strategy after the Municipal District Meeting on Wednesday, 2<sup>nd</sup> September, 2020.

This concluded the Meeting.

Signed:

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**Cathaoirleach**

Dated:

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