

MINUTES OF PROCEEDINGS AT MEETING OF THE MUNICIPAL DISTRICT OF NEWCASTLE WEST HELD IN ÁRAS WILLIAM SMITH OBRIEN, NEWCASTLE WEST, CO. LIMERICK, ON WEDNESDAY, 4th NOVEMBER, 2020, AT 10AM.

PRESENT IN THE CHAIR:

Councillor F. Foley, Cathaoirleach.

MEMBERS PRESENT:

Councillors Collins, Galvin, Ruddle, and Scanlan.

OFFICIALS IN ATTENDANCE:

Director, Community Development Directorate (Mr. G. Daly), Senior Executive Engineer, West Division (Mr. G. O'Connor), Senior Engineer, Operations and Maintenance Services (Mr. H. McGrath), Acting Director, Capital Investments Directorate (Mr. S. Hanrahan), Senior Executive Engineer, Design and Delivery (Mr. K. O'Gorman), Technician, Design and Delivery (Mr. K. O'Brien), Executive Engineer, Roads (Mr. P. Vallely), Acting Executive Engineer, Housing (Mr. D. Toomey), Staff Officer, Property Services (Mr. J. Cregan), Meetings Administrator, Newcastle West (Ms. M. Corbett), Clerical Officer, Newcastle West (Ms. A. Lenihan).

APOLOGIES:

Councillor Sheahan.

At the outset of the Meeting, Councillor Foley welcomed everyone in attendance to the November Meeting of the District.

1. Adoption of Minutes

- (a) Circulated, copy of draft Minutes of Meeting of Municipal District of Newcastle West, held on 7th October, 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 Meeting of the Draft Budgetary Plan 2021 held on 21st October, 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”.

2. Disposal of Land

- (a) Circulated, report of Head of Property and Community Facilities, dated 14th October, 2020, concerning proposal to dispose of property at Athea Upper, Athea, Co. Limerick.

The criteria for having a structure included on the Record of Protected Structures was discussed.

Members noted the proposal.

- (b) Circulated, report of Senior Staff Officer, Community Support Services, dated 16th October, 2020, concerning proposal to dispose of land at 116 Assumpta Park, Newcastle West, Co. Limerick.

Members noted the proposal.

- (c) Circulated, report of Head of Property and Community Facilities, dated 22nd October, 2020, concerning proposal to dispose of property at Templeathea West, Athea, Co. Limerick.

Members noted the proposal.

At this point in the Meeting, it was agreed to take Item 4 on the Agenda.

4. Design and Delivery Services

To receive update on the Abbeyfeale Traffic Management Plan and housing development at Colbert Terrace, Abbeyfeale.

The Cathaoirleach welcomed the Senior Executive Engineer, Design and Delivery Services, to the Meeting.

The Senior Executive Engineer, Design and Delivery Services, gave an update to Members on the Abbeyfeale Traffic Management Scheme, which will improve traffic flow in the town, give enhanced pedestrian safety along with improved public realm features.

He outlined the progress to date and noted that a working group had been set up to progress the plan with input from the Abbeyfeale Community Council and Abbeyfeale Business Community. Messrs. Malachy Walsh & Partners, are the Consultants for the plan.

He referred to surveys on accident breakdown and parked vehicle incidents, and also referred to the pedestrian survey which was undertaken in September 2020. Pedestrian counts were carried out along with general crossing observations on a neutral day over three periods. He outlined the proposed crossing locations and types to the Members.

The Senior Executive Engineer stated that carriageway width is to be increased to 6.7 metres with 2.4 metre wide parking bays and stated that the proposed scheme would increase parking spaces within the town from 225 to 240 number spaces. He also stated that the overall cost of the project is €8m approximately.

The Senior Executive Engineer noted that the next steps in the process were to complete legal agreements, set up a Meeting with the Working Group, carry out ground investigation, and prepare detailed design for underground works. He stated that it is hoped the scheme would go to tender in Q2 2021.

The A/Director, Capital Investments Directorate, gave an update on the proposed housing development at Colbert Terrace, Abbeyfeale, which is with the Department for consideration. It was noted that the proposed housing scheme will incorporate a section of new footpath.

The Director, Community Development, also referred to the derelict sites along Colbert Terrace and stated that compulsory purchase on a number of properties on has been completed and sale agreed to private buyers. Discussions are ongoing with regard to other property owners to resolve issues surrounding dereliction/vacancy.

5. General Municipal Allocation (GMA)

On the proposal of Councillor Galvin, seconded by Councillor Foley, it was agreed to allocate €2,000 for fencing at Ballyagran.

On the proposal of Councillor Galvin, seconded by Councillor Foley, it was agreed to allocate €2,500 to Templelantine Community Council.

On the proposal of Councillor Ruddle, seconded by Councillor Scanlan, it was agreed to allocate €1,000 to Cooleyroe GAA Pavillion.

On the proposal of Councillor Foley, seconded by Councillor Galvin, it was agreed to allocate €1,500 to Abbeyfeale Town Park.

On the proposal of Councillor Foley, seconded by Councillor Galvin, it was agreed to allocate €2,500 to Templelantine Community Council.

On the proposal of Councillor Collins, seconded by Councillor Foley, it was agreed to allocate €500 to a new seat at Assumpta Park, Newcastle West.

On the proposal of Councillor Scanlan, seconded by Councillor Foley, it was agreed to allocate €1,000 to flashing lights at Feohanagh.

3. Operations and Maintenance Services Directorate

To receive update on the Local Improvement Scheme Grant.

The Cathaoirleach welcomed the Senior Engineer, Operations and Maintenance Services to the Meeting.

The Senior Engineer, Operations and Maintenance Services, conveyed his apologies for his delayed attendance due to a road traffic accident and gave an update to the Members on the main changes in the qualifying criteria for Local Improvement Scheme applications, which are set out by the Department of Rural and Community Development.

He stated that the purpose of the scheme is to upgrade private roads and referred to an amendment in the scheme with regard to the number of holdings, which now allows for two in Agriculture or two in Harvestry or one in each. He also referred to the number of applicants on the list and the prioritisation of applicants for the Scheme.

A discussion followed and the Members acknowledged the amendment with regard to the number of holdings. The issue with regard to security gates at entrances and commercial dwellings on the road was also raised.

Following discussion, the Senior Engineer stated that it was proposed that the scheme and how to operate it would be discussed at the Travel and Transportation SPC in December.

QUESTIONS

6. Question submitted by Councillor J. Scanlan

I will ask at the next Meeting for a flashing speed monitor to be provided on the southern entrance to Feohanagh village in the interest of safety.

REPLY: A flashing speed monitor sign can be erected at this location and should be considered under GMA funding.

7. Question submitted by Councillor J. Scanlan

I will ask at the next Meeting when public lighting is likely to be provided along the pathway between the northern end of Bishops Court and An Gael Scoil on Station Road.

REPLY: Ducting has been installed on the Bishop's Court Section of the Great Southern Greenway Limerick as part of the resurfacing project that is currently on site.

There is no provision to provide lighting as part of this contract.

8. Question submitted by Councillor L. Galvin

I will ask at the next Meeting for (a) an update on the vacant houses in Mountcollins (b) a detailed update on the two story house across from the church in Mountcollins (c) an update on the new development for Mountcollins? (d) how many houses are vacant in Abbeyfeale (e) what length of time are the houses vacant.

REPLY:

- (a) Vacant houses in Mountcollins are as follows: one major refurbishment and two casual vacancies. The two casual vacancies are estimated to be ready by the end of this year.
- (b) The house in Mountcollins was purchased under the Buy and Renew Scheme. Refurbishment works will be completed by a contractor after the tendering process is completed.
- (c) Designs for a proposed development of four social housing units at Radharc Na Ghleanna, Mountcollins have been developed in consultation with the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage. An updated application for project funding approval based on that development proposal will be submitted to the Department in the coming weeks.
- (d) There are currently seven houses vacant in Abbeyfeale. Three properties are casual vacancies and four of these properties are major refurbishments.
- (e) The three casual vacancy properties in Abbeyfeale are estimated to be ready by the end of this year.

9. Question submitted by Councillor L. Galvin

I will ask at the next Meeting for a report on overgrown hedges in this district.

REPLY: At the beginning of September, landowners within the Newcastle West District were written to with regard to hedge cutting requirements and over 400 letters were posted to landowners.

Failure to comply with the letter, resulted in 3 Notices being served under Section 70(2) (b) of the Roads Act 1993 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.

Two landowners who received Section 70(2)(b) Notices have already complied. If any particular area is of concern to the Members please advise of same.

NOTICES OF MOTION

10. Notice of Motion submitted by Councillor J. Scanlan

I will move at the next Meeting that a delivery bay be provided along Lower Bridge Street, Newcastle West.

The Motion was seconded by Councillor Galvin.

REPLY: There is a loading bay at Bridge Street, Newcastle West along with disc parking spaces and a disabled parking space.

A loading bay can only be used by a commercially insured vehicle while in the process of loading or unloading. There are also other loading bays in the vicinity of Bridge Street at Upper and Lower Maiden Street, the Square and South Quay.

The Council are satisfied that no further loading bays are required along Lower Bridge Street, Newcastle West.

11. Notice of Motion submitted by Councillor J. Scanlan

I will move at the next Meeting that our Authority work with the appropriate Approved Housing Bodies to secure delivery of renewable derelict sites in order to improve the level of housing delivery within this Municipal District.

The Motion was seconded by Councillor Ruddle.

REPLY: The property and community facilities department who manage actions taken in relation to derelict sites do not work directly with Approved Housing Bodies. The Housing Development Directorate liaise directly with Approved Housing Bodies regarding the acquisition of houses that are vacant and generally in need of some level of refurbishment works.

Subject to the normal assessment criteria such as housing need, appropriate balance of housing in the area, purchase price and cost of works etc., Limerick City and County Council work with the Approved Housing Body to support a funding application to the Department of Housing to allow the project to proceed.

In proposing the Motion, Councillor Scanlan expressed his disappointment at the response received and requested that the Local Authority work with the appropriate Approved Housing Bodies to improve the delivery of housing in our villages.

12. Notice of Motion submitted by Councillor L. Galvin

I will move at the next Meeting that the Council take in charge the Rays estate, Mountcollins, Co. Limerick.

The Motion was seconded by Councillor Foley.

REPLY: The process for the taking in charge of this estate will be commenced. This will involve obtaining reports from our Roads, Water Services and Parks Sections including a schedule of works required in order to have this estate completed to a taking in charge standard. The completion of these works will be dependent on available funding.

13. Notice of Motion submitted by Councillor L. Galvin

I will move at the next Meeting that a discussion be held in relation to heating systems recently installed in our housing stock.

The Motion was seconded by Councillor Scanlan.

REPLY:

(a) The heating system used in New Build units is an air to water heat pump. Combined with full fill cavities and floor insulation, it is considered to be an effective economic solution to heating costs.

In relation to refurb, where possible a heat pump will be installed, however, this will only occur where floors are being removed and a cavity exists. This is to allow the installation of correct levels of insulation. In other refurb units, the existing gas system is being upgraded to a combi boiler.

(b) The ongoing energy efficiency upgrade programme has seen the introduction of air source type heat pumps used to provide heating in 70 homes in areas where piped natural gas is not available. These heating systems do not use traditional fossil fuels to run and so are much more environmentally friendly. They use the same principle as the domestic fridge in reverse, extracting energy from the air and using this energy, with compressed refrigerant gas, to generate heat inside the home. Even if the air outside is very cold, heat pumps can still be effective. Proof of this is the fact that 20% of Swedish homes are heated by heat pumps. The systems work best with highly insulated homes where heat loss is minimised. When combined with electricity producing photovoltaic solar panels, the cost of running an air source heat pump is further reduced.

There are two types of air source heating deployed on this project. Air to air heat pumps provide space heating only and are more suited to smaller homes, typically less than 100m². Air to water heat pumps provide both space and hot water and are suitable for larger homes. Both systems incorporate an external fan and compressor

unit, which is usually placed at the rear of the property and looks like an air conditioning unit.

The heat pumps provided on this project are sourced from Mitsubishi Electric who are a global market leading environmental technologies manufacturer. The efficiency of heat pumps varies between 300% and 400% as opposed to conventional heating systems, which operate at 75% to 92% efficiency. This means significant savings can be made on fuel bills.

Full training on the use of the new systems will be provided to all residents during testing and commission of the systems. In addition full maintenance back up will be provided by Operations and Maintenance staff and their supporting contractors.

In proposing the Motion, Councillor Galvin referred to the heating systems that are currently in place in Local Authority houses and requested that more affordable heating systems be put in place.

14. Correspondence

Correspondence as circulated was noted by the Members.

The following items were also raised.

The ongoing issue of river erosion at the Town Park, Abbeyfeale, was raised and following discussion, it was agreed that Irish Water would be invited to attend an onsite Meeting with the Members to discuss this matter.

An update was sought on whether the Newcastle West Community Centre new car park could be utilised for public parking. In replying the Senior Executive Engineer stated that a Meeting had taken place with representatives of the Community Centre and a response from them is awaited.

The cordoned off car spaces in the Aldi car park was referred to and it was noted that this has been referred to Planning Enforcement.

An update was sought on the casual trading spaces at The Square and that Limerick City and County Council clearly mark out and define the trading area. The marketing of the trading area as a whole was referred to and if measures could also be taken to enhance the area. The Director agreed to raise the marketing of the trading area with the relevant Directorate on this matter.

The Members acknowledged the excellent work carried out by the Roads Section at Nash's Lane, Newcastle West.

The footpaths at Churchtown were noted and it was requested that the tree stumps on the right hand side of the roadway be removed.

The vacant houses in Mountcollins and Castlevew was raised and the delay in getting them into occupancy.

Illegal dumping at the recycling centre in Templeglantine village was referred to and the Members requested that CCTV be installed at this location.

The quality of the CCTV in Abbeyfeale was raised and it was queried if the CCTV was now working so that the Gardai can access footage when required. The Meetings Administrator agreed to follow up on this matter with the relevant Directorate.

The issue of underage antisocial behaviour in Sharwood Estate, Newcastle West, was raised and this matter is to be referred to the Community Sustainment Department.

The condition of the road near Centra on the N21 was raised. In replying, the Senior Executive Engineer stated that funding has been sought for the road works and a contractor has also been procured to carry out drainage works.

The overgrown hedges on both sides of Colbert Terrace, Abbeyfeale was referred and it was requested that these hedges be cut.

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

This concluded the Meeting.

Signed:

Cathaoirleach

Dated:
