

MINUTES OF PROCEEDINGS AT ONLINE MEETING OF THE MUNICIPAL DISTRICT OF NEWCASTLE WEST HELD IN ÁRAS WILLIAM SMITH OBRIEN, NEWCASTLE WEST, CO. LIMERICK, ON WEDNESDAY, 3RD MARCH, 2021, 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), Senior Engineer Operations and Maintenance Services (Mr. H. McGrath), Acting Executive Engineer, Housing (Mr. D. Toomey), Executive Engineer, Mid West National Road Design Office (Ms. D. Clarke), Executive Engineer, Mid West National Road Design Office (Mr. U. Heffernan), Assistant Engineer, Mid West National Road Design Office (Mr. R. Kennedy), Graduate Engineer, Mid West National Road Design Office (Mr. A. Burke), Meetings Administrator, Newcastle West (Ms. M. Corbett), Clerical Officer, Newcastle West (Ms. A. Lenihan).

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

The Meetings Administrator outlined to the attendees that in accordance with Standing Orders and GDPR Regulations, no cameras of any kind or sound recording or communication equipment may be used at these Meetings.

The Cathaoirleach then proceeded with the Meeting by confirming all the Elected Members present.

1. Adoption of Minutes

- (a) Circulated, copy of draft Minutes of Meeting of Municipal District of Newcastle West, held on 3rd February, 2021.

Proposed by: Councillor Collins

Seconded by: Councillor Ruddle

And Resolved:

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

2. Disposal of Land

Circulated, report of Head of Property and Community Facilities, dated 11th February, 2021, concerning proposal to dispose of property at The Demesne, Newcastle West, Co. Limerick.

Members noted the proposal.

3. Physical Development Directorate

To receive Update on proposed works for Ward's Cross and Devon Road 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 which included the construction of a right turn lane for N21 Ward's Cross. She stated that meetings had taken place with the TII Safety Engineer. The Council are still awaiting formal TII approval to proceed to preparation of tender documents along with confirmation of a funding allocation to complete the works. She stated that this matter has been followed up on with the TII on a number of occasions.

Devon Road Cross

The Executive Engineer, Mid West National Road Design Office also gave an update to Members on the proposed works for N21 Devon Road Cross. She stated that approval of the TII on the recommendation to create a staggered junction and for the allocation of the necessary funding is awaited. However, she stated that as an interim measure, funding has been secured to install signage on the R515, approaching the N21, to improve the visibility of the N21/R515 junction.

A discussion followed and the Members expressed disappointment at the length of time taken to progress the above projects. In replying, the Executive Engineer stated that she will continue to liaise with the TII with regard to these projects.

4. Physical Development Directorate

To receive presentation on the N21 Coolanoran Road Improvement Scheme.

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

The Executive Engineer, gave a presentation to the Members on the proposed works on the N21 Coolanoran Road Improvement Scheme. The proposed works are in the vicinity of the Applegreen Service Station.

He stated that the Coolanoran site was identified as a high collision location by the TII as a number of accidents had taken place there including a fatality. He stated that the cluster of collisions in this area had been attributed to two main factors which included a high number of turning movements accessing the service station and the lack of visibility of oncoming traffic.

The Executive Engineer stated that the purpose of the safety scheme was to address the haphazard parking and to slow down N21 traffic in this area. He outlined to the Members the key features in the scheme which included the proposal to close the existing north eastern diverge taper and to install kerbed islands with bollards. The provision of a cycle track also forms part of the proposed works. He also stated that the 3.5m lane widths, the right turn lane and the existing ghost island are to remain unchanged.

He noted that pavement overlay works are due to be completed in Q4 2021 in this area and it is proposed to combine this Safety Scheme with these overlay works in order to reduce costs, resources and traffic disruption. He stated that a Part 8 public consultation process is to take place along with further consultation on the project with the service station owner and the adjoining homeowners during the detailed design phase.

The Members welcomed the proposals and a discussion followed on a number of matters including the cost of the project and the location of the cycle lanes.

The Members thanked the Executive Engineer for the presentation.

5. Schedule of Works for the Municipal District

To consider Draft Schedule of Works for the Municipal District of Newcastle West.

Circulated, report of Director of Services, dated 22nd February, 2021, setting out the details of the Draft Schedule of Works for the Municipal District of Newcastle West 2021.

The Senior Executive Engineer stated that there was a significant increase in the allocation for road restoration improvement, road restoration maintenance and supplementary road restoration maintenance this year. He referred to the increase in the allocation for Low Cost Safety Schemes and stated that works are to be carried out in Coole West, Athea, and Ballaghbehy, Abbeyfeale. He stated that the allocation for drainage remained the same as last year. He also said that there was an increased allocation for bridge rehabilitation works and referred to works at Monaleana, Castlemahon and Meenoline, Templeglantine.

He made reference to the significant allocation received under Active Travel Measures 2021. He stated that works under this scheme included footpath widening and other various works

including public car park resurfacing at the Demesne, Newcastle West, a pedestrian crossing and footpath works at Station Road and Sheehan's Road Newcastle West.

Glin village pedestrian improvement works, Athea village pedestrian works, Abbeyfeale pedestrian connection works along with Ardagh village improvement works.

Members, in welcoming the report, thanked staff for the work, which had gone into compiling the Schedule. They noted the works proposed for 2021 and referred to the funding which was made available for the various projects, which was also welcomed.

The Members unanimously adopted the Schedule of Works 2021 for the Municipal District of Newcastle West.

6. General Municipal Allocation (GMA)

On the proposal of Councillor Ruddle, seconded by Councillor Scanlan, it was agreed to allocate €1,000 to Ardagh District Recreational and Sporting Company.

On the proposal of Councillor Collins, seconded by Councillor Ruddle, the following projects were approved under the GMA Roads Allocation for 2021.

No.	GMA 2021 – Allocation Roads €95,000	Cost
1	Castlemahon Graveyard, Bend Removal	€25,000
2	Newcastle West, Gortboy Lane, Ramps	€35,000
3	R52/L1303 Ardrine, Castlemahon cross junction improvements	€15,000
4	Dore's Cross, Ballykennedy, Junction Improvements	€20,000
	Total	€95,000

QUESTIONS

7. Question submitted by Councillor L. Galvin

I will ask at the next Meeting for (a) a detailed report on the 12 remaining houses at Cois na Feile, Abbeyfeale (b) a detailed update on each of the vacant houses in Abbeyfeale to include address, how long vacant and expected occupancy date (c) how many applicants are on the waiting list with any preference for Abbeyfeale (d) how many are on HAP.

REPLY:

(a)

The properties at 1-10 Cois Na Féile, Abbeyfeale have been compulsorily acquired under the Derelict Sites Act, 1990. The properties will vest into the name of Limerick City and County Council on 8th March, 2021. Properties 11 and 12 Cois na Féile, Abbeyfeale are at the preliminary stages of being purchased by Limerick City and County Council.

(b)

The following is a list of vacant properties illustrating how long they have been vacant and the expected occupancy date. Please note that specific addresses of vacant properties cannot be provided based on security and insurance considerations along with privacy concerns and social intervention of subsequent tenants.

LCCC Stock In Abbeyfeale	Type	Level of Works	Update	Expected Completion	Vacant Since
Unit 1	4 bed	Category 4	Contractor delayed due to Covid-19	Early March	02/01/2017
Unit 2	3 bed	Category 4	Contractor delayed due to Covid-19	Early March	14/11/2016
Unit 3	3 bed	Category 1	Thermal Upgrade Contractor delayed due to Covid-19. Once completed Housing Maintenance Direct Labour to complete	Early May	13/07/2020
Unit 4	3 bed	Category 1	Assessment/Housing Maintenance Direct Labour	Early May	04/01/2021
Unit 5	3 bed	Category 2	Assessment/Pre tender stage	Early May	25/01/2021
Unit 6	2 bed	Category 1	Assessment/Pre tender stage – units being completed in batches	N/A	29/06/2020
Unit 7	2 bed	Category 3	Assessment/Pre tender stage – units being completed in batches	N/A	29/04/2019
Unit 8	3 bed	Category 4	Assessment/Pre tender stage - units being completed in batches	N/A	20/12/2017
Unit 9	5 bed	Not available	Assessment/Funding to be identified	N/A	20/11/2020

(c) Limerick City and County Council have received 138 applications with a preference for Abbeyfeale.

(d) There are currently 46 applications signed up to the housing assistance programme with properties in Abbeyfeale.

Councillor Galvin expressed his dissatisfaction at the response received. He referred to the length of time taken to get vacant houses into occupancy and to the postponement of works due to Covid 19. In replying, the Director agreed to raise these matters with the relevant Directorate.

The Director also gave an update to the Members on the properties at Cois Na Féile, Abbeyfeale, which are to be vested in the name of Limerick City and County Council on 8th March, 2021 under the Derelict Sites legislation. A discussion followed and it was proposed

by Councillor Sheahan and seconded by Councillor Galvin that a pilot scheme for Affordable Housing be considered for these properties. The need for an Affordable Housing Scheme for Newcastle West was also raised. The Director stated that he would raise these matters with the Housing Development Directorate.

8. Question submitted by Councillor L. Galvin

I will ask at the next Meeting for a safety audit to be carried out on the bridge entering Athea village on the Abbeyfeale road.

REPLY: Following an inspection of the above, additional signage will be erected on the approach road to the bridge.

9. Question submitted by Councillor L. Galvin

I will ask at the next Meeting for detailed updates on Wards Cross and Devon Road Cross to include (a) programme of works (b) start date (c) cost of works.

REPLY:

(i) N21 Ward's Cross

Since the previous update on the scheme, we have had two meetings with the TII Safety Engineer at which we requested an update on our submitted request for formal TII approval to proceed to preparation of tender documents and the allocation of funding. This has been followed up with emails and phone calls but despite our best efforts we do not have TII approval or funding to proceed.

Completion of the tender process is dependent on the TII approval and the completion of discussions with Irish Water and subsequent design of the necessary water main diversion.

We cannot include the information you requested in items a, b, and c as we do not have TII approval to proceed with preparation of tender documents.

(ii) N21 Devon Cross

Similar to Ward's Cross, we are endeavouring to secure TII approval of the recommendation to create a staggered junction and for allocation of the necessary funding to allow Barry Transportation to proceed with the detail design process and preparation of tender documents.

As an interim measure, until such time that funding is available to construct the recommended option, funding has been secured to install signage on the R515, approaching the N21, to improve the visibility of the N21/R515 junction and the installation of signs will be undertaken by the area office.

Again, we cannot provide the specific information requested as this scheme has not received funding to proceed with the detailed design process.

10. Question submitted by Councillor J. Scanlan

I will ask at the next Meeting (a) how much was spent on refurbishing 22 Cluain Arra, Newcastle West (b) was it part of a bundling works process (c) what standard checks were in place prior to it being handed over to the family that it was allocated to.

REPLY: In relation to 22 Cluain Arra, the contract was €33,655 (€38,198). An extra €300 was spent on the rear garden. It was tendered as part of five properties (Tender 4 Lot 1). Prior to handover to housing allocations, D & D complete an inspection of the works carried out. If issues are found, a list of these issues are sent to the contractor who rectifies the items.

11. Question submitted by Councillor J. Scanlan

I will ask at the next Meeting when and if a contract was entered upon for delivery of AHB units at Woodfield through Cluid and (b) if a valid contract remains in place given the most recent grant of planning.

REPLY: A contract was entered upon between the developer and Cluid for the turnkey acquisition of units at Woodfield in August 2020.

It is Limerick City and County Council's understanding that the contract is pursuant to the delivery of housing under the granted planning application reference 17375 and therefore remains valid. The matter is being reviewed at present in consultation with planning colleagues.

A discussion took place with regard to housing issues in the District and following a request from the Members, it was proposed by Councillor Scanlan and seconded by Councillor Ruddle that a meeting be held to discuss these matters with the Housing Directorate. It was further agreed that representatives from Water Services would also be invited to attend the Meeting. The Meetings Administrator agreed to arrange the meeting.

12. Question submitted by Councillor T. Ruddle

I will ask at the next Meeting that the Council consider speed reduction ramps for the Glebe estate Monagea. The residents have signed a petition with over two thirds looking for a ramp to slow cars down coming into this estate. It is particularly dangerous with the number of small children playing in the estate. Could this be looked at as a priority as it is an accident waiting to happen.

REPLY: A Speed Survey was carried out in this Estate over a one week period at end of October 2020.

The recorded speeds do not justify installation of Traffic Calming in accordance with Limerick City & County Council's Traffic Calming Policy.

While there is a very low number of speed violations, the 85%ile recorded speed is 23km/hr, significantly lower than the 30km/hr speed limit within this estate.

A further speed survey can be arranged to see if this situation has altered.

Councillor Ruddle queried the response received with regard to the speed survey which was carried out. In replying, the Senior Executive Engineer stated that the installation of traffic calming measures needs to be justified and agreed to have another speed survey carried out at this location.

13. Question submitted by Councillor T. Ruddle

I will ask at the next Meeting that the Council consider a speed reduction ramp towards the top of the Woodfield Drive estate, Newcastle West. I have previously drawn attention to this with the residents signing a petition, with over two thirds looking for a ramp to slow cars down driving into the estate.

REPLY: A site assessment will be carried out on this location with regard to the need for a speed reduction ramp. Following this, any works required will be in accordance with the Council's Traffic Calming Policy.

14. Question submitted by Councillor T. Ruddle

I will ask at the next Meeting that the Council consider replacing the footpath from Heaphy's Garage on the N21 to the Brothers of Charity Newcastle West as the current footpath is a hazard for walkers.

REPLY: A survey will be carried out on this area and following this, funding will be sought under the TII GeoApp to carry out necessary works.

NOTICES OF MOTION

15. Notice of Motion submitted by Councillor M. Collins

I will move at the next Meeting that traffic calming measures including speed repeater signs and a pedestrian crossing at Main Street, Ardagh be completed as part of the recent announcement of €100,000 from the National Transport Authority for upgrade works at Ardagh village.

The Motion was seconded by Councillor Galvin.

REPLY: The Active Travel Funding recently announced specifically targets re-allocation of road space from motorists.

The allocations are directed at footpath widening, pedestrian crossings and reducing road widths at crossing points.

Traffic Calming as referenced is funded generally from a different source i.e. Low Cost Safety.

Nevertheless, a Pedestrian Crossing can be considered provided a suitable location is identified.

In proposing the Motion, Councillor Collins referred to the speed of traffic at Main Street, Ardagh and requested that traffic calming measures and a pedestrian crossing be carried out at this location. In replying, the Executive Engineer stated that a site inspection was carried out and a number of traffic calming measures can be considered.

16. Notice of Motion submitted by Councillor L Galvin

I will move at the next Meeting that the road connecting the N21 and Lots Road be taken in charge by the Council.

The Motion was seconded by Councillor Foley.

REPLY: In order to declare this a public road, it is necessary to go through a Public Consultation process in accordance with Section 11 of 1993 Roads Act.

This involves newspaper notification, public display of map of road for a 1 month period and a further 2 weeks for submissions.

The declaration of a Road to be a public road is a Reserved Function.

This process will commence shortly.

17. Notice of Motion submitted by Councillor J. Scanlan

I will move at the next Meeting that that the hand over process for refurbished Council properties by Design and Delivery be reviewed in the interest of improved efficiency and customer service levels for new tenants.

The Motion was seconded by Councillor Ruddle.

REPLY: Design and Delivery Services organise works to vacant Council properties where significant construction work is required. Construction work is monitored during the construction period and a final visual inspection takes place when the property is due for handover.

If any issues are noted which would prevent this handover process the contractor is required to rectify same prior to Limerick City and County Council

taking possession of the building. The Defects Liability Period commences when the building is certified as being “substantially complete” in accordance with the building contract and is typically 12 months in duration.

The contractor is responsible for remedying defects that arise during this period which are his responsibility under the contract. The contractor is not responsible for normal wear and tear, etc., during this period. Once a tenant is selected, a demonstration takes place on the operation of equipment etc., e.g. heating systems. During the Covid-19 period instructions have been left with each property providing contact details of the contractor should an issue arise. The majority of issues are addressed over the phone.

Air to water heating systems are now standard in new build local authority houses as a means of ensuring compliance with Part L of the Building Regulations and are also being used in refurbishment projects. A greater level of instruction and engagement is typically required with the tenant on the operation of this system.

Housing Support Services provide support to tenants post occupancy addressing any issues that may arise. Limerick City and County Council is open to exploring any suggestions on improvements that could be made to the handover process.

In proposing the Motion, Councillor Scanlan highlighted the need for the handover process for refurbished houses to be improved upon and requested that the name of a dedicated contact person at local level be made available to the tenants of newly allocated houses.

The following items were also raised.

The accident history on Dore’s Cross, Templeglantine, on the N21 next to the Devon Hotel.

An update on the provision of safety measures along the R522 between Tiermeana Bridge and Ardnacrohy Height was requested. In replying, the Senior Executive Engineer stated that a speed survey was undertaken and the results of the survey have been forwarded to An Garda Síochána.

It was agreed to hold the April Meeting of the District on Wednesday, 7th April, 2021, at 10.00 a.m.

This concluded the Meeting.

Signed:

Cathaoirleach

Dated: