

MINUTES OF PROCEEDINGS AT MEETING OF THE MUNICIPAL DISTRICT OF NEWCASTLE WEST HELD IN ÁRAS WILLIAM SMITH OBRIEN, NEWCASTLE WEST, CO. LIMERICK, ON WEDNESDAY, 1st December, 2021, AT 10AM.

PRESENT IN THE CHAIR:

Councillor L. Galvin, Cathaoirleach.

MEMBERS PRESENT:

Councillors Collins, Foley, Ruddle, Scanlan and Sheahan.

OFFICIALS IN ATTENDANCE:

Director, Community, Tourism and Culture (Mr. G. Daly), Senior Executive Engineer, West Division (Mr. J. Sheehan), Executive Engineer, Roads (Mr. P. Vallely), Executive Engineer, Housing (Mr. D. Toomey), Meetings Administrator, Newcastle West (Ms. M. Corbett), Clerical Officer, Newcastle West (Ms. A. Lenihan).

1. Adoption of Minutes

Circulated, copy of draft Minutes of Meeting of Municipal District of Newcastle West, held on 3rd November, 2021.

Proposed by: Councillor Sheahan

Seconded by: Councillor Collins

And Resolved:

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

2. Disposal of Land

Circulated, report of Senior Staff Officer, Housing Support Services, dated 18th November, 2021, concerning proposal to dispose of freehold interest in property at 81 Assumpta Park, Newcastle West, Co. Limerick.

The Members noted the proposal.

3. Deputation

The Cathaoirleach welcomed representatives from Broadford Voluntary Housing and Community Childcare Facility CLG. The Deputation consisted of Ms. Mary Lee Geary and Mr. Mike Boyce.

Ms. Geary thanked the Members for the opportunity to address the Meeting.

She referred to a site in Broadford which was purchased by Broadford Voluntary Housing and Community Childcare Facility CLG., with a view to building a new housing development at the centre of the village. She noted that the site was derelict and in need of development. She also noted that Broadford Voluntary Housing currently manage twenty two houses and a day care centre. She acknowledged the support of the Council with regard to these developments.

Mr. Boyce addressed the Meeting and stated that it was proposed to build seven community houses comprising of two single bedroomed houses and five two bedroomed houses on this site. He noted that there was a meeting with the Council in late September on this proposal. He also noted that the Council were seeking more houses on this site and referred to an assessment of need for community housing which was to be carried out by the Council.

Ms. Geary referred to another housing development for Broadford which was being proposed by the Council and this relates to the building of eighteen houses on a green field site at the edge of the village. She queried the need for eighteen houses and expressed concerns on a number of matters including sewage capacity, water supply and the provision of a footpath from the site to the village. She noted that no consultation had taken place with the local community on this matter. She also noted that the group were awaiting a response from the Council on their proposal for 7 houses following the September meeting.

Ms. Geary stated that Broadford Voluntary Group also acquired an unused quarry site a number of years ago with a view to developing a car park, adjacent to the existing car park. This development would alleviate traffic congestion in the village during busy periods when traffic is parked on both sides of the road and this makes it difficult for large vehicles to get through the village. She asked if the Council could provide assistance on this matter. She also noted that there is a proposed private development of houses next to the quarry site where one house is built already.

The Members thanked the delegation for their attendance and acknowledged the work of the Voluntary Group. A discussion followed, on the Part 8 housing development for 18 houses, the existing derelict housing development and the need for a response to the group on their proposal to develop Nunan's Corner. Following discussion, it was proposed that a Meeting should be held with the relevant Directorates to discuss these matters and that further contact should be made with representatives of Broadford Voluntary Housing by these Directorates. It was also noted that the Councillors can decide on the Part 8 proposal once the report on same comes before them following the conclusion of the public consultation period.

In replying, the Director stated that with regard to the Part 8 for 18 houses in Broadford, this proposal is currently on public display and submissions can be made. The unfinished housing estate is being followed up by the Derelict Sites team as correspondence has been received and is being considered. It was also noted that the Housing Directorate wish to hold a workshop with the Newcastle West Councillors on the 8th December and the Broadford Development at Nunan's Corner could be raised at this.

4. General Municipal Allocation (GMA)

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

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

On the proposal of Councillor Collins, seconded by Councillor Scanlan, it was agreed to allocate €4,000 to Ashford Community Development.

QUESTIONS

5. Question submitted by Councillor L. Galvin

I will ask at the next Meeting for the railing to be replaced, road to be repaired and the bushes to be cut back at Kilconlea on the old N21 road, which is now a cul de sac road.

REPLY: The section of the railing which is broken at the above location will be repaired within the next 3 weeks.

The roadway has been repaired and the bushes have been cut back.

6. Question submitted by Councillor L. Galvin

I will ask at the next Meeting for (a) the lighting to be upgraded at Gaelside housing estate Athea (b) the dangerous footpath to be repaired above the funeral home Athea (c) an update on the public realm plan for Athea.

REPLY:

- (a) Gaelside housing estate, Athea has 3 no public lights located within it. These lights have been included in the scope of work for the South West Region Public Lighting Energy Efficiency Project where existing public lighting is to be retrofitted to LED energy efficient lanterns. It is expected that the appointed contractor will be carrying out retrofits in the LCCC administrative area in 2023. It should be noted that the Public Lighting teams budget is for the purpose of maintenance and does not provide for the upgrading of existing lights. With this in mind if there are failures noted prior to the commencement of the above contract the maintenance team will examine the feasibility upgrading these lights.
- (b) At the present time there are renovations taking place at a private house above the funeral home in Athea. Once these renovations are complete, footpath repairs will be carried out subject to the availability of funding.

- (c) The Athea public realm project is in the process of being completed. The installation of a new footpath and public lighting from the graveyard to Athea GAA field is in progress with an expected completion date of a further 2 – 3 weeks. Funding for this project was sought and approved by the National Transport Authority.

Councillor Foley also referred to the project on the footpath and public lighting in Athea from the graveyard to the GAA field and noted that in March 2020 he contributed €4,700 of his GMA allocation towards the public lighting for this project.

7. Question submitted by Councillor L. Galvin

I will ask at the next Meeting for (a) a copy of the byelaws around the erection of head stones in our graveyards for this local authority (b) how many illegal developments are now in our graveyards (c) how many enforcements have the Council taken against illegal developments over the past 5 years.

REPLY:

- (a) Limerick City and County Council Cemetery Bye-Laws 2015 are available on Council website for public viewing at https://www.limerick.ie/sites/default/files/cemetries_bye_laws_2015.pdf.
- (b) Limerick City and County Council is aware of 40 illegal developments erected in last 5 years.
- (c) In last 5 years, 24 enforcements letters have issued resulting in 1 court prosecution and the removal of 7 Monumental Sculptors from Limerick City and County Council Register of Approved Monumental Sculptors.

A discussion took place on the need to highlight the requirements of the bye-laws with regard to the limit on the size of monuments to be erected and also the need to strengthen enforcement of the bye-laws. An Enforcement Officer was needed to ensure that people complied with the Bye Laws which are in place and that action be taken where non compliance was occurring.

8. Question submitted by Councillor T. Ruddle

I will ask at the next Meeting can the road 6076 Kerrikyle, Ardagh be considered for inclusion in the Roadworks Programme 2022 as the road is in poor condition.

REPLY: This request will be considered under the Roads Programme of Works for 2022.

9. Question submitted by Councillor T. Ruddle

I will ask at the next Meeting can footpaths be renewed at Boherbui, Newcastle West as they are in bad condition and that they be considered for inclusion in the Roadworks Programme 2022.

REPLY: This request will be considered under the Roads Programme of Works for 2022.

10. Question submitted by Councillor T. Ruddle

I will ask at the next Meeting for a breakdown of the current numbers on the housing waiting list for the Newcastle West Municipal District and that the numbers for 2020 also be given as a comparison.

REPLY:

Total Demand for each area in the Newcastle West Municipal District as of 18th November 2021 as follows:

<i>Newcastle West Municipal District</i>	
Abbeyfeale	139
Ardagh	59
Ashford/Ballaugh	11
Athea	35
Ballyagran	14
Ballaugh	2
Broadford	28
Carrigkerry	12
Castlemahon/Feohanagh	40
Castletown	5
Dromcollogher	35
Dromtrasna	0
Feenagh	24
Glin	28
Kilmeedy	19

Knockaderry	1
Mountcollins	12
Newcastle West	343
Strand	25
Templeglantine	54
Tournafulla	22

In relation to the second part of the query, the system the Council uses (Ihouse) to capture this data is a Live System and any changes are updated immediately so therefore there is no historical/obsolete information stored on the system so unfortunately it is not possible to do a comparison of this data with 2020.

Councillor Ruddle expressed concern that the figures for 2020 were not available and queried how progress is measured from one year to another.

11. Question submitted by Councillor J. Sheahan

I will ask at the next Meeting for the full list of the current rates across the three Housing Grant Schemes, which include Housing Aid for Older People, Mobility Aid Grant and the Housing Adaptation Grant Scheme.

REPLY:

The maximum grant levels are notified to Local Authorities by the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage.

1. Housing Aid for Older People

The Housing Aid for Older People grant covers some of the cost of work needed, but not all of it. The amount of money an applicant gets depends on their household income for the previous tax year. There are some disregards and deductions that can reduce the amount of household income that the local authority takes into account.

The most an applicant can get is €8,000 or 95% of the total cost of the work approved by the local authority (whichever is less). This grant can go towards the total cost of the work including the VAT.

Yearly household income	Percentage of costs	Maximum grant
Up to €30,000	95%	€8,000
€30,001 - €35,000	85%	€6,800
€35,001 - €40,000	75%	€6,000
€40,001 - €50,000	50%	€4,000
€50,001 - €60,000	30%	€2,400
Over €60,000	No grant payable	No grant payable

1. Mobility Aid Grant

The most an applicant can get is €6,000 or the total cost of the work approved by the local authority (whichever is less). This grant can cover 100% of the cost of the work, up to a maximum of €6,000. There are some disregards and deductions that can reduce the amount of household income that the local authority takes into account.

A grant is not available if the household income for the previous tax year is more than €30,000 after the disregards and deductions are applied.

2. Housing Adaptation Grant for People with a Disability

The Housing Adaptation Grant covers some of the cost of the work needed, but not all of it. The amount of money an applicant gets depends on the household income for the previous tax year. There are some disregards and deductions that can reduce the amount of household income that the local authority takes into account.

The most an applicant can get is €30,000 or 95% of the total cost of the work approved by the local authority (whichever is less). A grant is not available if the household income is more than €60,000, after the disregards and deductions are applied.

Yearly household income	Percentage of costs	Maximum grant for homes built more than 12 months ago	Maximum grant for homes built within the last 12 months
Up to €30,000	95%	€30,000	€14,500
€30,001 - €35,000	85%	€25,500	€12,325
€35,001 - €40,000	75%	€22,500	€10,875
€40,001 - €50,000	50%	€15,000	€7,250
€50,001 - €60,000	30%	€9,000	€4,350
Over €60,000	No grant payable	No grant payable	No grant payable

A discussion took place on the Standard Unit Costs and Cllr. Sheahan noted that he had been informed that the current rates in place maybe commercially sensitive. He noted that the grant amounts on the application forms as outlined above were giving applicants a false impression of what grant allocation they may be approved as this could differ when the standard unit costs are applied. There is a need to have both the Council's Standard Units costs increased and also the National grant allocations as set down within the application forms by the Department of Housing to take account of the increasing costs in the building trade.

12. Question submitted by Councillor J. Scanlan

I will ask at the next Meeting when will the replication of property numbering at Daar River Walk and Daar River View, Newcastle West be resolved.

REPLY:

Daar River View is currently on the Council list for the taking in charge. Once the estate has been taken in charge, appropriate signage can be put in place. It is expected that the estate will be taken in charge within 4 to 6 months.

Appropriate directional signage is in place for Daar River Walk.

NOTICES OF MOTION

13. Notice of Motion submitted by Councillor L. Galvin

I will move at the next Meeting that road safety measures be put in place at Athea National School.

The Motion was seconded by Councillor Foley.

REPLY: A pedestrian crossing is in place at Athea National School.

There are also driver feedback signs and flashing lines at the school.

The roadway is also lined and signage is in place to alert traffic that there is a school ahead.

A discussion followed and it was noted that as all traffic calming measures have been implemented at this location. The only other option to be considered is a loop traffic system for drop off and collection similar to St. Fergus National School in Glin but the school would have to agree to this and there would be a cost to them if this solution was to be considered.

14. Notice of Motion submitted by Councillor L. Galvin

I will move at the next Meeting that the Council improve the sight lines at Buckley's Cross, Abbeyfeale (Kilmorna Junction).

The Motion was seconded by Councillor Foley.

REPLY:

Hedging at this junction was cut back to improve sightlines.

The following can also be carried out to further improve the sightlines within the next 3 weeks.

- Further cutting back of hedging
- Improvement in signage
- Improvements in road markings

15. Notice of Motion submitted by Councillor J. Scanlan

I will move at the next Meeting that that the Standard Unit Cost Model in respect of all Housing Adaptation Grants be reviewed forthwith.

In proposing the Motion, Councillor Scanlan stated that the level of grant assistance provided for Housing Grants is inadequate due to a number of factors including escalating costs and material shortages.

The Motion was seconded by Councillor Sheahan.

REPLY:

The Motion is timely given material supply shortages and increasing material costs due to a number of factors including Brexit, Covid-19, extreme weather events and global demand.

Limerick City and County Council will arrange to prepare a revised schedule of rates for works typically funded under the grants scheme to ensure that the standard cost applied for the grants are up to date with current building costs. The revised schedule of rates will be arranged without undue delay.

16. Notice of Motion submitted by Councillor J. Scanlan

I will move at the next Meeting that the Public Lighting at Daar River View, Newcastle West, be serviced.

In proposing the Motion, Councillor Scanlan requested that the public lighting be serviced at Daar River View, Newcastle West.

The Motion was seconded by Councillor Sheahan.

REPLY:

It would appear that Daar River View has not been taken in charge as yet, and therefore the responsibility for the servicing of the lighting remains with the developer.

In general where contact is made with the Council regarding issues like this in estates not taken in charge, Planning Enforcement will write to the developer asking them to do the necessary works.

In the Daar River View instance, Planning Enforcement will write to the developer and notify them of the public lighting situation.

Following discussion of the Motion, a request was made that consideration be given to the taking in charge of the lighting before the estate is taken in charge.

Following discussion on this Notice of Motion, Councillor Collins indicated he had to leave the Meeting.

17. Notice of Motion submitted by Councillor J. Sheahan

I will move at the next Meeting that a full review of the rates applied by Limerick City and County Council to the Housing Aid for the Elderly, the Mobility Aid and the Housing Adaption grants take place immediately and that Councillors be allowed participate in the review.

The Motion was seconded by Councillor Scanlan.

REPLY:

The motion is timely given material supply shortages and increasing material costs due to a number of factors including Brexit, Covid-19, extreme weather events and global demand.

Limerick City and County Council will arrange to prepare a revised schedule of rates for works typically funded under the grants scheme to ensure that the standard cost applied for the grants are up to date with current building costs. The revised schedule of rates will be arranged without undue delay.

In proposing the Motion, Councillor Sheahan referred to the level of grant assistance provided in the Housing Grant Schemes and requested a review of the application forms to be undertaken.

The following items were also raised.

An update was sought on the safety measures along the R522 at Ardnacrohy, Newcastle West. In reply, the Executive Engineer Roads, noted that the Gardai had advised that a safe location was needed for the Go Safe Van on this roadway

It was noted that a private Virtual Briefing on the Housing Delivery Action Plan 2022 – 2066 for the Municipal District of Newcastle West is to take place on Wednesday, 8th December, 2021.

It was agreed to hold the January Meeting of the District on Wednesday, 12th January, 2022, at 10.00 a.m., at Áras William Smith OBrien.

The Cathaoirleach wished the Members, Management and Staff a Happy Christmas and acknowledged their assistance and support during a difficult 2021. He asked that this be conveyed to all staff working with the District. The Members also referred to shopping local and the need to support local businesses during the current pandemic. The need to adhere to HSE public health guidelines was also stressed.

The Director on behalf of Management and staff wished the Councillors a Happy Christmas and thanked them for their assistance with all the virtual meetings which had taken place during the year when in person meetings could not be held.

This concluded the Meeting.

Signed:

Cathaoirleach

Dated: