

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 OCTOBER, 2023, AT 10AM.

PRESENT IN THE CHAIR:

Councillor T. Ruddle, Cathaoirleach.

MEMBERS PRESENT:

Councillors Collins, Foley, Galvin, Scanlan and Sheahan.

OFFICIALS IN ATTENDANCE:

Director, Economic Development, Enterprise and Tourism (Mr. G. Daly), Meetings Administrator, Newcastle West (Mr. M. Curran), Senior Executive Engineer, Newcastle West Municipal District (Mr. J. Sheehan), Executive Engineer, Roads (Mr. P. Vallely), Senior Executive Planner, Planning Development (Mr. B. Henn), Executive Engineer, Planning Enforcement (Mr. S. McGrath), Assistant Engineer, Planning Enforcement (Mr. E. Walsh), Senior Engineer, Mid West National Road Design Office (Mr. Tim Fitzgerald), Senior Executive Engineer, Mid West National Road Design Office (Mr. G. Carey), Director, Transportation and Mobility (Mr. B. Kennedy), Administrative Officer, Housing Support Services (Ms. A. O'Brien Slater), Senior Planner, Strategic and Forward Planning (Ms. M. Woods), A/Senior Executive Planner, Strategic and Forward Planning (Ms. C. Brislane), Assistant Engineer, Planning Enforcement (Mr. E. Walsh), Officer, Newcastle West (Ms. A. Lenihan).

At the outset of the Meeting, the Cathaoirleach welcomed Ms. H. Supple to the Meeting as she will be taking on the role of Meetings Administrator for the District. The Members wished to thank the outgoing Meetings Administrator (Mr. M. Curran) for his support and his excellent work while in the District. They also wished to congratulate him on his recent promotion. The Director and his colleagues also wished Mr. M. Curran well in his new role as Administrative Officer with Kerry County Council. Mr. M. Curran thanked the Members and colleagues for their good wishes and he also wished the Members the very best of luck in the forthcoming Local Elections in June 2024.

1. Adoption of Minutes

- (a) Circulated, copy of draft Minutes of Meeting of Municipal District of Newcastle West, held on 6th September, 2023.

Proposed by: Councillor Scanlan

Seconded by: Councillor Foley

And Resolved:

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

2. Declaration of Interest.

The Meetings Administrator stated that, in line with Part 15 of the Local Government Act, 2001, as amended, and the Code of Conduct, he was inviting those present to notify the Cathaoirleach of any declaration of interest in any item due for discussion at the Meeting. No such interests were declared.

3. Planning, Environment and Place-Making Directorate

Draft Abbeyfeale Local Area Plan 2023 – 2029

Consideration of the Chief Executive’s Report on the submissions received as part of the public consultation on the Draft Abbeyfeale Local Area Plan 2023 – 2029.

Previously circulated, Report of the Director of Services, Planning, Environment and Place-Making Directorate dated 13th September, 2023 and Report of the Chief Executive, dated 13th September, 2023, in relation to the Draft Abbeyfeale Local Area Plan 2023 – 2029.

The Cathaoirleach welcomed the Senior Planner to the Meeting. She stated that material alterations to the Abbeyfeale Draft Local Area Plan were placed on public display from the 22nd July, 2023 to 21st August, 2023 and that submissions were received within the statutory timeframe. She stated that following a Briefing held for the Members on the Draft Abbeyfeale Local Area Plan that the Members of the Municipal District of Newcastle West at the October Meeting were being asked to consider the Chief Executive’s Report and decide to make or amend the proposed Draft Abbeyfeale Local Area Plan.

The Members acknowledged the excellent work carried out in the preparation of the Plan and to the importance of this Plan in the development of the town. Reference was also made to the submissions received during the process and to the rezoning of lands in the Main Street in Abbeyfeale. The importance of prioritising a bypass of Newcastle West and Abbeyfeale was also reiterated.

Following discussion and consideration of the Chief Executive Report on the submissions received on the Draft Abbeyfeale Local Area Plan 2023 – 2029 it was proposed by Councillor Galvin, seconded by Councillor Foley and agreed by all the Members “That the Draft Abbeyfeale Local Area Plan 2023 – 2029 be adopted in accordance with Section 20 of the Planning and Development Act, 2000 (as amended)”.

4. Planning, Environment and Place-Making Directorate

Taking in Charge of Estates – Declaration of Roads to be Public Roads

(a) To consider the Taking in Charge of Estate Knight’s Court, Newcastle West, Co. Limerick, in accordance with Section 180 of the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended) and Section 11 of the Roads Act 1993.

Circulated, report of Senior Planner, Planning, Environment and Place-Making, dated 21st September, 2023.

Proposed by Councillor Galvin, seconded by Councillor Sheahan and resolved:

“That Knight’s Court, Newcastle West, be taken in charge in accordance with Section 180 of the Planning and Development Acts 2000 (as amended) and Section 11 of the Roads Act 1993”.

The Members referred to an unfinished section at the end of the estate which is not taken in charge which needs to be cleaned up but however welcomed the Taking in Charge of the remainder of the estate.

(b) To consider the Taking in Charge of Estate The Paddocks, Newcastle West, Co. Limerick, in accordance with Section 180 of the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended) and Section 11 of the Roads Act 1993.

Circulated, report of Senior Planner, Planning, Environment and Place-Making, dated September, 2023.

Proposed by Councillor Galvin, seconded by Councillor Sheahan and resolved:

“That The Paddocks, Newcastle West, be taken in charge in accordance with Section 180 of the Planning and Development Acts 2000 (as amended) and Section 11 of the Roads Act 1993”.

The Members welcomed the Taking in Charge of the estate.

5. Disposal of Land

Circulated, report of Head of Property Management, dated 18th August, 2023, concerning proposal to dispose of property at Knockfinisk, Carrigkerry, Co. Limerick.

Members noted the proposal.

6. General Municipal Allocation (GMA)

On the proposal of Councillor Galvin, seconded by Councillor Ruddle, it was agreed to allocate €1,500 to footpaths in Athea.

On the proposal of Councillor Collins, seconded by Councillor Scanlan, it was agreed to allocate €700 to St. Kieran's Heritage Group.

QUESTIONS

7. Question submitted by Councillor J. Scanlan

I will ask at the next Meeting for the actual rainfall level for Newcastle West town from 2.45 p.m., to 4.30 p.m., for the 10th September.

REPLY:

This information is not collected by Limerick City and County Council. I have contacted Met Éireann and they have advised:

The closest rainfall station to Newcastle West, and for which data has already been collected and quality controlled, is Shannon Airport, Co Clare. We can say that up just over 0.8 mm (the day's total) fell at Shannon Airport in the hour before 17:45 UTC (4:45 pm local). However, it appears there were thundery downpours on the day, so hourly values were likely different from the Shannon Airport's totals.

There is a rainfall station at Castle Demesne, Newcastle West (station number 5711) which observes daily (09-09 UTC). However, returns from this station will not be available for another couple of months, at least. The highest *hourly* rainfall total at any of our 25 primary weather stations *nationwide*, in the *afternoon*, was 8.0 mm at 16 UTC.

8. Question submitted by Councillor J. Scanlan

I will ask at the next Meeting when safety measures are likely to be put in place at the junction of the Old Camas and Ballyowen roads.

REPLY: A low cost safety scheme will be applied for to improve the safety at this junction. In the meantime we will carry out measures to improve the visibility and safety at this junction.

9. Question submitted by Councillor J. Scanlan

I will ask at the next Meeting that Limerick City and County Council conduct a comprehensive and immediate survey of the storm water infrastructure of Newcastle West town.

REPLY:

Limerick City and County Council has engaged the services of CES Ltd, who has carried out extensive power cleansing of the surface water network in Kilmeedy, Newcastle West and

Abbeyfeale. The outcomes is to determine the condition of the pipe network, clear blockages and supply a video survey to enable the local authority to plan future improvements.

10. Question submitted by Councillor T. Ruddle

I will ask at the next Meeting that Limerick City and County Council give a date and commitment to clean Upper Maiden Street and both the North and South Quay locations of Newcastle West as there is grass growing up the sides of the footpaths. We had over 30,000 visitors to the Castle last year and we do not want to project an image of an unkempt town.

REPLY: Works as requested will be carried out at these locations throughout October.

NOTICES OF MOTION

11. Notice of Motion submitted by Councillor J. Scanlan

I will move at the next Meeting that location identifier points be placed along the Limerick Greenway in the interest of health and safety.

The Motion was seconded by Councillor Collins.

REPLY: Limerick City and County Council will review existing procedures on the Limerick Greenway and examine possible additions that could be made.

In proposing the Motion, Councillor Scanlan referred to the tragic loss of life which sadly took place on the Limerick Greenway and to the importance of having location identifier points along the Greenway to identify a precise location. In replying, the Director agreed to follow up on this matter.

12. Notice of Motion submitted by Councillor J. Scanlan

I will move at the next Meeting that Limerick City and County Council provide funding for our County Town's Christmas lighting on a pro-rata basis with Limerick City.

The Motion was seconded by Councillor Ruddle.

REPLY:

Provision is made in the Annual Council Budget for Christmas lights supports in both the city and county. The budget provision for Limerick City Centre reflects the benefit this has not only for the city and county but for the Midwest region. If the budget allocation for the county town is to be allocated on a pro-rata basis with the Limerick City allocation this is a decision for the Members at the Annual Budget Meeting.

In proposing the Motion, Councillor Scanlan requested that funding be provided for Christmas

lighting in the town of Newcastle West on a pro-rata basis with Limerick city. A discussion followed by the Members with regard to putting a budget in place for the provision of Christmas lighting in Newcastle West and other towns in the District and to erection and maintenance of the Christmas lights for the festive period. In replying, the Director stated that this is a budgetary matter and agreed to discuss same with the relevant Directorate.

13. Notice of Motion submitted by Councillor J. Sheahan

I will move at the next Meeting that the Roads Section of the Municipal District of Newcastle West set a specific budget aside for the supply and service of two permanent tar patchers to cover specifically the road network of the Municipal District all year round.

The Motion was seconded by Councillor Galvin.

REPLY:

Currently the Municipal District of Newcastle West have two patching units operating in the Municipal District.

It would not be deemed efficient having patching units operating all year around due to precipitation and inclement weather. For six months of the year, two patchers are going to be in operation throughout the district.

From November to February we will be reducing to one patching unit in the District.

In proposing the Motion, Councillor Sheahan referred to the large network of roads in the District where tar patching is to be carried out and requested that two tar patchers be put in place in the District all year round. In replying, the Senior Executive Engineer suggested that increased General Maintenance Budget would help. He made reference to the tar patching season which runs from March to October each year and to the costs involved in having a patching unit in the District. He also stated that street cleaning is to be increased during the winter months in the District.

14. Notice of Motion submitted by Councillor J. Sheahan

I will move at the next Meeting that in the interest of balanced service of the road network in the Newcastle West Municipal District that a permanent crew of road workers would operate on a full time basis out of the Kinard depot in Glin.

The Motion was seconded by Councillor Galvin.

REPLY:

At present, we have two Senior Supervisor/General Services Supervisor positions operating in the Municipal District of Newcastle West. One is located in Top Yard, Newcastle West and one in Doonakenna. Both of these supervisors have crews operating out of these locations. Any additions to these bases would have staffing and financial implications that would need

to be approved by both Transportation Management and Human Resources. Regardless of locations, we believe all areas in the Municipal District are getting a balanced service.

In proposing the Motion, Councillor Sheahan referred to the absence of a roads crew from the Newcastle West District operating out of Kinard roads depot and requested that a permanent crew of road workers from the Newcastle West District operate out of Kinard Depot to service the roads in that area. In replying, the Senior Executive Engineer agreed to liaise with the Rathkeale Roads District on this matter.

15. Notice of Motion submitted by Councillor M. Collins

I will move at the next Meeting that the footpath at Ashford village be extended to the speed limit at the Ballagh side.

The Motion was seconded by Councillor Scanlan.

REPLY:

Limerick City and County Council were programmed to carry out improvements to the footpaths at the following locations in Newcastle West District in 2023; Ardagh, Athea, Abbeyfeale, Feenagh, Kilmeedy, Mountcollins and Newcastle West. That programme is currently ongoing and should be completed by end November 2023. The intention going forward is to carry out footpath improvements in the other urban locations within the Newcastle West District including Ashford going forward.

In proposing the Motion, Councillor Collins requested that the footpath at Ashford village be extended to the speed limit on the Ballagh side.

The following items were also raised.

An update was sought on the development of a bypass of Abbeyfeale and Newcastle West. In replying, the Senior Executive Engineer stated that in February/March 2021 the route options for both towns were put on public display and that public display of the preferred option took place in November/December 2021. He stated that the preferred options were chosen and the 400 metre corridors were announced in March 2022 after further public consultation.

The Senior Executive Engineer also gave an update to the Members on the work which has taken place from March 2022 to present. He stated that many surveys have been completed including topographical, archaeological, ground investigation, environmental surveys, as well as winter bird surveys, bats, barn owls and aquatic life. The Senior Executive Engineer made reference to consultations which took place with various landowners and to ground investigations which were carried out and thanked the landowners for their co-operation. He stated that both schemes are sub-threshold for mandatory EIAR (Environmental Impact Assessment Report) and that following contact and recommendation from Limerick City and

County Council, An Bórd Pleanála directed that an EIAR be prepared which is ongoing at present.

He stated that the next step in the process is a Design Update and to publish reduced 100m corridor which is to take place for both schemes in November/December 2023 and that a presentation will take place with the Members on this matter. He referred to further ongoing consultation with property owners directly and indirectly affected.

The Senior Executive Engineer stated that in Q2 2024 it is hoped that a public display of the updated design will take place and that it is expected that an application will be made to An Bórd Pleanála in the Summer of 2024 to construct the scheme.

The Senior Engineer gave an update to the Members on the current position with regard to progression of the Adare bypass. He stated that the first phase of the scheme is hedge clearance and fencing along the proposed motorway between Attyflyn and Rathkeale. He stated that tenders have recently been received for these works and a contractor is expected to be on site shortly. He also stated that a similar tender is to issue shortly for the section of carriageway between Rathkeale and Foynes and that an anticipated delivery date of 2027 is envisaged for the scheme.

The Members welcomed the updates on the various road schemes and a lengthy discussion took place on a number of matters including the process of compensation for the landowners affected by the development of the schemes, Notices to Treat, carbon footprint, various timelines in completion of the schemes and An Bórd Pleanála timelines.

Following discussion on timeframes for completion of the schemes, it was agreed that the Meetings Administrator would write to the Minister for Environment, Climate and Communications with regard to having the N21 Relief Road of Newcastle West and the N21 Relief Road for Abbeyfeale done in conjunction with the Foynes to Limerick road (including Adare bypass) as a matter of priority to prevent larger bottlenecks in the towns of Newcastle West and Abbeyfeale.

The issue of various street lights out of order in the District was raised and the Members expressed urgency on this matter. A lengthy discussion followed and in replying, the Director gave an update to the Members and stated that this is an issue nationally but however is working with the relevant team on this matter. He stated that an ESB presence is required on site to get a number of street lights in working order and stated that this matter will be escalated to the ESB to achieve a quicker resolution.

In replying, the Members referred to a number of matters including the various street lights not working in the District, the length of time taken to get street lights in working order and also the service level agreement in place. Concern was raised with regard to safety on the Hill Road in Abbeyfeale and to the length of time taken to remove ESB poles near the footpath and to an application made to the ESB with regard to this matter. In replying, the Director agreed to liaise with the ESB to get this issue resolved as soon as possible.

An update was sought on the Devon Road Cross, Templeglantine, and in replying, the Senior Engineer, Mid West National Road Design Office stated that a feasibility report has been submitted to Transport Infrastructure Ireland recommending a staggered junction to be constructed and that approval and funding is awaited from Transport Infrastructure Ireland.

Reference was made to an application made for the footpath to be extended at Dore's Cross.

An update was sought on the provision of a bus shelter on the Killarney Road, Abbeyfeale and in replying, the Director stated that this matter has been raised with the National Transport Authority. An update was also sought on the provision of a bus shelter at Templeglantine village and the Director agreed to seek a further update and revert to the Members on these matters.

An update was sought on the Taking in Charge of Ray's Estate, Mountcollins and to a survey and costing which is to be carried out at this estate.

An update on the provision of a dog park in Newcastle West was raised and in replying, the Meetings Administrator agreed to revert to the relevant Directorate on this matter.

The Members referred to a number of local isolated incidents which took place in the District and outlined their concerns with the upcoming Halloween festivities. Reference was also made to having the Mass Gate locked for the duration of Halloween. In replying, the Senior Executive Engineer agreed to liaise with the Gardaí on the closure of the Mass Path gate.

The growing of grass on the footpath at both sides of the school on the Monagea Road was raised.

The recent work carried out at Rathina, Newcastle West was acknowledged.

A request has been received from West Limerick Sports Complex with regard to attending a Meeting of the Municipal District to address the Members on the current situation at the Sports Complex, to the huge opportunity that has arisen to purchase the facility and the adjoining two acre site from the current owners, moving them from private to community ownership. The Members agreed to the attendance of a delegation at the November Meeting of the District.

It was agreed to hold the November Meeting of the District on Wednesday, 1st November, 2023, at 10.00 a.m., at Áras William Smith OBrien.

This concluded the Meeting.

Signed:

Cathaoirleach

Dated:
