

MINUTES OF PROCEEDINGS AT MEETING OF THE MUNICIPAL DISTRICT OF NEWCASTLE WEST HELD IN ÁRAS WILLIAM SMITH OBRIEN, NEWCASTLE WEST, CO. LIMERICK, AND ONLINE ON WEDNESDAY, 15TH JANUARY, 2025, AT 10AM.

PRESENT IN THE CHAIR:

Councillor L. Galvin, Cathaoirleach.

MEMBERS PRESENT:

Councillors Collins, Foley, Ruddle, Scanlan and Sheahan.

OFFICIALS IN ATTENDANCE:

Director, Planning and Place-Making (Mr. V. Murray), Meetings Administrator, Newcastle West (Ms. H. Supple), Senior Executive Engineer, Newcastle West Municipal District (Mr. J. Sheehan), Executive Engineer, Roads (Mr. P. Vallely), Administrative Officer, Property Management (Ms. T. Knox),

At the outset of the Meeting, the Cathaoirleach welcomed everyone to the first Newcastle West Municipal District Meeting for 2025 and wished all a Happy New Year.

Prior to commencement of the Meeting, the Cathaoirleach and Members referred to the extreme weather event which took place recently and acknowledged the excellent work carried out by the Roads Team, the indoor and outdoor staff in the Newcastle West District. The assistance of the private contractors, ESB Networks, Irish Water and the agricultural sector was also acknowledged.

A discussion took place on a number of matters including the length of time properties were without power and water, the number of power outages in the District in 2024 and the reasons for these outages. Reference was also made to the installation of generators in reservoirs to pump water into Council reservoirs during a power outage, fallen and overhanging trees on the roadside, trees near power lines and the issue of ash dieback in the District. The Members also sought the name of the liaison person in Irish Water to deal with queries by the Members.

A lengthy discussion took place and following discussion, it was agreed that the Meetings Administrator would arrange for a representative from ESB Networks to attend a Meeting of the District. It was also agreed that representatives of Irish Water would be invited to attend a Special Meeting of the District as a follow up on the recent weather events.

1. Adoption of Minutes

- (a) Circulated, copy of draft Minutes of Meeting of Municipal District of Newcastle West, held on 6th December, 2024.

Proposed by: Councillor

Seconded by: Councillor

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, she was inviting those present to notify the Cathoairleach of any declaration of interest in any item due for discussion at the Meeting. No such interests were declared.

3. Disposal of Land

- (a) Circulated, report of Senior Staff Officer, Housing Support Services, dated 9th December, 2024, concerning proposal to dispose of Freehold Interest in Property at 2 St. Ita's Terrace, St. Ita's Road, Newcastle West, Co. Limerick.

Members noted the proposal.

- (b) Circulated, report of Head of Property Management, dated 9th December, 2024, concerning proposal to dispose of land 0.1784 Acres (0.0722 Hectares) at Lower Mall, Glin, Co. Limerick.

Members noted the proposal. The Administrative Officer, Property Management also gave an update to the Members on the above Disposals.

4. General Municipal Allocation (GMA)

On the proposal of Councillor Foley, seconded by Councillor Collins, it was agreed to allocate €1,000 to Killoughteen National School for the erection of stage and provision of lighting equipment for the school.

On the proposal of Councillor Ruddle, seconded by Councillor Scanlan, it was agreed to allocate €500 to Killoughteen National School for the erection of stage and provision of lighting equipment for the school.

On the proposal of Councillor Collins, seconded by Councillor Foley, it was agreed to allocate an additional €700 to Killeedy G.A.A., for picnic tables and wheelchair accessibility beside the playground.

QUESTIONS

Replies to the following Questions on the Agenda were circulated to all Members prior to the Meeting and the Questions were therefore taken as having been dealt with.

5. Question submitted by Councillor L. Galvin

I will ask at the next Meeting for a detailed update on the bypasses of (a) Adare, (b) Abbeyfeale and (c) Newcastle West. Please give potential time frames, costings to date, next steps for each bypass and potential issues that may arise.

REPLY:

- (a) The Adare Bypass is one element of the Foynes to Limerick Road project which is a 35km road connecting Limerick city to the port of Foynes. The overall project is seen as vital for the strategic development and expansion of Shannon Foynes Port, for West Limerick and the Mid-West Region in general.

November 2023 marked the commencement of several enabling works contracts which are currently being progressed along the entire length of the project. These include for hedge clearance, fencing, an archaeological resolution contract, the construction of three railway bridges, haul road construction in addition to the diversion of numerous utility services.

On the 16th December, 2024, Limerick City and County Council announced that the joint venture of John Sisk & Son (Holdings) Ltd and Sorensen Civil Engineering Ltd., known as Sisk Sorensen Joint Venture had been awarded the Adare Bypass Design and Construction Contract, between the proposed Adare and Croagh junctions. Works are scheduled to commence on site in January 2025.

There has been approximately €67 million spent to date on the project since it commenced in 2014. A substantial portion on that is in recent times, due to the commencement of the construction phase, land acquisition, archaeological works, bridge contracts etc. While the Contract duration is 30 months, with a scheduled contract end date of June 2027, there still remains a number of challenges for the project team to achieve this very ambitious target.

The Council is continuing to progress the remaining elements of the overall project through this construction phase.

- (b), (c) Since our update to you on the N21 Abbeyfeale and N21 Newcastle West schemes, for the November Meeting of the Municipal District of Newcastle West we have continued through Phase 3 of TII's Project Management Guidelines which includes design and preparation of statutory documents.

The design and environmental evaluation are substantially progressed to incorporate additional design requirements including consideration of the active

travel facility cross section, the impacts of the 2023 speed limit review and the results from additional environmental surveys and we have also carried out additional archaeological test excavations at various locations.

We are on target to publish further design update early in 2025 and this update will show the proposed mainline, side road realignments and junction designs as well as whether the road is in cut or on fill. In addition, proposed access arrangements, material deposition areas, watercourse diversions and the location of drainage ponds etc., will be shown. As part of this update we will provide timeline estimates for the progression of the N21 Abbeyfeale and N21 Newcastle West schemes. Following the design update the project team will engage with affected landowners in a series of one-to-one meetings to discuss the scheme design within the lands affected.

Prior to submitting a planning application to An Bórd Pleanála both projects will be subject to peer review by TII and the Department of Transport and a legal review of the Environmental Impact Assessment documents. The outcome of these approval processes can potentially result in programme delays.

The progression of the schemes is subject to the continued support of public funding for the projects.

There has been approximately €1.9M and €1.8M spent to date on the Newcastle West and Abbeyfeale Bypass schemes respectively.

6. Question submitted by Councillor L. Galvin

I will ask at the next Meeting for a detailed update on (a) Devon Road Cross and (b) Dore's Cross, Templeglantine.

REPLY:

- (a) In 2023, the Mid West National Road Design Office resubmitted a feasibility report to TII recommending a staggered junction be constructed at N21 Devon Cross, to replace the existing arrangement. Unfortunately Transport Infrastructure Ireland (TII) refused approval to proceed with the detail design process and preparation of tender documents and they did not allocate the necessary funding to implement the recommended staggered junction at Devon Cross.
- (b) To date, Limerick City and County Council have been unsuccessful in securing funding for this scheme. We are carrying out additional surveys to further support our application and will resubmit to TII for consideration.

Limerick City and County Council will continue to follow up on this scheme and provide an update once available.

7. Question submitted by Councillor L. Galvin

I will ask at the next Meeting for a detailed update on the progress report arising from the flooding in Abbeyfeale.

REPLY: Limerick City and County Council have made submissions to Central Services for funding to be attained for the Hill Road, Abbeyfeale and areas impacted from Tullig Bridge, Ballagh, the Mart Bridge and Rathcahill, Monagea for enhanced drainage works to be carried out and restoration improvement works.

8. Question submitted by Councillor J. Scanlan

I will ask at the next Meeting when footpath renewal will be undertaken along the street between the Credit Union premises and Dromcollogher Post Office.

REPLY: Footpath renewal will form part of the GMA funding 2025.

9. Question submitted by Councillor J. Scanlan

I will ask at the next Meeting when the no parking signage will be reinstated in the area fronting Tadhg O'Connor's along St. Mary's Road locally.

REPLY: The sign will be reinstated by the end of January.

10. Question submitted by Councillor J. Scanlan

I will ask at the next Meeting that the speed indicator on the western side of Broadford village be relocated next to the speed limit signage.

REPLY: A site meeting will be arranged to confirm the agreed location.

11. Question submitted by Councillor T. Ruddle

I will ask at the next Meeting for a list of vacant properties in the Newcastle West Municipal District owned by Limerick City and County Council, in tabular form by location and the maximum length of time that they have been vacant.

REPLY:**Vacant Units in the Newcastle West MD**

Unit Location	Vacant Period (Months)	Current Position
Ballyagran	23	On Site
Strand	22	Procurement
Abbeyfeale	16	On Site
Abbeyfeale	12	On Site
Abbeyfeale	12	On Site
Abbeyfeale	11	On Site
Newcastle West	6	On Site
Newcastle West	4	Procurement
Newcastle West	2	Procurement
Athea	2	On Site
Athea	2	On Site
Newcastle West	2	Procurement

19 units have been completed and made available for letting to date in 2024.

NOTICES OF MOTION**12. Notice of Motion submitted by Councillor L. Galvin**

I will move at the next Meeting that the Council expedite the Flood Relief Scheme in Athea particularly after recent floods nearly causing flooding in the village.

The Motion was seconded by Councillor Foley.

REPLY:

The preferred option for the Athea Flood Relief Scheme (FRS) has been identified and environmental assessments are currently being reviewed by Limerick City and County Council and finalised. The cost benefit of the scheme is proving challenging to achieve a value of 1 or

greater (i.e. where benefits exceed the proposed project cost of the FRS) and further work is underway to maximise the benefits of the scheme whilst also refining the proposed capital cost of the scheme.

Subject to achieving a positive outcome on the cost benefit assessment, Limerick City and County Council will seek approval from OPW to submit the FRS to An Bord Pleanála for planning consent under Section 175 and Section 177AE of the Planning and Development Act, 2000 at the earliest opportunity which is currently programmed for Q2, 2025.

In proposing the Motion, Councillor Galvin requested that the Athea Flood Relief Scheme be expedited and that temporary works be carried out in the meantime including dredging and the clearing of debris from under the bridge. In replying, the Director stated that the Athea Flood Relief Scheme is being finalised at present and following the approval of the Office of Public Works, it is envisaged that this scheme will be submitted to An Bórd Pleanála for consideration in Q2 2025. It was agreed that a further update would be given to the Members on the provision of temporary dredging works at the bridge in the meantime.

Dissatisfaction was expressed at the length of time taken to progress this scheme and in replying the Director referred to the complexity of the scheme, the large amount of flood relief schemes in the country and to the limited expertise in this area.

13. Notice of Motion submitted by Councillor L. Galvin

I will move at the next Meeting that the Council calls on the Department of the Office of Public Works to draw up a Flood Relief Scheme from the Mart Bridge towards the rear of Abbey United Soccer Club and that this includes the dredging of the river from the said locations.

The Motion was seconded by Councillor Foley.

REPLY:

Following a review of the CFRAM study, which evaluated flood risk management options nationwide, the only viable measures identified for Abbeyfeale were the baseline Measure “Do Nothing” and the Non-Structural Measure “Public Awareness”. However, neither of these measures were considered viable in providing the required 1%AEP event design standard of flood protection. As part of our commitment to addressing flood risk, Limerick City and County Council will engage with the Office of Public Works (OPW) to explore whether a reassessment of the area can be undertaken, taking into account any recent data, developments, or emerging risks.

Further to the above, it is important to note that due to the presence of the River Feale SAC, dredging is unlikely to be viable due to concerns with regard to the long-term sustainability and effectiveness in flood risk reduction of this measure in addition to the likely potential for significant negative impacts on the SAC and surrounding environment.

In proposing the Motion, Councillor Galvin referred to the substantial damage caused by the

extreme flooding event which took place recently in Abbeyfeale and to the damage caused to Abbeyfeale United FC and Fr. Casey's GAA grounds and facilities. In replying, the Director stated that Tranche 1 schemes for Limerick has been approved by the Office of Public Works and that Tranche 2 schemes which includes Abbeyfeale is awaiting approval from the Office of Public Works.

Following discussion, it was agreed that the District would write to the Minister of State at the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage with responsibility for the Office of Public Works to advance a Flood Relief Scheme for Abbeyfeale.

14. Notice of Motion submitted by Councillor J. Scanlan

I will move at the next Meeting that both lighting and shelter be improved at the Westbound Bus Stop fronting the Longcourt House Hotel.

The Motion was seconded by Councillor Collins.

REPLY: We will ask the National Transport Authority if the existing westbound bus shelter fronting the Longcourt House Hotel can be upgraded. If this request is approved, this location will be added to the 2025 Bus Shelter Enabling Works Grant Application.

In proposing the Motion, Councillor Scanlan stated that the Westbound Bus Stop is extremely exposed and requested that an upgrade of the bus shelter take place. Councillor Scanlan also made reference to the provision of additional bus stops along the route.

15. Notice of Motion submitted by Councillor J. Scanlan

I will move at the next Meeting that the road lighting at Killoughteen school be adjusted and placed on a timer to limit its levels of glare and intrusiveness on neighbouring residential properties.

The Motion was seconded by Councillor Ruddle.

REPLY: This issue has been highlighted in the past and an investigation whether we could dim the lights, it was found that any effort to dim the light would compromise the safety of pedestrians crossing the road at night.

In proposing the Motion, Councillor Scanlan referred to the glare from the lighting affecting houses in the vicinity of Killoughteen school and if a timer could be installed on the lights. A brief discussion followed and in replying, the Senior Executive Engineer stated that the dimming of lights would compromise the safety of pedestrians at night but however agreed to seek clarification on putting the lights on a timer.

The following items were also raised.

An update was sought on a clean-up and surveying of trees at Oakpark estate, Newcastle West. In replying, the Senior Executive Engineer agreed to revert to the Members on this matter.

Reference was made to a stream which is clogged up with stones in Ballagh next to where the Post Office was previously located. In replying, the Senior Executive Engineer stated that he would contact the Office of Public Works to see if it will qualify for the Minor Works Scheme.

An update was sought on the proposed installation of a bollard at the top of Nash's Lane, Newcastle West, to prevent traffic entering Nash's Lane from the Square, Newcastle West. In replying, the Senior Executive Engineer agreed to provide an update prior to the next Meeting.

A request was made for the glass on the recently vandalised bus shelter across from the Devon Hotel to be replaced and in replying, the Executive Engineer agreed to follow up on this matter with Central Services.

Reference was made to St. Ita's Day in Killeedy which takes place on the 15th January every year and a Happy St. Ita's Day was wished to all.

The issue of public lighting was raised and reference was made to various street lights not working in the District. Following a brief discussion, it was agreed that the Members would submit a list of street lights of concern to the Meetings Administrator who would then forward this list to Central Services.

The Meetings Administrator referred to the holding of a Workshop on Limerick City and County Council's Corporate Plan 2024 – 2029 and it was agreed by all that this Workshop would take place on Wednesday, 29th January, 2025, at 10 a.m., at Áras William Smith OBrien.

It was agreed to hold the February Meeting of the District on Tuesday, 4th February, 2025, at 10.00 a.m., at Áras William Smith OBrien.

This concluded the Meeting.

Signed:

Cathaoirleach

Dated:

