

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, 5TH MARCH, 2025, AT 10AM.

PRESENT IN THE CHAIR:

Councillor L. Galvin, Cathaoirleach.

MEMBERS PRESENT:

Councillors Collins, Foley, Galvin, 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), Senior Executive Engineer, Catchment, Flood Risk Assessment and Management (Mr. J. Moloney), Acting Senior Executive Engineer, Catchment, Flood Risk Assessment and Management (Mr. Darragh J. Ryan), Administrative Officer, Property Management (Ms. T. Knox).

Mr. Jonathan Reid, Ryan Hanley Consultants.

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

1. Adoption of Minutes

- (a) Circulated, copy of draft Minutes of Meeting of Municipal District of Newcastle West, held on 4th February, 2025.

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, she 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. Disposal of Land

Circulated, report of Head of Property Management Services, dated 20th February, 2025, concerning proposal to dispose of property at Kilready, Castlemahon, Co. Limerick.

Members noted the proposal.

4. Planning and Place-Making Directorate

To Receive Update on Athea Flood Relief Scheme.

The Cathaoirleach welcomed the Senior Executive Engineer, Acting Senior Executive Engineer, Catchment, Flood Risk Assessment and Management and Mr. Johnathan Reid, Ryan Hanley Consulting Engineers to the Meeting.

The Senior Executive Engineer referred to the Flood Relief Scheme for Athea which was being progressed by Limerick City and County Council in conjunction with the Office of Public Works. He stated that Messrs. Ryan Hanley Consulting Engineers were appointed by Limerick City and County Council to assess, develop and design an appropriate, cost-effective and sustainable Flood Relief Scheme for Athea, the River Galey and its tributaries. The Senior Executive Engineer introduced Mr. Reid to the Meeting and stated that Mr. Reid would outline the key elements and next steps in the Plan.

Mr. Reid gave a comprehensive Presentation to the Members. He stated that a Steering Group had been set up and that key stakeholders in the project included Limerick City and County Council, local stakeholders, environmental stakeholders and other project teams. He gave an update to the Members on the background to the scheme. He stated that a Catchment Flood Risk Assessment and Management Study (CFRAM) was carried out, the CFRAM study area included Athea as an Area for Further Assessment and concluded that a Flood Relief Scheme would be viable and effective for the community. He stated that the current project was initiated and a team was appointed in 2019. He referred to the primary goal of the scheme which is to identify an environmentally acceptable and cost beneficial scheme with 1% AEP Fluvial/0.5% AEP Coastal Design Standard.

Mr. Reid outlined the progress to date on the scheme which includes the following:

- Opening Consultation (2020) and Constraints Study
- Constraints Report August 2020
- Data Collection, Environmental Surveys and Investigation Contracts
- Hydrology, Hydraulic Modelling and Draft Flood Mapping, Geotechnical Assessments
- Public Consultation No. 2 Q1 2024
- Scheme Refinement, Environmental Impact Assessment Reporting and Preparation of Planning Documentation.

He made reference to the measures which are to address flooding from the River Galey and two local tributaries namely Athea West and East streams. He gave an update to the Members on Fluvial 1% AEP Flood Mapping, Environmental Constraints Mapping and the proposed scheme for Athea village. He outlined the locations of the three pumping stations which were identified. He referred to Sediment Management which would involve the periodic removal of excess gravel deposits in areas which are particularly hydraulically sensitive for example at Athea Bridge. Mr. Reid also gave an update to the Members on Public Realm Enhancement for the scheme.

He outlined the next steps in the project which included landowner liaison and finalising planning drawings, finalising EIAR and NIS, Gateway Approval 1 (GA1) submission to the Office of Public Works and subject to GA1 approval planning application is to be submitted to An Bórd Pleanála.

The Members thanked Mr. Reid for the comprehensive presentation and referred to a number of matters including the pumping stations identified, sediment control, where sediment is being taken to and the cost of the project.

In replying to the Members, Mr. Reid made reference to some of the biggest complexities in the scheme including ground conditions and environmental sensitivity around the River Galey. He stated that the planning application included for the removal of gravel from the River Galey for the period of planning when it will be resurveyed again with ten years being the anticipated timeframe for removal of sediment. He stated that it is proposed that the Fisheries would use the sediment for river enhancement. In conclusion, Mr. Reid stated that it is expected that a planning application will be submitted in June 2025 and that works will take approximately eighteen to twenty four months to complete. Mr. Reid also stated that the scheme may cost up to €8m to construct the scheme.

5. General Municipal Allocation (GMA)

On the proposal of Councillor Foley, seconded by Councillor Scanlan, it was agreed to allocate €334 to Mountcollins Development Association for St. Patrick's Day Parade.

On the proposal of Councillor Collins, seconded by Councillor Scanlan, it was agreed to allocate €334 to Mountcollins Development Association for St. Patrick's Day Parade.

On the proposal of Councillor Galvin, seconded by Councillor Scanlan, it was agreed to allocate €334 to Mountcollins Development Association for St. Patrick's Day Parade.

On the proposal of Councillor Galvin, seconded by Councillor Scanlan, it was agreed to allocate 1,500 to Athea United Football Club.

On the proposal of Councillor Ruddle, seconded by Councillor Scanlan, it was agreed to allocate €500 to Athea United Football Club.

On the proposal of Councillor Foley, seconded by Councillor Scanlan, it was agreed to allocate €500 to Athea United Football Club.

On the proposal of Councillor Sheahan, seconded by Councillor Scanlan, it was agreed to allocate €1,500 to Athea United Football Club.

On the proposal of Councillor Scanlan, seconded by Councillor Foley, it was agreed to allocate €466.70 to Flavour of the Month Productions Drama Group.

On the proposal of Councillor Collins, seconded by Councillor Foley, it was agreed to allocate €466.70 to Flavour of the Month Productions Drama Group.

On the proposal of Councillor Ruddle, seconded by Councillor Foley, it was agreed to allocate €466.70 to Flavour of the Month Productions Drama Group.

On the proposal of Councillor Foley, seconded by Councillor Ruddle, it was agreed to allocate €1,000 to Abbeyfeale St. Patrick's Day Parade Committee.

On the proposal of Councillor Galvin, seconded by Councillor Ruddle, it was agreed to allocate €1,000 to Abbeyfeale St. Patrick's Day Parade Committee.

On the proposal of Councillor Foley, seconded by Councillor Collins, it was agreed to allocate €2,000 to drainage works at Devon Road, Templeglantine.

On the proposal of Councillor Galvin, seconded by Councillor Collins, it was agreed to allocate €1,500 to drainage works at Devon Road, Templeglantine.

On the proposal of Councillor Ruddle, seconded by Councillor Scanlan, it was agreed to allocate €1,000 to Newcastle West Camogie Club.

On the proposal of Councillor Sheahan, seconded by Councillor Foley, it was agreed to allocate €500 to Kinard Cemetery Caretaker's Fund.

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.

6. Question submitted by Councillor L. Galvin

I will ask at the next Meeting for an update on the footpath/pedestrian crossing and traffic calming measures at the Killarney Road, Abbeyfeale (Dalton's Cross).

REPLY: A survey to warrant a crossing at this location has been carried out and it has been submitted to TII for approval and possible funding.

7. Question submitted by Councillor L. Galvin

I will ask at the next Meeting for an update on the pedestrian access to the Greenway at Galvin's road, Templeglantine and at Murphy's Bend.

REPLY:

The two access points at Galvin's road, Templeglantine and Murphy's Bend (Doctors Bridge), Abbeyfeale have been identified for closure following a road safety audit that was completed as part of the Limerick Greenway project.

Galvin's Road

The landowner at this location came forward and offered their lands to Limerick City and County Council so as to maintain an access point that is safe at this location. The landowner where the proposed access point is to be located was met on site in 2024 and there has been telecoms with Limerick City and County Council in 2025 also. Drawings and maps are being finalised at present and will then be shared with the landowner for final approval. The tourism capital project team will make a funding submission for the works to TII.

Murphy's Bend/Doctor's Bridge

It is proposed to review what options are available, if any, to create an alternative safe access point at this location. There are no funds available to purchase lands either by Limerick City and County Council or TII. If a viable option is determined and lands are provided by landowners then a submission for funding to TII can be made. If no option is available the existing access point will have to be closed as per the road safety audit.

8. Question submitted by Councillor L. Galvin

I will ask at the next Meeting for a full detailed report on (a) new graveyard in Abbeyfeale (b) update on the Part 8 for the Greenway at the station storehouse and yard.

REPLY:

- (a) The Council have identified a site for a new burial ground in Abbeyfeale. The acquisition of the site will be subject to planning permission being secured prior to the legal acquisition of the site. The burial ground site will also accommodate car parking to serve the Greenway hub in Abbeyfeale. In this regard, the Council have appointed Consultants to progress both projects and the burial ground design is being progressed for a Part 8 application. The Council would like to advise that negotiations cannot be concluded until planning permission has been secured. In any event, the Part 8 is being progressed in parallel with negotiations and therefore there is no delay in progressing the burial ground project.
- (b) The project which is the Limerick Greenway Hub at Abbeyfeale has had Part 8 planning since March 2024, planning reference 24/8000.

The project currently has Category 2 funding under the RRDF in order to bring it to tender stage. The project was submitted for Category 1 funding in February 2024 but was unsuccessful. It is proposed to submit the project for future calls under Category 1 of the RRDF if they arise.

9. Question submitted by Councillor T. Ruddle

I will ask at the next Meeting when the Planning Department are sending out correspondence to constituents can they put a contact name on the correspondence for ease of reference please.

REPLY:

The Planning Authority deal with a large volume and range of correspondence from members of the public in relation to the delivery of planning services. Therefore, in addressing correspondence, it is necessary to have a central point of contact in order to ensure statutory requirements are met and tracked. All queries are acknowledged as per the Customer Charter and referred to the relevant administrative or case officer best suited to address the request.

Newcastle West Municipal District has an assigned District Planner, who is a key point of contact for applicants and agents in the facilitation of the planning application process.

The Planning Office will be happy to assist any member of the public with their query and direct them to the appropriate person.

10. Question submitted by Councillor T. Ruddle

I will ask at the next Meeting (a) how many visits of people using the Greenway in 2024 (b) how many have used the Greenway since it has opened.

REPLY:

Limerick Greenway has already been a major success in terms of visitor numbers, business growth and positive feedback from the public/tourists. While still an amenity, Limerick Greenway has transformed West Limerick into an area that people want to visit and stay in and base themselves from while touring the West of Ireland and exploring the WAW, with the long-term goal being to create a reputable and enticing tourism destination.

Limerick City and County Council research has found that:

- Almost nine out of ten Limerick Greenway users are now more physically active as a result of the Greenway investment. 29% of the local community stated that they are “extremely more active” due to the ease of access to Limerick Greenway for exercise.
- Limerick Greenway use exceeds national recreational walking averages, compared to national walking data reported in the Irish Sports Monitor.

- The average value of an overnight visitor to Limerick Greenway was €128 per night while day visitors generated an average of €28 per day. Overseas visitors to the area generated a higher average overnight spend of €144 per overnight stay.
- (a) Limerick City and County Council has 11 counters on Limerick Greenway. Analysis of the data indicates that in 2024, there were 170,894 visitors on the Greenway.
- (b) The total number of visitors since the Greenway opened is approximately 639,902.

11. Question submitted by Councillor T. Ruddle

I will ask at the next Meeting when is it envisaged that there will be a toilet installed in the Demesne as it has been raised with me by the public.

REPLY: There is currently no funding identified for the installation of toilets in the Demesne in Newcastle West. It is estimated that funding for an automated toilet would be of the order of €25,000 to €30,000 per annum including servicing of the unit. Once a funding source is identified, consideration can be given to the location and installation of these toilets.

12. Question submitted by Councillor F. Foley

I will ask at the next Meeting for an update on the purchase of the new burial ground in Abbeyfeale.

REPLY: The Council have identified a site for a new burial ground for Abbeyfeale and are in negotiations with the landowner. The acquisition of the site will be subject to planning permission being secured prior to the legal acquisition of the site. The site will also provide car parking to serve the Greenway hub in Abbeyfeale. The Council would like to advise that Consultants have been appointed and a design is being progressed for a Part 8 application.

ADJOURNED NOTICES OF MOTION

13. Notice of Motion submitted by Councillor T. Ruddle.

I will move at the next Meeting that signage be placed around the town and at the entrance to the Demesne showing where we have parking available for visitors and shoppers in the town.

The Motion was seconded by Councillor Collins.

REPLY: Signage has already been erected and further signage has been ordered and will be in place once delivery has been received.

In proposing the Motion, Councillor Ruddle requested that signage be displayed around the town to show where public parking is available. In replying, the Executive Engineer stated that some signage has been erected and signage for the N21 is to arrive this week.

14. Notice of Motion submitted by Councillor T. Ruddle.

I will move at the next Meeting that the Community Council car park be made available for car parking to shoppers in the town. The Council have in recent times assisted with lighting to the car park here.

The Motion was seconded by Councillor Sheahan.

REPLY: A discussion has taken place with a member of the committee and it will be raised at their Board meeting and a further up date will ensue at the March meeting.

In proposing the Motion, Councillor Ruddle referred to the importance of having the Community Council car park available for car parking to shoppers in the town. Councillor Collins also made reference to insurance for the Community Council car park and if this matter could be explored.

NOTICES OF MOTION

15. Notice of Motion submitted by Councillor F. Foley

I will move at the next Meeting that a school warden be provided on the N21 at the entrance of Scoil Mháthair Dé, Abbeyfeale in the interest of safety for the pupils attending the national school.

The Motion was seconded by Councillor Galvin.

REPLY: An assessment of the site will be carried out and submitted to TII for approval as it is on a National road.

In proposing the Motion, Councillor Foley made reference to correspondence he received from Scoil Mháthair Dé, Abbeyfeale and to road safety issues at the school.

Councillor Galvin also requested that a school warden be provided at Scoil Mháthair Dé, Abbeyfeale due to limited availability of parking. He requested that a site assessment for the provision of a school warden at Templeglantine also take place and that clarification be sought on where funding for the school wardens in Adare and Newcastle West is sourced.

16. Notice of Motion submitted by Councillor L. Galvin

I will move at the next Meeting that the shed at the rear of the old bank be given to parking and be included as additional parking as part of the Abbeyfeale Traffic Management Plan.

The Motion was seconded by Councillor Foley.

REPLY:

The lands referred to in the Notice of Motion are currently in the ownership of Innovate Limerick DAC. We are currently exploring options to acquire these lands as requested by the Members and exploring if it is feasible to provide car parking at this location. However, it should be noted that these lands are identified in the Local Area Plan for Abbeyfeale and the Town Centre First Plan to be considered as part of an overall development masterplan in conjunction with the adjoining lands for a mixed use development (Residential/Commercial). We will revert to the members when we have concluded discussions with the landowners.

In proposing the Motion, Councillor Galvin requested that the lands at the rear of the old bank be made available for car parking as part of the Abbeyfeale Traffic Management Plan and that it be made a focal point in the town.

In replying, the Director stated that this land is currently in the ownership of Innovate Limerick DAC. He stated that discussions are ongoing with regard to acquiring these lands and to the possibility of providing car parking at this location. The Director agreed to revert to the Members when discussions with the landowner is concluded.

17. Notice of Motion submitted by Councillor T. Ruddle

I will move at the next Meeting that the Council consider two public lights for the Council owned Demesne car park in front of Newcastle West town soccer ground as it discourages people from using the town car park.

The Motion was seconded by Councillor Scanlan.

REPLY: Lighting in this area can be considered for funding under the Schedule of Municipal District Works 2025.

In proposing the Motion, Councillor Ruddle requested that public lights be provided at the Demesne car park to encourage more use of the car park. In replying, the Senior Executive Engineer stated that ducting for the lights is in place and a costing for the poles will be sought shortly.

18. Correspondence

Correspondence as circulated was noted by the Members.

The following items were also raised.

The Cathaoirleach stated that a Briefing for the Members of Limerick City and County Council on the N21 Newcastle West, N21 Abbeyfeale Road Schemes Design and an update on the Distributor roads for Newcastle West and Abbeyfeale is to take place on Thursday, 27th March, 2025, at 10 a.m., at Áras William Smith OBrien.

The Members expressed concern at the ongoing issue of insufficient wastewater treatment capacity at the Newcastle West Treatment Plant and a lengthy discussion took place. Reference was made to housing developments in Newcastle West town not being able to proceed due to lack of capacity at the treatment plant. A query was also raised on how much wastewater is coming into the Newcastle West Wastewater Treatment Plant from other areas. Following discussion, a proposal was made that a review of Limerick City and County Council's Development Plan take place to highlight the issue of lack of wastewater treatment capacity in the District. In replying, the Director stated that the procedure for a review of the Development Plan is set out in the Planning legislation and the Planning Section is proposing to commence a review of the Development Plan in Q1 2026. He stated that work on the new Plan will commence prior to expiry of the existing Plan. The Director made reference to the amount of time required for preparation of the Plan which is two years and that the next Plan will be a ten year Plan under new legislation.

The Director stated that a Meeting is scheduled to take place shortly with Uisce Éireann to discuss various issues, including the lack of wastewater capacity at the Newcastle West treatment plant. The building of modular homes and connections to sewers was also discussed.

Reference was made to a Part 8 planning application which is being progressed for the design of the new burial ground in Abbeyfeale. Details on the timeframe for submission of the Part 8 to the Planning Section was requested and in replying, the Director agreed to seek clarification on this matter from the relevant Directorate.

The Executive Engineer, Roads, circulated a List of the Newcastle West Municipal District GMA Local Roads Projects for 2025 in the amount of €95,000 which was noted by all the Members.

Prior to the conclusion of the Meeting, the Cathaoirleach wished to thank the Director for his support, contribution and his excellent work while in the District. The Members and Staff also wished the Director well in his new role. In replying, the Director thanked the Members and colleagues for their kind words.

It was agreed to hold the April Meeting of the District on Wednesday, 2nd April, 2025, at 10.00 a.m., at Áras William Smith OBrien.

This concluded the Meeting.

Signed:

Cathaoirleach

Dated:
