

***Minutes of November Meeting of Mullingar Area Committee held on Monday 16<sup>th</sup> November, 2009, at 2.00pm in the Council Chambers, County Buildings, Mullingar.***

- Presiding** : Cllr.D.Cornally, Cathaoirleach.
- Members Present** : Cllrs.Dollard, Troy, Glynn, Cooney, Burke, Davitt, Leonard, Penrose.
- In attendance** : Cllr.Ruth Illingworth, Cathaoirleach, MTC.  
Mr.Terry McCague, Senior Planner;  
Ms.Catherine Dillon, Executive Planner;  
Mr.Pat Keating, Senior Executive Officer,  
Mr.Mark Costello, Technician Grade II;  
Ms.Annette Barr Jordan, Community & Enterprise Development Officer.
- Officers Present** : Mr.G.Lambden, Area Director.  
Dr.P.McCool, Area Engineer  
Ms.M.Moore, Administrative Officer  
Ms.C.Byrne, Staff Officer.

**Item 1 Deputation from Westmeath Community & Voluntary Forum:**

The Cathaoirleach welcomed Ms.Annette Barr Jordan, Community & Enterprise Development Officer and Mr.Pat Brennan, Westmeath Community and Development Association who made a presentation to the Members on behalf of Westmeath Community & Voluntary Forum. The presentation was also presented in paper format to the Members and covered items under the themes of (1) Access, (2) Community Infrastructure/Promotion of Westmeath, (3) Road Safety and (4) Anti Social Behaviour.

George Lambden, Mullingar Area Director, went through each of the items listed in the report, together with the Council's response to each item.

Following the presentation, Members thanked the representative from Westmeath Community & Voluntary Forum.

**Item 2 Miontuairisci**

- (i) On the proposal of Cllr.Glynn, seconded by Cllr.Leonard, the Minutes of Meeting of Mullingar Area Committee held at 2pm on Monday, 14<sup>th</sup> September, 2009 in the Council Chambers, County Buildings, Mullingar, were agreed.

Matters Arising:

Referring to Michael Connolly's report to Members on winter gritting at the September Meeting, Cllr.Troy asked if the Ballynacargy and Moyvore Roads would be added to the winter gritting programme this winter.

Referring to Motion 10.29, Cllr.Cornally asked if a representative from the Council's Housing Section has met with the residents in Grange Heights.

Referring to Motion 10.30, Cllr.Cornally asked if the Litter Warden might call to inspect the serious littering at this location and this was agreed.

### **Item 3        Replies to Questions**

The Replies to Questions were noted and supplementary questions answered.

Motion 8.9 was taken in conjunction with Question 12.

**8.9    Cllr.Glynn:**            To call on Westmeath County Council to put in place anti skid coating on the sloped entrance to College Hill/College Vale, as this is proving of major concern to local residents.

#### **Reply:**

**This will cost approximately €3,000 and can be considered in the context of the 2010 Estimates.**

Cllr.Glynn proposed that this work would be included in the 2010 Estimates. This proposal was seconded by Cllr.Troy and supported by Cllr.Penrose.

Referring to Question 18 which related to the introduction of a two hour parking limit in Kinnegad, Cllr.Leonard asked if a meeting can be organised between the County Council, the Gardai and the traders in Kinnegad and George Lambden agreed that if Members wished, such a meeting could be arranged.

### **Item 4        Report on taking in charge of housing estates**

Members had been circulated with a report prepared by the Legal and Enforcement Section. Pat Keating, Senior Executive Officer and Mark Costello, Technician Grade II answered Members questions as followed.

Cllr.Penrose enquired if the Legal and Enforcement Section can take any action to secure the bond provided by developers in estates where little progress is taking place. In addition, he asked if a developer's company has gone into liquidation, is there anything the Council can do regarding unfinished estates.

Cllr.Glynn referred to the green areas at Ardleigh and Ardilaun estates, as well as the entrance to Ardilaun Green. He also asked for an update on the progress with College Vale estate.

Cllr.Troy welcomed the works which were recently carried out at the Inis Glora Estate in Ballinalack. Referring to Forest View, Rathconrath, and to the unsafe wall which was erected by the developer and which is blocking sight lines, Cllr.Troy asked if any progress has been made to have the developer rectify this situation.

Cllr.Davitt referred to the bond for Manorfield Estate in Kinnegad. Pat Keating advised that the Council will be taking the developer of Manorfield to court for non compliance with an Enforcement Notice issued by the Council.

Cllr.Glynn asked for advice on how householders can address issues of soundproofing their houses.

Cllr.Dollard asked if any progress has been made regarding the Willows, at Lakepoint. He also asked how progress can be made if a developer has moved from an area and cannot be contacted.

Pat Keating advised that where developers are no longer in place, i.e. where liquidators have taken over, this is a new area which the Council finds itself in and the Council is seeking information on how to proceed.

Referring to the question of bonds, Pat Keating stated that these were never designed to allow an estate to be completed. However, they were used as a guarantee by the Council. He stated that where necessary, the Council is pursuing and prosecuting developers. In this regard, he advised that the threat of legal action against a number of developers is quite high and the Council plans to instigate several courses of legal action early in 2010.

Pat Keating advised Cllr.Troy that the Council is finding it a challenge to have the developer of Forest View, Rathconrath co-operate in relation to the wall which is blocking sight lines.

Cllr.Leonard stated that in some estates, particularly in Riverside Lawns, Kinnegad, the developer has failed to maintain the public lights which are not working and this is leading to many incidences of anti-social behaviour. He asked if the Council can carry out any interim works in estates in such situations.

Pat Keating advised that the Council takes responsibility for the public lighting in an estate at a certain stage of the development. However, he stated that before this happens, the lights area the responsibility of the developer.

Cllr.Dollard asked if the Council can take any action to have works finished up in the Central Park estate in Mullingar. Cllr.Illingworth agreed that this estate should be finished, particularly as some works are outstanding for over a decade. Pat Keating advised that the works are of a minor nature and would not warrant the resources required for the Council to take court action in this instance.

On the proposal of Cllr.Leonard, seconded by Cllr.Dollard, it was agreed that the report on the taking in charge of housing estates would be accepted.

## **Item 5 Mullingar Cycle Network and Green Route Strategy**

George Lambden went through the report which had been circulated to the Members. He stated that funding level of €400,000 is required and will come out of the income from paid parking in 2010. He advised that this can be discussed in detail when Members are considering the proceeds from paid parking at their meeting in January.

Cllr.Dollard stated that the Mullingar Cycle Network and Green Route Strategy is a very worthwhile initiative. He felt that where funding is made available from central government, it should be used by the local authority.

Cllr.Davitt stated that Members will work to ensure that matching funding is sought to allow this project to go ahead. He asked if the Council staff will have additional work as a result of this project or if further staff will be employed.

Cllr.Glynn and Cllr.Leonard were both supportive of the initiative.

Cllr.Cooney stated that this is a great initiative and a wonderful tourist attraction for the county. He suggested that in the future, when the cycle routes network is in place, that Mullingar might consider having a scheme of bicycles for hire, such as that recently launched in Dublin.

Cllr.Illingworth stated that cycling has wonderful health benefits and should be encouraged and welcomed where possible. She stated that the introduction of the cycle network should also mean that more people will leave the car and use cycle transport instead.

Terry McCague, Senior Planner, stated that this proposal fits in to a broader “green routes” strategy for the greater Mullingar area. It is hoped to develop an integrated walking and cycling network in the future with the emphasis on tourism, benefits to the community etc. He stated that this broader “green routes” strategy will come back before the Members at a later date. He stated that it will be important to market and promote this strategy to the wider community as it has huge potential.

George Lambden advised Members that the funding for this project has to be spent in 2010 and he stated that if Members approve this report then planning can commence.

Cllr.Dollard proposed the adoption of the report on the Mullingar Cycle Network and Green Route Strategy. Cllr.Davitt seconded this proposal.

## **Item 6            Variation No.6 of Westmeath County Development Plan 2008-2014**

George Lambden outlined to the Members the process for commencing a variation of the County Development Plan. The process has to be publicly advertised, he stated, and the proposal placed on public display for a period of four weeks, when the public can make submissions or objections. These submissions or objections will then be considered by the County Manager before coming back before the Members and a final decision made.

Terry McCague advised that this particular variation arises from an objective in the County Development Plan where the County Council has to bring forward proposals for sites in order to establish “heavy industry”. He stated that a location has been identified in Mullingar and is located in the upper end of Forest Park, Mullingar. He advised that paragraph 5.4 on Page 7 of the report issued to Members sets out the types of “non light industry” which would be included. Terry McCague pointed out that this objective in the County Development Plan was to be secured within twelve months of the adoption of the County Development Plan and he stated that this objective meets a particular need of a gateway town. He advised that if Members agree to the commencement of the variation process, that the matter could come back before Members for final consideration in February or March 2010.

Cllr.Glynn stated that he would have concerns in relation to this proposal, particularly the area which has been identified. He stated that when advertised, he will be inviting members of the local community to share their concerns.

Cllr.Burke stated that he has confidence in the planning system and looked forward to this matter going on public display so that the community can have their say.

Cllr.Dollard proposed that the process be commenced on Variation No.6 of the County Development Plan 2008-2014 in relation to identification and zoning of lands in Mullingar for non light industrial uses, in accordance with Objective O-EY1 of the said Plan. This proposal was seconded by Cllr.Cooney. George Lambden advised Members that the matter will be advertised in the coming weeks.

Cllr.Troy asked if a copy of the Serviso II Directive referred to in the report circulated to Members could be made available and this was agreed.

## **Item 7 Correspondence**

A letter from Mullingar Chamber of Commerce was considered by Members in relation to a request to have Oliver Plunkett Street, part of Pearse Street and part of Mount Street closed on 6<sup>th</sup> December, 2009 for a planned Christmas Market Festival in the town.

It was advised that this day would be similar to the “Discover Mullingar Day” held in September, with street entertainment, food stalls etc. It was noted that the times of the road closures would be from 10am until 6pm on Sunday, 6<sup>th</sup> December. This was proposed by Cllr.Davitt and seconded by Cllr.Troy.

Cllr.Dollard suggested that Mullingar Chamber of Commerce be invited to attend a future meeting of Mullingar Area Committee where they might make a presentation on future activities planned for the town. He stated that it would be worthwhile to have interaction between the Mullingar Area Members and Mullingar Chamber of Commerce.

## **Item 8 Replies to Notices of Motion**

The Cathaoirleach advised that she would take Cllr.Burke’s Notices of Motions first, with the agreement of Members. There was no objection to this.

**8.18 Cllr.Burke:** Regarding the Cullion-Ballagh road and correspondence from the residents to Westmeath County Council, that the Council would indicate the current position in relation to (a) the proposed speed limit reduction, (b) additional signage on the road and (c) Area Engineer’s report on the road resurfacing.

### **Reply:**

- (a) **This is a matter for the speed limit review.**
- (b) **Signage for the school has been conditioned under a recent planning permission;**
- (c) **This road will be considered for restoration in the context of the 2010 Estimates.**

**8.19 Cllr.Burke:** In relation to County Council staff, that the Council would indicate the breakdown of numbers working in the Coole, Mullingar, Athlone and Kilbeggan areas.

**Reply:**

**The following is a summary of indoor and outdoor County Council Area staff:**

**Coole Area: 23**  
**Mullingar Area: 75**  
**Athlone Area: 48**  
**Kilbeggan Area: 25.**

**8.20 Cllr.Burke:** That the Council would indicate the current position in relation to the completion of the N52 join-up at Ballagh and advise if the NRA has responded to the Council's request to meet them regarding this road.

**Reply:**

**A contractor has commenced work on the N52 tie-ins at Ballagh and Rathconnell. It is hoped that these works will be completed by the end of the year.**

**8.21 Cllr.Burke:** That Westmeath County Council would advise if it would consider meeting with business or business representatives in order to see how best they can restructure the Rates Budget to support local business in these testing economic times.

**Reply:**

**The Council met with Chamber of Commerce officials on 9<sup>th</sup> November 2009 to discuss commercial rates for 2010.**

**8.1 Cllr. Dollard:** That Westmeath County Council would look at means of traffic calming opposite the crèche on the Killucan Road, Kinnegad.

**Reply:**

**This is a main access road on the outskirts of Kinnegad and it would not be appropriate to introduce traffic calming measures at this location. In addition, there is no funding for such measures. Enforcement of the speed limit at this location is a matter for the Gardai.**

Cllr.Dollard asked if the Council's Road Design Section might examine this road to see what works are necessary and how much they would cost.

**8.2 Cllr.Dollard:** That Westmeath County Council would indicate what measures it has in place in the context of waste recycling.

**Reply:**

**The primary measures which Westmeath County Council has in place in the county in the context of recycling include to following:**

**/.....**

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- **Inclusion of Blue Recycling Bin as part of waste collection system for mixed dry recyclables;**
- **Pilot Brown Bin project in Mullingar for organic waste;**
- **Operation of 2 No. Civic Amenity Sites (Clonmore, Mullingar and Golden Island, Athlone) which accept a wide range of recyclable materials;**
- **Provision of 48 No. Bring Centres for Glass, Cans and Textiles;**
- **Hazardous household waste collection normally held twice per annum;**
- **Participation in Farm Plastic Collection Schemes**
- **Enforcement measures in respect of WEEE, batteries, packaging, etc.**
- **Issuing of Permits and monitoring of facilities for Construction & Demolition Waste, End of Life vehicles, etc;**
- **Promotion of Recycling via work of Environmental Awareness Officer with Green Schools, Community Groups, etc;**
- **Promoting of Home Composting via workshops and information;**
- **Provision of Christmas tree shredding facilities etc.**

**The recycling rate has been increased substantially over the past number of years and is currently 35% for County Westmeath.**

**8.3 Cllr.Dollard:** That Westmeath County Council would put in place measures to prevent illegal car parking on the plaza in front/side of First Active PLC.

**Reply:**

**There are bollards and large planters on Dominick Square to prevent parking. However, it is believed a local businessman may have removed a bollard and relocated the planters without the permission of Westmeath County Council. This will be rectified as soon as possible.**

**8.4 Cllr.Dollard:** That in the context of the 2010 Budget Estimates, that Westmeath County Council would erect suitable signage at the bridge between Ballagh/Cullionbeg, to make motorists aware of its hazardous width.

**Reply:**

**The signage at this location will be checked and if necessary, additional signage will be erected.**

In the absence of Cllr.Penrose, Motions 8.5, 8.6, 8.7 and 8.8 were moved by Cllr.Dollard.

**8.5 Cllr.Penrose:** That Westmeath County Council would consider putting in place a pedestrian crossing on the Lynn Road at O'Brien's Filling Station.

**Reply:**

**A pedestrian crossing is planned as part of the adjacent development at O'Brien's on the Lynn Road (Pl.Ref. 07/5633 refers).**

**8.6 Cllr.Penrose:** That Westmeath County Council would continue the footpath down from Ballysallagh towards Ballynacargy village, as there are a lot of children using this route to travel to and from school.

**Reply:**

**This can be considered in the context of the 2010 Estimates.**

**8.7 Cllr.Penrose:** That Westmeath County Council would resurface the road down as far as Tudenham lake, Road No. L 51361, as there are numerous bad spots on this road which makes it dangerous for the large volumes of traffic using the road.

**Reply:**

**This road can be considered for restoration in the context of the 2010 Estimates.**

**8.8 Cllr.Penrose:** That Westmeath County Council would look at the possibility of erecting additional lighting in the village of Ballynacargy, as there are only two lights on the right hand side from the Chapel to Kilmurray's Corner.

**Reply:**

**It is not unusual for public lighting to be designed in such a way that the majority of lights are on one side of the road, as is the case in Ballynacargy, where there are six lights on the southern side of the road and two lights on the northern side. If the Members wish, the Council can have Airtricity examine the lighting in this Village.**

Motion 8.9 had been taken with Question 12 under Item No.3.

**8.10 Cllr.Glynn:** To call on Westmeath County Council to contact ESB Contracts with a view to have the numerous lights in the area which have been out of service for a considerable amount of time to be immediately repaired.

**Reply:**

**ESB Contracts have now been taken over by Airtricity and Westmeath County Council has entered into a maintenance agreement with Airtricity for the maintenance of public lights throughout the county. Airtricity will be contacted regarding repair of the lights that are currently out of service.**

Cllr.Glynn stated that the service which the Council receives regarding maintenance of public lights is very poor in his opinion. He stated that there are numerous lights out of order right throughout the area, some for months and months. He proposed that a representative of Airtricity be invited to attend a future meeting of Mullingar Area Committee. This proposal was unanimously agreed and it was agreed that a letter would issue to Airtricity.

Cllr.Dollard complained that funding put in the Estimates two years ago for public lighting has still not been spent and the lights have not yet been provided. He stated that this is not good enough.

**8.11 Cllr.Glynn:** To call on Westmeath County Council to offer some form of parking incentive to help business in the town as well as attract shoppers in the run up to the Christmas Season.

**Reply:**

**As happened in 2008, the question of providing some element of free parking around Christmas time will be discussed with Mullingar Chamber of Commerce.**

**8.12 Cllr.Glynn:** To call on Westmeath County Council to carry out improvements such as placing tarmacadam on the surface and planting ivy along the wall on the walkway leading into Greenpark Meadows and bordering Carra Vale.

**Reply:**

**There are no plans, funding or necessity for this work. However, residents may, if they wish, undertake some or all of this work.**

Cllr.Glynn asked if the Council might work with the residents in both these estates to try and have the proposed works carried out.

**8.13 Cllr.Illingworth:** That Westmeath County Council allows free car parking in Mullingar Town on the three weekends leading up to Christmas.

**Reply:**

**As happened in 2008, the question of providing some element of free parking around Christmas time will be discussed with Mullingar Chamber of Commerce.**

**8.14 Cllr.Troy:** To call on Westmeath County Council to carry out some grass cutting on the Lynn Road.

**Reply:**

**This relates to two green areas adjacent to the new roundabout on the Lynn Road. These areas were excavated as part of the Main Drainage works. These areas will be top-soiled and re-seeded when ground conditions are suitable.**

**8.15 Cllr.Troy:** That Westmeath County Council would clear the drain in front of Jack and Rosie Gilchrist's house at Joanstown, Rathowen.

**Reply:**

**The gullies and channel at this location will be checked and cleaned out if necessary.**

**8.16 Cllr.Troy:** That Westmeath County Council would unblock the gully outside No.7, Cathedral View, Mullingar.

**Reply:**

**These works have now been carried out.**

**8.17 Cllr.Troy:** That Westmeath County Council would repair the depression at the side of the road at Eamonn Connell's house, Kilpatrick, Rathconrath.

**Reply:**

**This relates to Local Road No.5901. Some minor verge repairs will be carried out as soon as possible.**

Motions 8.18 – 8.21 taken at the commencement of Item 8.

**8.22 Cllr.Leonard:** That the Council would ask the ESB to put measures in place to eradicate the recent series of erratic power outages in the East Westmeath area, which have caused power surges and massive disruption to residents and businesses throughout the area.

**Reply:**

**The Council will arrange to write to the ESB on this matter, if the Members wish.**

**8.23 Cllr.Leonard:** That the Council seeks to meet with the business communities in east Westmeath to examine how together we might promote investment, jobs and attract enterprise to a high potential area straddled by the M4 and M6.

**Reply:**

**Westmeath County Council is taking a proactive approach in its policy to facilitate enterprise and employment creation in the county and to co-operate with other agencies, including the private sector, in order to provide and support employment opportunities that arise. In this regard, within the County Development Plan 2008-2014, the Council has taken the lead in zoning this land. The Council has also been proactive in zoning land on the Trim Road for micro enterprise and granted permission for industrial lands in Kinnegad last year. It may now be appropriate for landowners to bring forward plans for these areas. However, the Council acknowledges that there are sewerage capacity difficulties in Kinnegad which need to be addressed.**

**8.24 Cllr.Leonard:** That the by-pass area of Kinnegad which borders on Meath and Westmeath would be subject to trimming of hedges which are dangerous to walkers and to sight lines for traffic, as well as complete the remaining footpath area on the Athlone Road and that this work be carried out in conjunction with Meath County Council and with the NRA.

**Reply:**

**Trimming of roadside planting will be carried out on the Westmeath section of this road as soon as possible.**

Cllr.Leonard asked if a letter would be sent to Meath County Council in relation to this matter.

**8.25 Cllr.Leonard:** That the flooding problem on the Killucan Road would be separated from the roundabout issue and that the Council would install a white line and a footpath on the Killucan Road, Kinnegad, as this narrow road houses a large childcare facility, as well as a new soccer club and is the route for the proposed Slí na Sláinte walk, so provision of this footpath is a matter of urgency.

**Reply:**

**The design of a new surface water drainage system at this location is currently being examined.**

Cllr.Leonard stated that the provision of a footpath at this location is very necessary. He indicated that the developer of the soccer pitch is willing to make a contribution towards a footpath.

**8.26 Cllr.Cornally:** That Westmeath County Council would resurface the Grange Village estate and provide more parking spaces.

**Reply:**

**This will be considered in the context of the 2010 Estimates.**

**8.27 Cllr.Cornally:** That Westmeath County Council would repair the loose bricks between Shaws and the Bank of Ireland on Pearse Street.

**Reply:**

**This will be checked and repairs carried out if necessary.**

**8.28 Cllr.Cooney:** That Westmeath County Council examines the practice of HGV's and other commercial vehicles parking overnight and during daytime in residential areas.

**Reply:**

**The Council has no powers in this regard unless the vehicles are parked on a double yellow line or on the footpath.**

**8.29 Cllr.Cooney:** That Westmeath County Council provides signage in Mullingar Town to highlight locations such as the County Buildings, County Hospital, Railway Station etc.

**Reply:**

**There is already some signage in the town for these locations. However, funding would need to be provided for additional signage.**

Any other business:

Members unanimously proposed a Vote of Sympathy to Michael Cox on the untimely death of Noel Cox. Sympathies were expressed by many of the Members to Mr.Cox.

Cllr.Cornally proposed a Vote of Sympathy to Pat Dooley, Council employee, on the recent death of his mother Mary. This was supported by Members.

This concluded the business of the meeting.

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Cathaoirleach

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Date