

COMHAIRLE CHONTAE NA GAILLIMHE

**MINUTES OF LOUGHREA AREA COMMITTEE MEETING
HELD AT LOUGHREA REGIONAL OFFICES ON
THURSDAY, 14TH FEBRUARY 2008**

ILATHAIR

Baill:

Cllr. P. Feeney, Chairman
Cllr. W. Burke
Cllr. B. Willers
Cllr. P. Hynes
Cllr. M. Fahy
Cllr. M. Regan
Cllr. M. Maher

Oifigigh:

Ms. C. McConnell, Senior Planner, Planning Department
Mr. M. Sheil, A/S.E.E., Loughrea Electoral Area
Mr. A. Raftery, E.E., Loughrea Engineering Area
Ms. A. Power, S.S.O., Loughrea Regional Offices

DEPUTATION FROM BLACKWATER/CLOONAHABA RESIDENTS

The Chairman welcomed Mr. S. Killeen, Ms. A. Loughnane and Ms. B. Molloy from Blackwater/Cloonahaha Residents Group and the following matters were discussed:

Canahown Road (linking Limerick Road) - Mr. Killeen stated that the road was in a very bad condition. A combination of heavy traffic and a number of bad turns have made this road very dangerous. He referred to a section of the roadway near the railway bridge where there is a drop of 20ft and stated it was full of water and the fields adjacent to it were flooded. He said that on the other side of the bridge the road was deteriorating as a result of heavy traffic (i.e. 2 lorries meeting) and road was beginning to subside. He requested that signage be put in place and that the water-tables be reinstated.

Ms. Molloy referred to an ongoing problem she has with water coming in from the public road onto to her driveway. She explained that the problem came about after the Council carried out resurfacing works on this road in 2005. She said that having made contact with the Council regarding the problem, the local Area Office carried out some works but within a short time it was back as bad as ever. She said there was no drains along this road and the water had no where to go.

Ms. Loughnane referred to the roadway about 1 mile outside Gort town (out past Lady Gregory Hotel and first roadway on left hand side) which was in very poor condition. She requested that two more public lights be put in place to join up the lighting from the town and the replacement of Junction definition posts at this location.

Referring to flooding of driveway, Cllr. Fahy stated that the O'Connor family who lived across the road from Ms. Molloy had similar problems since the roadway was raised in 2005.

Mr. Sheil stated that the N18 at this location was in poor condition but improvement works were not due to be carried out until after the main was being laid for the Gort R.W.S.S. In reply to a query from the Deputation, Mr. Sheil stated that Lough Cutra was still the preferred location for supply for Gort R.W.S.S. He advised that the gas pipeline would also have to be laid and that permission would be required from the N.R.A. to surface this roadway.

DEPUTATION FROM CRAUGHWELL DEVELOPMENT GROUP

The Chairman welcomed Mr. J. Walsh and Ms. T. Coppinger from Craughwell Development Group to the Meeting. They raised the following issues in relation to Craughwell:

Local Area Plan – the Deputation stated that they were concerned about the recent large number of planning applications that have been made for Craughwell in advance of the Local Area Plan being in place.

Sewerage Scheme – they stated that there was a lot of concern in recent months on the environmental impact; capacity; odour control with site proximity to current site of the proposed sewerage scheme. They also referred to the fact that the current site of the treatment plant has become flooded during the recent bad weather and they were concerned about that.

Water Supply – they said that currently the supply was coming from Dunkellin River and they wanted confirmation from the Council that the proposed new water scheme was being supplied from Loughrea.

Flooding – They referred to the flooding on the N6 in the New Year and stated that both the Crinnage and Ardahan Roads were impassable over the Christmas period. They wanted some feed-back as to what relief solutions were being looked at. They also commented that with the increased development going on in the area, this may have a negative impact on the current relief solution. Ms. Coppinger referred to recent Hydrology Reports that were carried out and stated that the survey could not be carried out as they were unable to get access to it during the winter months and also the budget for the survey had imposed limitations on them.

Amenity – they wanted to ensure that Craughwell was developed in such a way so as to have a good living environment and emphasised the importance of identifying a site for playing fields within the village area.

Heritage Protection – they stated that they were very keen to emphasise the need for protection of heritage of the area.

Referring to the flooding issue, Mr. Sheil stated that a section of R347 under the Railway Bridge has flooded on an annual basis when flood levels in the river are high. He said they were hoping to solve the problem by having works carried out by the Developer. The works referred to include the berming of the river and the provision of a surface water pipe to drain water from the road at the bridge. He said that there was Council Staff out over the Christmas to pump out water across the N6 and that further investigation of flooding at Craughwell Village would have to be carried out at this location.

In relation to the water and sewerage issues raised, Mr. Sheil advised that the Environment & Water Services Unit dealt with those items. He confirmed that the water main for Craughwell Water Scheme had already been laid from Loughrea to Craughwell and that the pumps in Loughrea had to be upsized and this work was being carried out now.

In relation to the Local Area Plan, Ms. McConnell stated that one of the Planners met with the Community Group to advise them on same. She advised that they would re-look at doing the Local Area Plan for Craughwell after the County Development Plan was completed. She said that Craughwell was identified as a substantial settlement centre. She said that their approach to preparing the plan would be the same way as the Barna Plan was done and advised that it was a much more effective way of meeting the amenity proposals as it helps to put some of the responsibility back on the developers to provide land for amenity and recreation facilities.

Cllr. Burke stated that they had raised the issue about the Treatment Plant at the last Council Meeting. With regard to the Local Area Plan, he stated that they had stopped development going on in Portumna until the Town Plan was in place and asked if this was possible for Craughwell. Cllr. Willers said that it was very unsatisfactory to have such an increase in development in the area without a town plan being in place and asked if anything could be done to curtail this trend. Cllr. Hynes requested that Craughwell Community Centre and School be connected to new sewerage plant and water supply. He said that hopefully when submissions were invited under that Local Area Plan, that land would be made available for recreation purposes and that it would be dealt with at that stage. Cllr. Fahy stated a meeting was held a few weeks back regarding Dunkellin drainage and he stated that funding may be made available from the O.P.W. to sort out the flooding problem.

The Deputation then left the meeting.

CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES OF LOUGHREA AREA COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 17th JANUARY 2008

Matters Arising

Leitrim School

Cllr. Willers queried if an estimate had been prepared for the resurfacing of the parking area across from the school as had been requested at the last Meeting. Cllr. Regan queried when the pot-holes were going to be filled. Mr. Sheil advised that they would be totally opposed to doing any works on the road verge in question. He said that they can't be seen to provide a pick-up/drop-off facility which is across a very busy regional route and which would pose a safety hazard. He advised that if they fixed the pot-holes it could be construed that the Council had responsibility for the provision of a pick-up/set-down area. He stated that it was the responsibility of the Department of Education to provide safe access and egress to the School. Cllr. Regan stated that the realignment of this section of the road which took place a few years earlier had made the situation at the school so bad now. Mr. Sheil stated that as far as they were concerned the area in question was a road verge and not a parking area for the school. He said that they could be making the Council liable if they did works on it. He said that it was the Council's responsibility to warn road users of the road hazard ahead and they had done this by providing school flashing lights and signage on the road at this location. He said that rumble strips had been requested but explained that they can't be installed within 100m of a dwelling-house. Cllr. Regan stated that something had to be done about the parking. Mr. Sheil agreed that it was an issue that needed to be addressed. He suggested that the most effective action that could be done in the short-term would be to ban parents from parking and dropping off children and have a full bus service that would bring all children to and from school. He stated that the road could be paved back as far as the wall of the school and a Keep Clear area provided for the bus stop so that the children do not have to cross the road and would pose less of a safety risk to the children. Mr. Raftery advised that large standard school signs have been ordered for this location and these should provide a traffic calming effect. Cllr. Willers stated that she had spoken to the Garda Superintendent and asked him to consider looking at having the area patrolled for people breaking the speed limit at this location. In relation to the C.P.O. process that was discussed at the previous meeting, Cllr. Hynes queried why the Board of Management should have to pay the acquisition costs of the C.P.O. Mr. Sheil advised that it would mean taking the responsibility away from the Department of Education. He said that it was important that the Council define the boundaries of their responsibility.

Next Area Meeting

Cllr. Feeney stated that another Area Meeting was due to be held shortly to discuss the 2008 Roadworks Programme. Some Members said they were unhappy that Senior members of staff were unable to attend the meeting for various reasons. Cllr. Burke requested that there should also be representatives present at the Area Committee Meetings from the various Departments, i.e. Water Services, Environment, Housing

Outdoor Staffing

Cllr. Fahy queried if there was any feed-back in relation to replacing staff that were either retired or on long-term sick leave. Mr. Sheil stated that all Engineering Areas had to operate within budget and staffing levels have to be paid for from the available budget. Cllr. Feeney stated that this issue can be brought up as a question at the next Council Meeting.

Change of Boundaries of Electoral Area

Cllr. Fahy referred to correspondence received from Mr. T. Murphy, S.E.O., in relation to the proposed changes to boundaries. He stated that there was a possibility that Loughrea Electoral Area could be reduced down to five members. He asked was there anything they could do to retain the Electoral Area as is. Cllr. Feeney advised that they can make independent submissions to the County Secretary on same. Cllr. Fahy suggested that a submission made by the Electoral Area as a whole would have more credence.

On the proposal of Cllr. Willers, seconded by Cllr. Maher, the Minutes of the Loughrea Area Committee Meeting held on the 17th January 2008 were confirmed. Cllr. Regan requested that the Minutes be presented again at the next meeting when Senior Management was present. This was agreed by the Meeting.

TO CONSIDER THE DRAFT COUNTY DEVELOPMENT PLAN

A copy of the Draft County Development Plan 2009-2015 had been circulated to each Member. Ms. McConnell explained that the document circulated was a reworking of the original Development Plan for the County of Galway 2003-2009. Ms. McConnell stated that there was now a requirement to carry out a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) as part of the review process and for this purpose, the Planning Authority would be preparing an environmental report on the likely significant effects on the environment of implementing the new plan. She stated that they may have to start the process for the review of the Plan again to incorporate this requirement into the Plan and that they had to look at the implications of that. She said that the alternative of this was to try to condense down the consultation/consideration timeframe and still meet the May 2009 time-frame. She said that she would come back to the Members again on this. The Members then reviewed the document.

Ms. McConnell advised that they would be revisiting the settlement strategy in light of the water basin management projects, the emerging transport corridor and ground water condition survey. In reply to Cllr. Hynes, she advised that there was no plan to review the G.P.T.S. document. In relation to town boundaries/town fringes, Cllr. Willers asked if there was any scope to put in a clause for individual cases that would enable houses to be built on family owned lands in certain circumstances. Ms. McConnell stated that it was nearly impossible to write it into the plan. She said that they had tried to distinguish the

difference between land ownership and localness. She explained that more and more as towns grow, they come under pressure and for example, waste water treatment plant and playing pitches may be required, the idea of the urban fringes is that these facilities can be provided here, not too far from the town.

Cllr. Burke stated that a lot of effort was put into the 2006 Variation of the Plan, and that a lot of the ground work had been covered. He said that he would be very cautious about going into individual type cases and stated that they would want to keep it general. Ms. McConnell stated that they would be having several more Area Committees Meetings over the coming months to discuss different aspects of the review of the Development Plan. She suggested that for the next meeting, the Members pick out specific areas of the plan that they would like discussed at Area Committee level. Cllr. Feeney, referred to Page 16, Section 4, "Settlement Strategy – role of Galway City" and queried what areas did the "Gateway" cover? Ms. McConnell stated that the West Regional Authority have defined the Gateway and it included Barna, Oranmore, Claregalway and stated that it was the generator of a huge amount of social business of this county. Cllr. Burke, referring to Ballinasloe town, stated that the town had grown but needed to grow further and needed to become a centre and he believed that this growth would radiate out to Portumna. Ms. McConnell stated that Mr. Lavelle had plans for road investment for those roads from Ballinasloe over to Portumna.

Cllr. Regan stated that Craughwell, Athenry and Oranmore were areas that were going to grow anyway. He said that it was the towns of Portumna, Loughrea and Gort that needed growth and that apart from residential growth, it had nothing else. He said that business parks needed to be provided in these towns to attract industry there and they had got to be able to diverse people to these areas. Cllr. Willers stated that the development of Gort town was held up because the proper infrastructure, i.e. water and sewerage was not in place. Ms. McConnell stated that she agreed with the comments made and that they needed to make strategic decisions and make the conditions right to encourage investment in these areas. She said that if they can create a clear development plan, with strategic spatial planning, they would have a much stronger case in securing funding for major infrastructural projects. She said that the plan would be setting out the reasons why these towns are key drivers for the surrounding area. She suggested that when the Loughrea Area Plan was being reviewed that the Members would include provision of Business Park zonings and reduce the residential zonings.

Referring to Page 29, Policy 13, Cllr. Feeney stated that Tynagh Mines was included to be examined for development as an Enterprise Centre. He said that there were already serious worries in Tynagh, specifically in relation to the recent proposal for an Incinerator to be located here. Ms. McConnell stated that it was included here because there were two developments in place already. Cllr. Hynes stated that he did not think that it should be included as no remedial works have been carried out to the site. He suggested that until the environmental concerns were addressed, that no planning permissions be permitted at this location. Cllr. Burke stated that the proposal for an Incinerator was a big fear for the people living in the area. He said that he would be totally against the development of any business park in Tynagh and totally opposed to any development out there. Ms. McConnell stated that if the Members feel that Tynagh should be omitted, it should be

addressed now. The Members suggested that an objective be put into the plan for remediation of the Tynagh Mines site. However, Ms. McConnell cautioned that if they included a policy in the Development Plan for remediation of the site, there may be an implication that the Council would have to carry out these works. Cllr. Willers agreed that by including this in the Plan, they had to be careful that the onus of funding the rehabilitation works doesn't fall back on the Council. Ms. McConnell stated that she would liaise with the Law Agent in relation to the proposed wording on this and would come back to the Members at a subsequent meeting with same.

Referring to Rural Enterprise, Cllr. Willers stated that there was a need for ware-housing and small industries. Ms. McConnell stated that it was a question of scale and whether that type of development would be suitable in a small village or in a Business Park. She stated that if there were other things that the Members wanted to include, issues with regard to EPA Waste Water Treatment, etc., the S.E.A. Report might have to include this. She emphasised the importance and the absolute urgency in the East Galway Main Drainage Scheme as it was the key to everything happening in the Strategic Corridor and was the key to the Athenry I.D.A. site getting off the ground. She stated that the Department indicated that that was one of the Council's key strategic priorities in terms of the County's development and it was one of the big issues.

Referring to Page 36, The Eastern Strategic Corridor, Cllr. Feeney proposed that "waste treatment facilities" be removed. Ms. McConnell advised against removing it as she stated that it was waste treatment facilities not waste disposal facilities.

Cllr. Burke proposed that a Relief Ring Road around Portumna be included as another important Strategic Initiative.

Cllr. Regan stated that Lough Derg needed to be developed from a tourist point of view. He referred specifically to the area from Portumna to the Clare border and stated that this area had to be opened up for tourism development. Ms. McConnell stated that they would certainly look at this.

ANY OTHER BUSINESS

Portumna Bridge

Cllr. Feeney stated that the National Parks & Wildlife Section have made a submission on the proposed works on Portumna Bridge which may delay the works.

Westbridge Junction

The Members requested that a joint meeting be held between the Town Council and the Area Committee to discuss various issues regarding Main Street and the West Bridge junction and it was agreed that Mr. Lavelle, S.E. would also be asked to attend.

Chríochnaigh an Cruinniú ansin