

MUNICIPAL DISTRICT OF BALLINASLOE

MINUTES OF MEETING OF MUNICIPAL DISTRICT OF BALLINASLOE HELD AT COUNCIL CHAMBER, ARAS AN CHONTAE, PROSPECT HILL, GALWAY ON WEDNESDAY, 14th OCTOBER, 2020 AT 2.00 p.m.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Cllr. Keaveney

I LATHAIR FREISIN:

Baill: Cllrs. T. Broderick, D. Connolly, M. Connolly, D. Geraghty, Dr. E. Parsons.

Oifigigh: Mr. L. Hanrahan, Director of Services; Mr. E. Mulryan, Acting Senior Executive Engineer; Mr. E. Lydon, Executive Engineer; Mr. P. McLynn, Assistant Engineer; Mr. B. McDonagh, Executive Engineer; Ms. V. Loughnane, Senior Planner; Mr. Brendan Dunne, Executive Planner; Mr. Brian Corcoran, Assistant Planner; Ms. Davina Kelly, Clerical Officer; Ms. A. Monaghan, Staff Officer.

CONFIRMATION OF THE MINUTES OF THE ORDINARY MEETING OF THE MUNICIPAL DISTRICT OF BALLINASLOE HELD ON WEDNESDAY, 9TH SEPTEMBER 2020 MDB20042

The Minutes of the Ordinary Meeting of the Municipal District of Ballinasloe held on Wednesday, 9th September 2020 were approved by the Municipal District Members and signed by the Cathaoirleach on the proposal of Cllr. M. Connolly and seconded by Cllr. Geraghty.

Matters arising from the Minutes

In response to Cllr. D. Connolly and with reference to MDB20038 Page 1, Mr. Hanrahan advised that the Part 8 Planning process for the development at Dunlo Hill will commence when the legal issues have been resolved.

In response to Cllr. D. Connolly and with reference to MDB20039 Page 2, Mr. Hanrahan confirmed that the waiting list figures presented in the October's Management Report include HAP applications.

In response to Cllr. M. Connolly with reference to MDB20042 Page 3, Mr. Mulryan advised that representatives from Tara Mines have confirmed that when the Covid-19 travel restrictions have been lifted they will assess the situation. Cllrs. Geraghty and Keaveney expressed concern about the damage to Route R328 and asked that this issue be addressed also.

In response to Cllr. Geraghty and with reference to MDB20042 Page 3, Mr. Hanrahan advised that he was not aware of any response having been received to the September 2020 Resolution regarding the closure of the Fire Station in Castlereah.

In response to Cllr. Broderick and with reference to MDB20042 Page 3, Mr. Mulryan advised that it was expected that the Town Enhancement Project would be substantially complete by the 23rd October, 2020 at which stage he advised snagging lists would have to be completed and closed out.

In response to Cllr. Broderick and with reference to MDB20042 Page 2, Mr. Hanrahan advised that anomalies in the Restart Grant had been pointed out to the Department of Business, Enterprise and Innovation. In response to Cllr. Broderick, Mr. Hanrahan advised that Galway County Council had not received any Circular to date in relation to the Budget 2021 announcement.

In response to Cllr. Dr. Parsons and with reference to MDB20042 Page 3, Mr. Mulryan confirmed that the Active Travel Projects at Duggan Avenue and Woodslip Lane have been completed and that any additional projects would not impact on business activity in the Town Centre.

COMMENCEMENT OF REVIEW OF EXISTING BALLINASLOE LOCAL AREA PLAN 2015 – 2020 AND NEW BALLINASLOE LOCAL AREA PLAN 2021 - 2027

MDB20043

Mr. Corcoran advised that the current Local Area Plan (LAP) in respect of Ballinasloe will expire in 2021 and that it is anticipated that engagement with relevant consultants / stakeholders will commence early in the new year with a view to being on public display by May, 2021. Mr. Corcoran also advised that the review of both the LAP and the County Plan will run in draft-form simultaneously.

Ms. Loughnane stated that this briefing was an initial notification before preliminary stages commence and that it is envisaged that stakeholder engagement with Consultants will begin in November and that Ballinasloe in its capacity as a key county town under the Regional Spatial & Economic Strategy [RSES] will form a prevalent part of any discussion. Ms. Loughnane stated that the Core Strategy in the County Development Plan will take account of this and she also advised that Covid-19 will not be an impediment to public consultation or any engagement with Elected Members who were advised that any comments / observations / talking points within coming weeks were welcome.

Cllr. Keaveney asked how the incoming LAP can capitalise on the emergence of Athlone Institute of Technology as a Technological University particularly within the context of Ballinasloe's status as a 'key town' under the RSES and Ms. Loughnane in response stated that from a forward planning prospective the changing aspects and dynamics within the hinterland of any key town is noted and considered in the construction of any plan. Ms. Loughnane stated that the synergy and interaction between both towns will be an intrinsic element of the Local Area Plan with liaison from partnering Local Authorities i.e. Roscommon County Council and Westmeath County Council being considered. The LAP

Ms. Loughnane advised will take cognisance of AIT' s evolving status. Cllr. D. Connolly stated that he welcomed the aforementioned comments.

Discussion took place in relation to the matter of dereliction, namely the complex of St. Bridget's and Cllr. D. Connolly stated that dereliction of unused buildings was a significant problem in the town and would need to be considered within the context of the CDP at large in addition to the new draft LAP. These comments were echoed by Cllr. M. Connolly who stated that Ballinasloe as a gateway town to the West was being undermined by scenes of dereliction upon entry to the town from major transport infrastructures like the motorway. Cllr. D. Connolly stated that any plan would have to make substantial provision for abandoned buildings. Cllr. Geraghty stated that dereliction is underscored by inadequate governance with owners of these buildings simply by not being able to afford the necessary upkeep required and he stated that co-operation with all interested parties is essential going forward.

Ms. Loughnane in response stated that Ballinasloe has been identified as a 'key town' within the RSES and that the NPF and the RSES provides the platform for population growth and planning within the County. Ms. Loughnane stated that as the population grows, the allocation of population growth will be allocated to the respective settlements. Ms. Loughnane advised that Brownfield developments will be identified within the new plan and that the complex at St. Bridget's is seen as an integral part of the town. Ms. Loughnane clarified that the LAP should not be construed as a 'funding mechanism' insofar as it can, as a policy document merely suggest objectives for strategic development. Ms. Loughnane advised that nonetheless, a collaborative approach will be adopted and any objectives set forth will enhance any future funding activity.

Cllr. M. Connolly raised the issue of population growth and its decline in recent years and he observed that if infrastructure relating to connection and industry was such that there are many positives to be garnered from the location of the town but any proposed plan he stated needs to acknowledge this and make provision for proper development delivery.

Cllr. Dr. Parsons queried the proposed Greenway and how this would be integrated in with the tourism strategy for the draft LAP and in response Ms. Loughnane reiterated previous points on funding and outlined how alternative models - i.e. Scandinavian towns are being looked at particularly within the context of supporting development during a pandemic and how proper provision of outdoors spaces form a central tenet of that.

Cllr. Geraghty queried as to any potential effect that a draft LAP could have upon the development of 'one off housing' in smaller villages. Cllr. M. Connolly noted the number of incomplete housing developments around the County and how a more robust water treatment system may alleviate the infrastructural issues faced by developers.

Ms. Loughnane advised that the members can engage with the Forward Planning Unit in the coming weeks in respect of any comments / observations about the forthcoming Draft LAP.

MUNICIPAL DISTRICT OF BALLINASLOE DIRECTOR'S BUSINESS

MDB20044

Mr. McDonagh presented a Briefing on the Ballinasloe Flood Relief Scheme. Mr. McDonagh gave a summary of progress to date with regard to hydrology, hydraulics, analysis of public submissions from the public consultation day, constraints study and stakeholder collaborative workshop which took place on the 20th July, 2020. Mr. McDonagh outlined the next steps on the Ballinasloe Flood Relief Scheme with regard to the draft hydrology report, hydraulic modelling, procurement and the constraints study.

The Members thanked Mr. McDonagh for his presentation. In response to Cllr. D. Connolly, Mr. McDonagh advised that OPW Hydrometric Stations for monitoring of water levels would be operational at Deerpark Bridge and Bunowen Bridge within two weeks.

Cllr. D. Connolly asked that a particular focus be put on the Station Road area. In response to Cllr. D. Connolly, Mr. McDonagh outlined the responsibility of the OPW with regard to channel maintenance.

In response to Cllr. Broderick, Mr. McDonagh advised that the OPW are in consultation with Insurance Ireland with regard to the issue of household insurance in flood zones and stated that he would request an update on same from Mr. John Kelly, OPW.

In response to Cllr. Geraghty, Mr. McDonagh advised that the dredging on the River Shannon will have impacts both upstream and downstream and that it will affect flows in the River Suck.

In response to Cllr. M. Connolly with regard to fast tracking the project, Mr. McDonagh advised that the Ballinasloe Flood Relief Scheme is proceeding via a statutory process and that it is expected that a preferred option will be identified by June, 2021. Mr. McDonagh advised that the East Bridge is a protected structure and that no work on same can take place without appropriate approvals.

In response to Cllr. D. Connolly, Mr. Mulryan advised that a quarterly update would be provided on the Ballinasloe Flood Relief Scheme.

In response to Cllr. Keaveney, Mr. McDonagh advised that it is envisaged that construction will commence in Quarter 2, 2023.

In response to Cllr. Geraghty, Mr. McDonagh advised that 83 persons along with 20 school children attended the Public Consultation Day held in the Shearwater Hotel.

In response to Cllr. Geraghty, Mr. McDonagh advised that local input from the Council Engineering Staff and General Services Supervisors along with information from local residents/landowners had provided beneficial information at the open day and this information he advised was feeding into the overall design of the project.

Following a discussion on the proposal of Cllr. D. Connolly and seconded by Cllr. Geraghty it was agreed that the following resolution be sent to Oireachtas Members from the

Roscommon/Galway and the Galway East Constituencies: “I propose that moves in the Houses of the Oireachtas to have a Single Authority for Abhainn an Shionnan (River Shannon) are supported by Ballinasloe Municipal District”.

MUNICIPAL DISTRICT OF BALLINASLOE CATHAOIRLEACH’S BUSINESS

MDB20045

No business arising

VOTES OF SYMPATHY/CONGRATULATION

MDB20046

None

ANY OTHER BUSINESS

MDB20047

Cllr. D. Geraghty raised the issue of Government Policy with regard to the closure of local bus routes and post offices and the impact of same on rural communities.

Cllr. D. Connolly raised concerns about safety issues at the Brackernagh/Harris Road Junction and the Ashfield Drive Junction at Derrymullen.

In response to Cllr. Broderick, Mr. Hanrahan advised that Galway County Council is committed to keeping open the public swimming pool in the Ballinasloe Leisure Centre and he stated that discussions regarding same are ongoing with Coral Leisure. Mr. Hanrahan advised that Mr. Farrell, Acting Director of Service will provide financial details on same to the Plenary Council Meeting.

In response to Cllr. Geraghty, Mr. Hanrahan advised that the Draft Budgetary Plan Meeting for the Municipal District of Ballinasloe is a Statutory Meeting which he advised must take place.

Cllr. Broderick asked if he could be provided with a breakdown of financial supports provided by Galway County Council to BACD and Ballinasloe Life.

It was agreed that the next Monthly Meeting of the Municipal District of Ballinasloe would take place on **Wednesday, 11th November 2020 at 2 p.m.**

CHRIOCHNAIGH AN CRUINNIU ANSIN

Submitted, Approved and Signed


(Cathaoirleach to sign here)

11.11.20

(Date)