

## COMHAIRLE CHONTAE NA GAILLIMHE

### Ceantar Bardasach Bhaile Locha Riach *Municipal District of LOUGHREA*

#### Minutes of Special Meeting of the Municipal District of Loughrea held in Council Chamber, 28<sup>th</sup> February 2022@ 3.30pm.

#### I LATHAIR:

Cathaoirleach

Cllr. G. Donohue

Baill:

Cllr's. P.J. Murphy, D. Kelly J. Byrne, M. Kinane,  
I. Canning, J. McClearn, S. Curley, G Finnerty, M.  
Maher

Oifigigh:

Ms. E. Ruane, Director of Services  
Mr. D Pender, Director of Services  
Mr. D. Mitchell, Senior Engineer;  
Mr. G. Haugh, Senior Executive Engineer;  
Ms. M. Finn, Administrative Officer  
Ms. E. Curran, Administrative Officer  
Mr A. Cunningham, Staff Officer.

**LMD 2208**

#### **To consider and adopt the 2022 Annual Schedule of proposed Works of maintenance and repair to be carried out in the Loughrea Municipal District**

Cllr Donohoe thanked all the roads staff for all their work over the last weeks and months on compiling the road programme for 2021.

Mr. Pender and Mr. Mitchell presented an overview of the Annual Roads Programme 2022 for the Loughrea Municipal District to the members. Mr. Pender acknowledged all the work of the area and administrative staff involved in preparing the document for presentation today and the huge volume of work that was successfully delivered during 2021 and looked forward to another successful and challenging year in 2022.

He informed the members that funding levels in respect of improvement works were nearly on par with funding received in 2012 excluding funding received in respect of maintenance works and Greenways.

Cllr McClearn thanked Mr. Pender and Mr. Mitchell for their presentation and acknowledged the level of work involved in compiling the programme for the members. He pointed out that while funding is approaching what was received in 2012, the cost of materials today has

were 2 schemes for the Loughrea Municipal District. Mr. Mitchell added in response to Cllr Byrne's query regarding the Specific Improvement Grants, that the schemes for this year are mostly a carry-over from the previous years and the indication that was given to the council from the Department was that they were unlikely to have many specific grants until the existing schemes were closed out.

Regarding the discretionary grants allocation, Cllr Byrne asked for clarity on the allocation of €265,000 considering the large number of tertiary roads in the MD, and why aren't tertiary roads considered local roads.

Mr. Mitchell stated there is €900k available for 2022 which is to be taken out of the discretionary grant and if there are specific roads that require review in relation to the PCSI index then they have no issues looking at that.

Cllr Byrne asked for a copy of the most recent the Pavement Condition Survey index carried out.

Cllr Byrne queried the allocation of monies for drainage works in the County and where it was being spent. He stated that one of the biggest singular issues facing the Council is the amount of localised flooding on our roads and the maintenance required to deal with this issue. Mr. Mitchell stated that the Council have consistently tried to use the drainage works grant allocated to carry out measures such as routine maintenance and that monies can also be used for a particular scheme.

Cllr Byrne raised concerns in regard to the RMG Programme and the surface dressing of roads that he felt had no preparation work done on them be it an overlay or hardcore overlay to get a road to a standard that it could be surface dressed. However, he acknowledged that the council is very restricted and that they must allocate roads for the RMG programme. He queried if the Council were going to use the Supplementary Restoration Maintenance Grant to carry out overlay works on our roads.

Mr. Mitchell stated that there was very little that could be done in relation to the surface dressing programme. He stated that last year there was a transfer of €412,000 from the supplementary restoration maintenance and tried to seek the transfer again for 2022 but was refused by the department. He added that if prep works are to be carried out then they have to be carried out under the RIG programme not under the surface dressing programme.

Cllr Byrne queried if there was to be a Rural Speed Limit review in 2022, the last review he believed to be carried out in 2018. Mr. Pender stated in response that a commitment has been given to commence a review in 2022.

Cllr Byrne noted the allocation for Signage and felt there is a particular problem on our country roads in which signage is quite illegible and that there needs to be a major audit carried out on all signage on our roads. Mr Mitchell in response said he understood the comments and hoped to look at this issue this year.

Cllr Byrne reflected that there was serious ambiguity on active travel measures-in the Municipal District relating to Kinvara, Ballindereen, Kilcolgan and Clarinbridge. No monies have been allocated to those 4 villages as they are on National Routes. He pointed that there was a major deficiency in safe pedestrian crossing in those towns and villages.

Cllr Maher welcomed the funding regarding Climate Change Adaptation to deal with localised flooding issues such as works scheduled at Earlspeak. Mr. Haugh confirmed that the funding for Earlspeak is specifically the Grange area not the connection between Long Point and the Earlspeak junction.

Regarding the Local Improvement Schemes Cllr Maher hoped that this would come on stream soon as soon as possible as there are a number of local schemes that each councillor would like to see progressed within the MD.

He also referred to the Playground and outdoor swimming facilities in Loughrea that have been used extensively and thanked the area staff for keeping the toilet facilities open there as this makes a huge difference.

Cllr Kinane thanked all the staff for their work done on the programme and wished to compliment the Gort area office for their work and support over the last number of years.

She welcomed the addition of the L81071 at Ballynacourty village on to the programme and the allocation of €115,000 for works. She asked that this road be prioritised for works due to the current condition of the roads surface. In response Mr. Haugh said he would look to see what can be done to prioritise this.

Cllr Kinane asked about the Safe to Schools programme, and the €400,000 allocated to Galway County Council and the breakdown for it, referring to an issue at Killeenen school which was in needs of footpaths.

Mr. Mitchell stated there was confusion about the Safe to Schools programme. He said that there is a Safe to Schools programme that started under the Active Travel programme introduced under the July 2020 stimulus to include works such as pedestrian crossings, connectivity to schools etc. In 2021 a dedicated Safe to Schools programme team was then created in the NTA. This was on foot of a request for expression of interest sent out to every principal of every school in the County in March last year. This was a completely independent process from Galway County Council who were not involved in the selection process. A number of schools were selected, 5 of which were in the municipal district.

He hoped that there would be funding available this year but there has been no indication of that yet. As this programme came forward for 2021, the programme that was within the Active Travel was for very minor interventions such as additional signage. Mr. Mitchell clarified that most of the Safe Roads to Schools programme will take place under the team at the NTA.

Regarding footpath connectivity within a town, the decision would be made from that design team.

In connection with the Council's Active Travel office, Cllr Kinane added she had a number of queries and asked when will the relevant staff member for this scheme be appointed. Mr. Pender confirmed that Ms. Paula Higgins had taken over as Senior Executive Engineer in relation to the delivery of the Active Travel Programme and could liaise with her in regard to queries.

Cllr Curley thanked all involved for producing the roads programme. He acknowledged the work done by the local area office and the improvement in the standard of hedge cutting in Galway as well as the local Loughrea area office for securing funding for footpaths under the Active Travel grant. However, he expressed serious concern at the lack of an area engineer in the Loughrea Area Office and felt the need for the extra staff member was pressing requirement for the Loughrea area.

Mr. Pender in response stated that a new area engineer for the Loughrea area office will be in place on the 4<sup>th</sup> of April with John Coyle transferring from the Tuam Municipal district. He added until that appointment is made, he did not have an additional resource that he could put into that position.

In response to Cllr Curley, Mr. Haugh informed that the reason the road works from 2021 were delayed was because the Kilreekill Group Water Scheme was not able to progress. He stated they have been given an understanding that this matter will now progress and hopefully by July or August the Council will be in a position to complete those roads.

Cllr Curley stated that he had brought a list of roads in Loughrea to the area office as part of his list of priorities for this year and asked for assurances that they would be done this year. Mr. Haugh stated that if there was money available at the end of year then they would look to do so at that time.

Mr. Curley asked for clarification on a start date for the Earlsparck works. He also referred to the tertiary road works at Ballybroder and if locals could be met before the commencement of works due to localised flooding issues there.

Cllr PJ Murphy acknowledged all the work that was done with the programme. He agreed with Cllr Finnerty and shared concerns that the wrong part of the road was being done at Circular Road in Gort and asked could an RIG job be done on this road for 2023. He also asked regarding the status of the LIS applications for 2022 and if there was going to be a request for new applications for same.

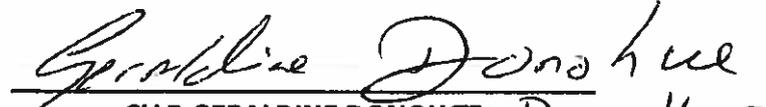
Cllr Donohoe thanked the area staff for all their work compiling the report. She raised the issue of works done on roads such as at Kilchreest which was resurfaced and that had deteriorated due to flooding and debris accumulated from storms in drains and that the lack of a regular maintenance crew to maintain roads can undo the initial good work done to the road.

Mr. Haugh stated that there are crews out actively trying to maintain the drainage networks, but the reality is that there are up to 2,000km of road to be done so it was question of having resources available to do so.

Cllr Donohoe agreed with Cllr Finnerty in respect of the damage done by Coillte to our roads and that it should be explored with the Department as to how to actively deal with the issue.

The next meeting of the Loughrea MD is to take place on 14<sup>th</sup> March at 2pm.

CHRIOGHNAIGH AN CHRUINNIU ANSIN

  
CLLR GERALDINE DONOHOE *Donohoe*  
CATHAOIRLEACH, LOUGHREA MD