

Minutes of Special Meeting of Mid Ulster District Council held on Thursday 30 June 2016 in the Council Offices, Circular Road, Dungannon

Members Present: Councillor Wilson (Chair)

Councillors Ashton, Bateson, Bell, Burton, Clarke, Cuthbertson, Doris, Elattar, Gillespie, Glasgow, Kearney, McAleer, McEldowney, McGinley, B McGuigan, McLean, McNamee, McPeake, Mullen, T Quinn, M Quinn, Robinson, G Shiels, Totten and Wilson

Officers in Attendance: Mr A Tohill, Chief Executive
Mr Cassells, Director of Environment and Property
Mr McCreesh, Director of Business and Communities
Mr Moffett Head of Democratic Services
Mrs Forde, Member Support Officer

In Attendance: **Agenda Item 3 TransportNI**

Mr Loughry Divisional Roads Manager (Western Division)
Mr Cuddy, Section Engineer
Mr Lunny, Section Engineer

The meeting commenced at 8.20 pm

SC20/16 Apologies

Councillors Buchanan, Cuddy, Forde, Gildernew, Mallaghan, McFlynn, S McGuigan, McKinney, Molloy, Monteith, Mulligan, C O'Neill, J O'Neill, Reid and J Shiels.

SC21/16 Declarations of Interest

The Chair, Councillor Wilson reminded Members of their responsibility with regard to declarations of interest.

SC22/16 Transport NI

The Chair, Councillor Wilson welcomed the delegation from Transport NI.

Mr Loughrey introduced the Section Engineers Messrs Cuddy and Lunny to the meeting and tabled a request/enquiry form to allow Members to raise local issues which would be collected at the conclusion of the meeting and advised that TransportNI would respond in due course.

Councillor Gillespie drew attention to the forms completed by Members at the 2015 special meeting and stated that no action had been taken on issues raised.

The Chair, Councillor Wilson reminded Members that the meeting was for strategic issues only and invited Mr Loughrey to present the report entitled Western Division report to Mid Ulster District Council Spring 2016.

Mr Loughrey advised that the intention of the report was to

- Provide an update on the work being undertaken on the Strategic Road Schemes across Mid Ulster;
- Highlight works completed across the district in 2015-2016; and
- Set out initial proposals for schemes 2016-2017.

Mr Loughrey drew attention to the report and advised that ongoing works at the Magherafelt by-pass were progressing on target and that the Transport NI had received additional funding for routine maintenance which would enable the repair of potholes, additional grass cutting and that there had been additional budget for capital maintenance which would enable a 'Rural Roads Initiative' as staff were very aware of the condition of some rural roads. It was also noted that other budgets had been cut for example on safety measure schemes so priorities would have to be set.

In response to Councillor Gillespie's comment regarding the non-action of previous Request/Enquiry Forms completed by Members Mr Loughrey apologised for any in-action and gave an assurance that those completed now would be acted upon.

With regard to Transport NI staff Mr Loughrey advised that Mr Black, the previous Section Engineer, had retired and drew attention to the Senior Management Team and staff outlined in the report.

Drawing attention to the Annual report Mr Loughrey highlighted the undernoted:

- Page 8 – Magherafelt Bypass contract for works progressing on target;
- Page 9 and 10 – A5 Western Transport Corridor scheme progressing with Public enquiry scheduled for the Autumn;
- Page 11 – A6 Randalstown to Castledawson is now at detailed design stage with the intention to commence works in the Autumn scheduled to be complete in 2020;
- Page 12 – A29 Cookstown By-Pass – publication of the draft orders and commencement of the statutory consultation process is dependent on the outcome of future budgetary settlements.
- Page 15-19 Structural maintenance detail of completed works
- Page 20-24 Surface dressing schemes across Mid Ulster total cost of which was £2.1m;
- Page 25 – Drainage Work 2015-2016;
- Page 33 – Structural Maintenance Planned Works 2016-2017 with total budget of £2,5m;
- Page 43 – Local Transport and Safety Measures – Sightline improvement at Lough Fea/Dunamore Lane, Cookstown;
- Page 44-45 – Tobermore Road Shared Cycleway and Gateway signage on Annaginnny Road, Newmills;

- Page 58 – Structures – List of completed works 2015-2016;
- Page 63-66 – Street lighting works both planned and completed;
- Page 70 – Planning Consultations.

The Chair, Councillor Wilson thanked Mr Loughrey for the update and stated in relation to changes to Transport NI staff that it would be useful if contact details were forwarded to Members. The Chair invited Members questions.

Councillor G Shiels expressed concern regarding speed limit and lack of footpath at the junction of Crew Road/Station Road, Maghera. The Councillor stated that a private developer may own the land but emphasised that the community could not be held to ransom waiting on works being completed which may take years and people were forced to walk on the road for 40-50 yards where there was no footpath.

Councillor McPeake thanked Transport NI for the report but made reference to lack of communication and stated that District Electoral Area meetings were required to allow the raising of local issues and to receive feedback on same. The Councillor also stated that he was meeting a Transport NI Engineer on site on Friday to progress an issue. Councillor McPeake also advised that Council had debated the possibility of 20mph speed limits in residential housing estates and emphasised that many areas would like traffic calming measures and that when Members go 'door-to-door' it is always a major issue. Referring to signage Councillor McPeake stated that due to malfunction of some flashing signage it was not being used and apparently due to cost of repairs may not be fixed.

Councillor Cuthbertson sought clarity on the Park and Ride at Stangmore which appeared to have dropped off the planned works list; Killyman and Lackey Primary Schools traffic calming not being on the list for works yet he had been advised it would be; and Far Circular Road/Moy Road junction the Councillor advised that the previous Minister had made site visit and that there was to be an investigation to

In response to questions posed Mr Loughrey advised that there is limited budget across all functions and that there was a lot of competition with regard to school traffic calming schemes and thus Transport NI had to prioritise. With regard to Stangmore Park and Ride Mr Loughrey advised that it had not dropped off the list but was not works which were programmed for the current year. In relation to the Council's suggestion for 20mph zones in housing areas Mr Loughrey stated that this would require a change in policy and whilst many people had posed the same question discussion was needed. In relation to school signage Mr Loughrey stated that it should be working.

Councillor Cuthbertson left the meeting at 8.42pm

Councillor McNamee made reference to the proposed Cookstown Bypass and stated that he had attended a meeting with the Minister, local MP Mr Molloy, Ms Dillion MLA and Ms O'Neill MLA for the area at which the Minister had stated he was committed to investing in the West and hopefully good news on the scheme would be received in the near future.

Councillor Kearney referred to the Bann Bridge in Portglenone which straddled two divisions and stating that it was the gateway to Mid Ulster asked if the problem of the growth which had built up on the limestone construction could be addressed.

Councillor McLean stated that the junction of Bellshill and Gracefield Road Scheme did not appear on planned works but he had received correspondence to state it would be included. The Councillor emphasised that there had been a considerable number accidents on the aforementioned stretch of Road. Councillor McLean also stated that Mid Ulster Council was now one and that there should be equity of treatment across district electoral areas. The Councillor welcomed the bypass for Magherafelt but stated that Transport NI needed to be proactive in dealing with the inevitable build-up of traffic in Moneymore and suggested a bypass for same. With regard to street lighting Councillor McLean stated that he could appreciate budget restraints but that it seemed to take considerable time to repair street lighting and consideration should be given especially when users of the area were elderly or vulnerable.

Councillor Clarke stated that utility providers laying pipework or lines never put the road back to its original standard highlighting in particular Dunamore Road and the A29 where there were now hollows in the road and mentioned an area where new water pipes had been laid large stones had been left in the grass which would cause future problems when grass cutting. The Councillor also referred to directional signage not being replaced and stated that he looked forward to District Electoral Area meetings at which all issues could be raised.

Councillor Burton left the meeting at 8.52pm

In response to aforementioned issues Mr Loughrey stated he too would welcome movement regarding the Cookstown bypass. In relation to potential problems at Moneymore following the completion of Magherafelt bypass Mr Loughrey stated that link roads along the main corridors had been discussed but again it was down to priorities. With regard to the bridge maintenance in Portglenone Mr Loughrey advised that the Northern Division had responsibility for maintenance but that he would pass on request raised.

In response to issues raised regarding Bellshill Mr Loughrey stated that he was aware of the proposed scheme but it was not affordable at this time. In relation to priority of work Mr Loughrey was emphatic that all areas received equity of treatment and stressed that decisions were made on greatest need. In relation to street lighting Mr Loughrey stated that he was of the understanding repairs were on schedule but if there was specific areas they should be forwarded to him.

Councillor M Quinn left the meeting at 8.55pm

With regard to repairs on roads Mr Loughrey stated the utilities having to lay pipes and wiring was an ongoing frustration and that there was rules and follow up inspections but that he would undertake to investigate the sites mentioned. In relation to directional road signage Mr Loughrey stated that it was frustrating if signs were missing.

Councillor McNamee and Director of Business and Communities left the meeting at 8.55pm

Councillor Bell expressed concern about roads on the 'Lough Shore' in particular the 'b' roads which have not had investment such as B160, B181 and B18. The Councillor also stressed that there were in excess of 10k vehicles daily turning onto 'b' class roads along the 'Lough Shore' and emphasised that there had been no investment and that the roads were subsiding.

Mr Loughrey highlighted in the report the works which had been completed on 'b' class roads such as B168 at Ballyronan and stressed the restrictions on budget and the need to prioritise works. Councillor Bell stated that as a keen cyclist many 'b' class roads in the Bann Valley and Rasharkin were as good as some 'A' class roads in Mid Ulster and referred to the history of lack of investment on the Lough Shore Roads.

Councillor Glasgow referred to the £4m additional budget going to Transport NI Western Division and asked how much would be channelled into Mid Ulster, Cookstown in particular. Councillor Glasgow also mentioned rural roads such as Ballinderry Bridge Road, Main Street, Coagh, bridge at Ballinderry on Lisnahall Road and associated weight restrictions and stated that he was aware inspections had been reduced but asked when issues on roads would be picked up.

Councillor Bell left the meeting at 9.00pm

Councillor McEldowney left the meeting at 9.01pm

In response Mr Loughrey referred to page 61 of the report which outlined options. In relation to the £4m he stated that it was estimated at £10k per scheme and again stressed works would have to be prioritised.

Councillor Doris left the meeting at 9.02pm

Councillor Bateson raised issue regarding junction at Crew Road/Station Road Maghera and sought clarity as to where the scheme is at. In response Mr Loughrey advised again it would take significant funding and was down to priorities.

Councillor G Shiels made reference to the Magherafelt bypass and stated as Money more would be a fraction of the cost could budget not be identified and also since people's driving habits don't necessarily change suggested that the park and ride facilities in relation to the Magherafelt by pass be shared out and not all based at Castledawson roundabout.

Mr Loughrey stated that good points had been raised in relation to a bypass at Money more but emphasised that Cookstown bypass was further along the development stage than Money more. He also made reference to the Ministers commitment for schemes along the A29 corridor but stated that any large scheme is completed in 'manageable chunks' but emphasised that the Minister had committed to reviewing it. In relation to Park and Ride schemes Mr Loughrey stated that he was aware of demand at Castledawson and stated that they needed to be at the junctions of main routes. He referred to the success of the scheme at Stangmore and stated that Translink had been requested to prioritise Park and Ride schemes.

The Chair, Councillor Wilson thanked the representatives of Transport NI for attending and encouraged Members to complete the Request /Enquiry forms. He also made reference to the report with regard to street lighting and stated there was no progress or indication when lighting would be repaired.

SC23/16 Duration of Meeting

The meeting was called for 8.30pm and ended at 9.10pm.

Chair _____

Date: _____