

Minutes of Council Meeting held in the Mtek Building, Knockaconny, Monaghan on Tuesday 17th April, 2007 at 10.00 a.m.

Chair: Cllr P McNally, Mayor

Present: Cllr Bannigan, Carville, Carthy, Conlon, Coyle, Crowe, Gallagher, Keenan, Kieran, Martin, Maxwell, McAnespie, McElvaney, O'Brien, P. McKenna, B. McKenna and Treanor.

Apologies Cllr Humphreys and Keelan

11. To consider draft annual Report for 2006

At the request of Cllr McElvaney it was agreed to defer consideration of this item until the May meeting.

12. Traffic Calming Sites/Bollards

Mr. David Fallon, Director of Services circulated a report on the current status of illuminated Bollards on traffic calming islands on National Roads, Non-National Roads and Urban Roads in County Monaghan. This report was based on a survey of traffic calming islands carried out by the area engineers and it was found that a number of bollards on these islands are unlit. However under current traffic calming guidelines, islands within a reduced speed limit do not require illuminated bollards, reflective bollards will suffice. In some cases the illuminated bollards are new and the Council is waiting for the ESB to connect power. In other cases the bollards have a power supply but this has become damaged and both Colas Construction and the ESB must carry out the necessary repairs.

The Members thanked Mr. Fallon for a comprehensive report.

A lengthy debate ensued to which a number of members contributed. The following proposals were made –

Cllr McElvaney proposed, Cllr Carville seconded that responsibility for the maintenance and cleaning of all traffic bollards be removed from Colas Construction and undertaken by Monaghan County Council and that the NRA would recoup the Council for this expenditure. This was agreed.

Cllr McElvaney proposed, Cllr Crowe seconded that the traffic island at the junction for Lidl in Castleblayney be removed immediately.

The County Manager said this traffic Island at Lidl was a condition on Lidl's planning application.

Cllr McElvaney said the Members should await a report on this matter before making a decision on the matter.

Cllr Maxwell proposed, Cllr McElvaney seconded that the line be removed from the approach to the roundabout on the Castleblayney road as it was confusing to motorists. Mr Fallon agreed to examine this matter.

The Mayor stated that despite the problems raised by the Members there was no excuse for careless driving and motorists should exercise caution at all times. He said that a proportion of the accidents that had occurred at traffic islands in the county were due to negligent driving.

The Members agreed to place the Traffic Calming/Bollards item on the agenda on a bi-monthly basis until the matter of unlit bollards was resolved.

13. Diospoireacht as Gaeilge

A number of Members contributed to the debate. It was agreed that a greater effort should be made to promote the use of Irish by the Council officials and members. The following points were made.

- It is important that the Members use the Irish language regularly at Council meetings.
- As part of the Official Languages Act 2003, all publication should be bi-lingual and road signs have to be bi-lingual, however an emphasis must be made to have the writing in both languages and designs of equal size.
- Monaghan County Council currently sponsors twenty-four half grants for attendance by students to the Gaeltacht, this is an excellent opportunity for young people to learn Irish.
- Under the Irish Languages Act, 2003 the Council must put a scheme in place for a three-year period, outlining their objectives and goals for the promotion and use of Irish by the local authority.

The County Manager said the Council was currently in the process of employing a part time Irish Officer and one of the first jobs of an Irish Office was to prepare a draft scheme under the Official Languages Act.

The Members proposed that when this new employee is appointed they attend a meeting of Monaghan County Council to outline their role and objectives.

7. Interreg IV Programme

Mr. Aidge King, Director of Services gave an over view of the Interreg IV Programme and outlined its implications for County Monaghan. The overview included:

- a. The Structural Funds and the Territorial Co-operation Priority**
- b. The Characteristics of Interreg IV – Priority 2, Co-operation for Sustainability**
- c. The Key issues and challenges**
- d. The Time Table for INTERREG IV**
- e. Recommendations for Action**

He stated the Interreg IV Programme would apply to the Border Region of Ireland, Northern Ireland (apart from Belfast area) and parts of Western Scotland. The delivery of the programme would be very different from previous programmes with the SEUPB itself taking a direct role in administering the programme and awarding of funding. The role of local authorities and cross border partnership (e.g. ICBAN and EBR) has shifted from *Intermediary Funding Body* to grant recipients. Accordingly significant consideration would be required to be given the most appropriate delivery structures going forward. The issue of corporate governance for instance will require due consideration. A new Strategic collaborative approach needed to be developed to promote innovative ways of addressing specific cross-border problems and delivery of public services within border areas.

The Members raised the following concerns

- The reduction in the role of the community sector is a major concern
- There is a need to include local groups
- There are concerns over the clarity and role of the cross border groups because Cross border groups have done excellent work in the past
- The promotion of tourism on a cross border basis should be encouraged
- Interreg Funding should not be used to fund the opening of the Ulster Canal
- The funding should not be used to substitute the Department of Finances allocation

Mr. King, Director of Services responded by saying that the SEUPB in their draft operational guidelines were proposing a new approach to the delivery of this programme. Cross border bodies and the Council they represent would need to review existing structures and delivery mechanisms in line with the new obligations, requirements and opportunities.

On the proposal of Cllr Crowe, seconded by Cllr Keenan, it was agreed that Monaghan County Council would not contemplate any lesser role for the cross border agencies in the allocation of Interreg funding.

Mr. King said there would be a lesser role for the cross border bodies as they were not allocating funding, the SEUPB (Special EU Programme Body) would be the distribution body from now on.

The County Manager said the previous funding had been based on a project basis, however this new funding is based on “themes” on a cross border basis – this requires a number of local authorities north and south getting together to agree a programme of work.

On the proposal of Cllr McElvaney, seconded by Cllr Treanor it was agreed to adopt in principle the establishment of a sub-committee whose membership would comprise of members of the various cross border committees. Their function would be to work together with Community & Enterprise on what applications could be put forward for funding to the SEUPB.

It was agreed that the nominations to the sub-committee would be an item on the May agenda.

Cllr B McKenna has proposed placing an advertisement in the local newspapers asking local communities and interested parties for their input to any application/project put forward for funding from the SEUPB from Monaghan County Council. However after the agreement to adopt in principle a committee of Members to work with Adge King, Cllr B McKenna said he would leave the decision to place an advertisement up to the newly established committee.

14. To fix dates for the following meetings

It was agreed that the following meetings be arranged

- (a) **Twinning Committee** – Friday 27th April 2007 at 4.00 p.m. in the Conference Room, the Glen, Monaghan.
- (b) **New Offices Working Group** – Tuesday 1st May at 2.30 p.m., to be held in the Conference Room, The Glen, Monaghan.

15. Approval of Newspapers for planning notices:

On the approval of Cllr Carthy, seconded by Cllr Maxwell it was agreed to remove the Evening Herald from the National Newspapers approved list for all four electoral areas.

On the proposal of Cllr Carville, seconded by Cllr Maxwell it was agreed to include the Monaghan Post and the Monaghan Echo into the list of approved newspapers for each of the four electoral areas.

On the proposal of Cllr Martin, seconded by Cllr Carthy, it was agreed to remove the Dundalk Argus from the approved newspaper list for the Carrickmacross and Castleblayney electoral area and the Angelo Celt from the Carrickmacross Electoral Area.

Matters Arising

In response to queries from the Members Mr. Paul Clifford, Director of Services replied as follows:

- The new County Development Plan had come into effect on the 17th April, 2007 i.e. twenty-eight days after its adoption
- The Minister for Environment had not issued any instructions yet in relation to the Development Plan however; the Minister can issue directions to change the plan at any time during its lifetime. He may also direct the County Manager to make a change or have the Members reconsider part of the plan.
- Election posters can be erected once the President dissolves the Dail, however they must be removed seven days after an election or face fines.

The meeting then concluded.