

Minutes of Meeting of Monaghan County Council held in the M-Tek Building, Knockaconny, Monaghan on Monday 5th January, 2009 at 10.00 a.m.

Chair: Cllr M. Carthy, Mayor

Present: Cllrs Bannigan, Carville, Conlon, Coyle, Crowe, Gallagher, Humphreys, Keelan, Kieran, McAnespie, McElvaney, Martin, B. McKenna, P. McKenna, O'Brien and Treanor.

Mr. D. Nelson, Co. Manager, Mr. P Clifford, Mr. D. Fallon and Mr. A. King, Directors of Service, Mr J. Murray, Head of Finance, Mr. A. Hughes, Senior Planner, Mr. J McGrath, Senior Engineer, Ms. H. Hughes, Assistant Planner, Ms. C. Thornton, Meetings Administrator, and Ms. L Brannigan, A/Staff Officer.

Apologies: Cllr Keenan and Maxwell

1. Minutes:

On the proposal of Cllr Carville, seconded by Cllr Coyle it was agreed that the minutes of the Council meeting held on 1st December, 2008 be confirmed.

2. Correspondence:

The following correspondence was circulated to the Members:

- Letter from the Department of Health & Children in relation to Monaghan General Hospital
- Letter from the Office of the Taoiseach in response to letter re education cuts.
- Letter from the Office of the Taoiseach in relation to request for a meeting to re Monaghan Hospital.
- Letter from the National Roads Authority in relation to the Per Cent for Arts Scheme
- Letter from the Office of the Minister for Education & Science in relation to request for a meeting to discuss the Budget
- Letter from the Office of the Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Food in relation to the Farm Waste Management Scheme
- Letter from Mr Brian Crowley, M.E.P., in relation to the FWMS together with copy letters to Mr Crowley from Mariann Fischer Boel, Member of the European Commission and Brendan Smyth, TD
- Letter from the NRA in relation to the N2 Castleblayney Bypass
- Preliminary notification to Monaghan County Council and the elected members in relation to the Menin Gate Ceremony Presentation – Ieper, Belgium
- Resolution from South Tipperary County Council in relation to implementing the school vaccination programme for all twelve year old girls
- Resolution from Tralee Town Council in relation to cutbacks in the Budget.
- Letter from Dr James Reilly, TD, in relation to our invitation to attend the County Council Meeting on Monday 19th January

- Letter from the Office of the Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Food in relation to the Farm Waste Management Scheme deadline
- Letter from the Office of the Minister for Education & Science in relation to the recent budget measures for Education
- Letter from the NRA in relation to the N2 Castleblayney Bypass increased allocation for local roads
- Letter from Marian Harkin, MEP, in relation to extension of the deadline for the FWMS, together with copy of letter to Ms Harkin from Mariann Fischer Boel, Member of the European Commission

Farm Waste Management Scheme:

On the proposal of Cllr Treanor, seconded by Cllr B. McKenna it was agreed that this Council write again to the Minister for Agriculture requesting that the deadline for the Farm Waste Management Scheme be extended to end of February 2009 to allow farmers to complete their works and that the Department would be flexible regarding minor errors made in documentation being submitted in support of grant claims.

Per Cent for Arts Scheme:

The Members considered the letter from the NRA advising that the money provided for the art works on the Castleblayney and Monaghan bypasses could not be used for any other element of these projects.

On the proposal of Cllr Crowe, seconded by Cllr B. McKenna, the Council approve the recommendation of the Corporate Policy Group and proceed with the commissioning of the art works on the Castleblayney and Monaghan bypasses, as this money has been ring fenced under the Per Cent for Arts Scheme.

Cllr McElvaney stated that he was not in favour of this project.

The County Manager indicated that he acknowledged the sentiments expressed by the members. He stated that he would undertake to ascertain the time period involved between the commissioning of the artworks and the erecting of same on the sites.

Cllr McNally requested that it be made known to the general public that the commissioning of a piece of art for the Carrickmacross bypass under the Per Cent for Arts Scheme was agreed during a better economic climate.

Castleblayney Bypass:

On the proposal of Cllr Carville, seconded by Cllr Crowe, it was agreed to write again to the National Roads Authority requesting a meeting to discuss the situation in relation to funding for the repair of roads damaged by heavy construction traffic working on the Castleblayney bypass

On the proposal of Cllr O'Brien, seconded by Cllr Carville it was agreed that the mid Monaghan members meet with the Steering Committee for the Castleblayney bypass to discuss the matter of outstanding works on the bypass.

Monaghan General Hospital:

On the proposal of Cllr McElvaney, seconded by Cllr P. McKenna, it was agreed that the Council write to Dr. Rory O'Hanlon, T.D. and Margaret Conlon, T.D., asking what progress has been made with organising a meeting with An Taoiseach regarding the decision to remove acute medical services from Monaghan General Hospital.

Resolutions from other local authorities:

On the proposal of Cllr McElvaney, seconded by Cllr Carville, it was agreed to adopt the resolution from South Tipperary County Council regarding the vaccine programme.

On the proposal of Cllr McElvaney, seconded by Cllr Treanor, it was agreed to adopt the two resolutions from Tralee Town Council regarding the cutbacks in the Budget affecting medical card holders and the education sector.

Menin Gate Ceremony Presentation – Ieper, Belgium:

Cllr Martin proposed that the Mayor represent the Council at the ceremony in Ieper.

Mayor Carthy stated that, at the recent Budget Meeting, a decision was taken not to participate in international travel in 2009.

On the proposal of Cllr Martin, seconded by Cllr Carthy it was agreed that the Council write to the Department of Foreign Affairs and the Israeli Embassy outlining the Council's opposition to the attacks in Gaza.

3. Part VIII Local Government (Planning & Development) Regulations 2001:

Ref No: 08/8007 - proposal to locate one demountable dwelling with associated site works, septic tank and raised bed percolation area at Tossy, Loughmourne, P.O., Castleblayney, Co. Monaghan.

On the proposal of Cllr Bannigan, seconded by Cllr O'Brien it was agreed to approve the proposed development as per the report from the Director of Services, Mr. D. Fallon dated 15th December 2008.

4. Proposed variation to the Monaghan County Development Plan 2007 – 2013(Variation No. 8) to incorporate a policy in relation to overhead power lines:

Mr. Adrian Hughes, Senior Planner, gave a brief overview of the proposed variation to the members. He referred to the Manager's report dated 15th December 2008 which had been circulated to the Members. He also referred to the submissions and observations received, the response to the submissions. He stated that the recommendation of the

County Manager was that the members do not proceed with the proposed variation as to do so would be contrary to the policies and objectives of the Government.

Cllr Bannigan stated that, while none of the members are against the proposed variation, they do not agree to the over-grounding of the cables. Technology for the undergrounding option is most widely developed in the world. Cllr Bannigan stated that he was surprised at the failure of the Minister for Environment and the Minister for Communications, Energy and Natural Resources to make a submission regarding this project.

A number of members contributed to the debate and there was a general consensus that whilst they did not want to be seen as impeding development in the county they were adamant that the cables must be under-grounded in order to protect the drumlin landscape, the environment and the natural and built heritage.

The County Manager advised that the proposal to vary the County Development Plan is a highly legislative process with very definite procedures. A lot of work and discussion has gone into the preparation of this report which is based on facts and the submissions received. The planning code is a quasi judicial process and can only deal with what is before it. He must take account of Government policy and he cannot be selective in the way he deals with Government Departments. He rejected criticism of himself and the officials as totally unjustified and unfair. There was absolutely no personal interpretation in the report. He complimented all concerned with the report. He stated that the adoption of the County Development Plan and any variations to it is a reserved function. However, the Minister may decide to issue an Order to remove the variation or otherwise.

Cllr Bannigan proposed, Cllr Carthy seconded that the Council proceed to vary the Monaghan County Development Plan 2007-2013 to incorporate a policy in relation to overhead power lines, as follows:

“ No high density overhead power lines in excess of 220kV be located within 100 metres of any dwelling house, school, sports field, playground or place of work ”

Reasons provided by the Members for the proposed variation are as follows:

- *To protect the drumlin landscape of County Monaghan*
- *To ensure that the provision of overhead high density power lines and the necessary infrastructure (pylons) do not negatively impact on peoples homes, places of work and/or places of leisure.*

A recorded vote on Cllr Bannigan’s motion resulted as follows:

For: Cllrs Bannigan, Carville, Conlon, Coyle, Crowe, Gallagher, Humphreys, Keelan, Kieran, McAnespie, McElvaney, Martin, B. McKenna, P. McKenna, O’Brien and Treanor
Total 18

Against: Nil

The Mayor declared the motion carried.

5. Proposed variations to the Monaghan County Development Plan 2007 – 2013

This item was deferred to the adjourned January Meeting which was scheduled for 19th January 2009.

6. Annual Financial Statement for 2007 and Auditors Report on the Accounts of Monaghan County Council

Mr. John Murray, Head of Finance gave an overview of the Annual Financial Statement for 2007 and the Auditors Report on the Accounts of Monaghan County Council for the year 2007, both of which had been circulated to the Members. He then responded to a number of queries from the Members.

On the proposal of Cllr Conlon, seconded by Cllr Humphreys it was agreed that the Head of Finance provide a report to the members detailing what money is owed to Monaghan County Council and the Town Councils by the Department for longer than twelve months.

It was agreed that a report on the capital budget for the next three years would be submitted to the Council.

7. Launch of Social Inclusion Unit and Booklet – Presentation by Mr Francis McCarron

It was agreed that this item be deferred to either the adjourned meeting or the February Council meeting.

Urgent Business – Lisbon Treaty:

The Mayor stated that he had received a notice in the names of Cllrs B. McKenna, Conlon, McAnespie, Keelan, Crowe, Treanor & Carthy, as follows:

“That Monaghan County Council deplors the government’s declared intention to force the electorate to vote again on the Lisbon Treaty despite the fact that it has been overwhelmingly rejected by the people. That we call on the government to respect the sovereign decision of the electorate and to instead negotiate a better deal for Ireland and for Europe”

Cllr McNally stated that this item is not urgent and should not be taken under Urgent Business.

Following a vote by show of hands, which resulted in 6 for, 11 against, the Mayor ruled that this motion could not be dealt with under urgent business as it required the consent of one half of the total number of the Council (i.e. 10 members voting in favour).

8. To consider resolution from the Clones Road Area Committee

On the proposal of Cllr McElvaney, seconded by Cllr Kieran it was agreed that the resolution from Clones Road Area Committee, as follows, be adopted.

“That Monaghan County Council form a delegation to meet with the E.S.B. representatives to discuss outstanding issues in County Monaghan”

9. To receive minutes of meetings:

The Members noted the minutes of the following meetings:

- (i) Minutes of the meeting with School Principals re: education cuts.
- (ii) Minutes of the meeting with Minister Willie O’Dea, T.D., re: the closure of Monaghan Military Barracks.

On the proposal of Cllr Conlon, seconded by Cllr P. McKenna, it was agreed that the Council write to the Minister for Defence seeking a one year postponement of the disposal of Monaghan Military Barracks in view of the deflation of the property market and the likelihood that the property would be sitting empty for a long time and would incur considerable maintenance costs.

- (iii) Minutes of the meeting with Minister Mary Coughlan, T.D., re: economic issues in Co. Monaghan.
- (iv) Minutes of An Coiste Gaeilge held on 10th November 2008.

10. To fix dates for the following meetings/functions:

(i) Corporate Policy Group Meeting

It was agreed that a meeting of the Corporate Policy Group would be held on Wednesday 14th January at 12.00 noon in the Glen Road Offices, Monaghan.

(ii) Civic Reception for Emyvale Ladies Football Team

It was agreed that the Civic Reception for Emyvale Ladies Football Team be held on Friday 30th January at 7.30 pm in the Four Seasons Hotel, Monaghan.

11. To approve nominations from Community Forum to the Development Contributions Allocation Sub-Committee:

On the proposal of Cllr B. McKenna, seconded by Cllr P. McKenna, it was agreed to approve the nomination from Monaghan Community Forum of Ms Fiona Hoey, Radrumskean, Killanny, Co. Monaghan and Ms Ursula McKenna, Dochas for Women, Teach na nDaoine, Mullaghmatt, Monaghan, as representatives to the Monaghan County Council Development Contributions Allocation Sub Committee.

12. Eirgrid – Proposed 440kv Interconnector:

On the proposal of Cllr Bannigan, seconded by Cllr Carville it was agreed that this Council calls on Minister Ryan and the Government to instruct Eirgrid to suspend any further work on the North/South Interconnector with immediate effect. This is to allow a detailed report on the future of high density power lines be prepared, taking into account the modern technology that exists.

Ethics & Political Declarations:

Ms. C. Thornton, Meetings Administrator informed the Members that they had been issued with the annual declaration forms under the Ethics & Political Donations Regulations. She requested that Members complete the forms and return them before the prescribed dates i.e. 28th February 2009 (Ethics declarations) and 31st January 2009 (Political Donations declarations).

13. Reports from Conferences:

The Members noted the reports from Cllrs Bannigan, Gallagher, Humphreys, Keelan, Kieran, McElvaney, P. McKenna and O'Brien in respect of their attendance at the following conferences:

Annual Conference of the Society for the Study of Nineteenth Century Ireland, Limerick

Annual Conference – ‘Sustainable Development on the Edge of Europe – Options, Opportunities & Opinions’ - Tuam, Co. Galway

Parnell Summer School 2008 - Educating Ireland, Parnell Summer School, Rathdrum, Wicklow

The 21st John Hewitt International Summer School, Marketplace Theatre & Arts Centre, Armagh

Humbert Summer School 2008, Ballina, Killala, Lacken & Kilcummin, Co. Mayo

9th Annual Regional Assembly Conference, Marriott Druids Glen Hotel, Newtownmountkennedy, Co Wicklow

Local Economic & Social Development Conference, Marriott Hotel, Henry Street, Limerick

5th National Conference on Local Government Financing, Mount Wolseley Hilton Hotel, Tullow, Co. Carlow

Green Infrastructure – Connecting nature, People & Places, Grand Hotel, Malahide, Co. Dublin

Local Authority Financing - A crisis brewing, the challenge for Councillors - Killarney Plaza Hotel, Kenmare Place, Co. Kerry

2008 La Touche Legacy Seminar (20th Year) - Charlesland Golf & Country Club Hotel, Greystones, Co. Wicklow

7th North South Intercultural Forum, Tower Hotel, Derry

National Advisory Council Conference, Lyrath Estate Hotel, Dublin Road, Kilkenny

Regional Seminar on the Green Paper – Stronger Local Democracy – Options for Change, The Clarion Hotel, Sligo Town

EPA National Water Conference, Galway Bay Hotel, Salthill, Galway

Citizen First International Conference, The Old Ground Hotel, Ennis, Co. Clare

11th Annual Conference, Inchydoney Island Lodge, Clonakilty, Co. Cork

CPO Seminar – Implications for L.A. - Tullamore Court Hotel, Tullamore, Co. Offaly
LAMA, Annual Winter Seminar, TF Royal Hotel, Westport Rd., Castlebar, Co. Mayo
Irish Language for Councillors, Connemara Coast Hotel, Furbo, Co. Galway

16. Presentation by Fergus Towey, Donegal County Council

Mr. Fergus Towey, Executive Engineer, Donegal County Council gave a detailed presentation to the members regarding the establishment of rail network to the north west region. He stated that the establishment of rail links in the north west was consistent, with the National Development Plan and conformed with the National Spatial Strategy's desire to link hubs and gateways and drive development in the region. Mr. Towey stated that it is planned to conduct further studies into constructing rail links in the region. Their ultimate target is to get funding for a business study in 2009 which could evolve into a feasibility study with a view to putting a proposal on the table for a candidate project. As regards the exact route of the railway and the possibility of it being extended to include County Monaghan he would rule nothing in or out at this stage. His plan is to get the experts on board to look at the population centres and see how they could be best served by a rail development.

Mr. Towey then responded to queries from the Members in relation to the project.

The County Manager welcomed the presentation. He is of the opinion that the Council should look at the opportunity to develop the project. He suggested that the five or six relevant local authorities on the Northern Ireland side of the border should be invited to come on board and that the Border Regional Authority might be the agency through which the project could be advanced. He also expressed the view that the contribution each Council made to the study should be proportionate to their population.

The Mayor thanked Mr Towey for his presentation and complimented the excellent work undertaken by Donegal County Council. He referred to the decision at the budget meeting to agree, in principle, the provision of €30,000 for the regional railway study and that that this proposal would be discussed in more detail at the next meeting.

17. Questions

Cllr Gallagher asked:

- (a) Has Monaghan County Council any plans for the centralized collection of electrical items as organized previously in Monaghan town earlier in 2008 – to serve the need of the people of North Monaghan?

Reply: *Collection of Waste Electronic and Electrical Equipment (WEEE) at special open days is organised by the European Recycling Platform (ERP), in association with Monaghan County Council. The next open days in the county will take place on Friday 15th January 2009 in Monaghan Town and Saturday 16th January 2009 in Castleblayney. It is envisaged that 2 open days will take place every quarter in 2009. Locations will be in the vicinity of the 5 main towns, on a rotational basis. Open days will be advertised through the local media and www.monaghan.ie*

Cllr Gallagher asked:

- (b) What has been the level of interest in the “Home-Choice Loan” initiative in relation to Co. Monaghan? Can this Council facilitate those people that do not fit the criteria for this scheme?

Reply: *Home Choice Loan is a new loan initiative administered by Galway County Council for this region. Single applicants with income above €40,000 and joint applicants with income above €50,000 can apply for affordable housing. Galway County Council report that it has received 9 expressions of interest to date from Co. Monaghan. Monaghan County Council continues to provide a range of housing loan facilities for low income households.*

- (c) By what date is it expected to have the proposed route, (i.e. entrance at Clones Road), completed for the N2 – N54 Link Road, Monaghan Town?

Reply: *Our Consultants are presently preparing a feasibility report on the most suitable type of junction at this location. It is hoped to have a proposal ready for presentation to a council meeting for approval early in 2009.*

- (d) Would this Council facilitate the erection of public lighting at the entrance to Tyholland Community Centre as a contribution to road safety as a matter of urgency?

Reply: *Monaghan County Council has made an application to the National Roads Authority under the Road Safety Remedial Measures Scheme for funding to carry out safety measures at this location.*

The North Monaghan Area Office will prepare a proposal in relation to public lighting for consideration and prioritisation at the next Road Area Committee Meeting.

- (e) What is the up to date position with the proposed safety works for the junction at Clontibret chapel where the county road comes on to the N2 national primary route?

Reply: *A proposal was brought to the North Monaghan Roads Area Meeting in October. It was agreed that a Public Information meeting be held in Clontibret to discuss the proposal and it is intended to organise this meeting for early in 2009.*

Cllr O’Brien asked:

- (f) Will Monaghan County Council investigate the possibility of leasing/purchasing land in Ballybay town for a much needed car park?

Reply: *The County Council has appointed a consultant to revise the parking controls in Ballybay Town. As part of the brief, the consultant was asked to investigate off-street car parking options. A substantial amount of work has already been done and a few other options have been proposed recently that will need further investigations. A draft report will be available in the New Year, but as members would appreciate any proposals would probably require either land purchases or long term leasing and these options would need to be investigated fully, particularly in the current economic climate.*

Cllr O'Brien asked:

- (g) (i) Can Monaghan County Council put an extra lane in place at Glennyhorn, Clontibret at the approach to the under pass? At present the junction is very dangerous as two vehicles are unable to pass.

Reply: *We are presently investigating a possible solution to the problem of the narrow approach to the underpass from the Clontibret Link road.*

- (ii) Also, can Monaghan County Council extend the noise barrier at Glennyhorn for 50-60 metres as there are a number of residences affected with high levels of noise?

Reply: *Monaghan County Council has no plans to extend the existing noise barrier at this location as a noise survey carried out after the scheme was opened shows that additional noise barrier is not required.*

- (h) (i) What response, if any, has the NRA given to Monaghan County Council in relation to our calls for the re-alignment of the very dangerous junction at Broomfield on the N2?

Reply: *An application has been made to the NRA for funding to provide right turning lanes at Minister's Cross and Broomfield Junction on the N2. It is hoped that this funding will be provided in 2009.*

- (ii) When is it envisaged the signage will be put in place for the village of Doohamlet at the new Castleblayney by-pass and also when will the signage be erected for Cremartin on the Ballybay/Castleblayney road?

Reply: *There are no plans at present to provide additional signage for either Doohamlet or Cremartin at the new Bypass. However, signage directing traffic from the Ballybay/Castleblayney Road to Cremartin will be ordered and erected in the New Year.*

- (i) Will the Council consider introducing a bin waiver charge for low income families to encourage them to dispose of their rubbish in a responsible manner?

Reply: *As the Council does not collect waste and therefore does not collect any charges from the public the question of a waiver scheme for low income families does not apply.*

Cllr Conlon asked:

- (j) Under the headings listed below, the *Action Plan for Social and Affordable Housing 2007-2009* for County Monaghan proposes to provide 891 social and affordable units. To the end of 2008 please outline number of units attained under these headings:

Reply:

a) Direct provision (units built) by Council

<i>Bawn</i>	<i>8</i>
<i>Newbliss</i>	<i>8</i>
<i>Demountable units</i>	<i>2</i>
<i>Purchases</i>	<i>4</i>
<i>Purchases Conabury</i>	<i>3</i>

b) Acquisition under Part V by Council

<i>Annyalla</i>	<i>8</i>
<i>Rockcorry</i>	<i>4</i>
<i>Conabury</i>	<i>5</i>

c) Direct provision by Voluntary sector

<i>Toneyglasson</i>	<i>1 unit</i>
<i>Cuan Mhuire</i>	<i>9 units</i>

d) Acquisition under Part V by Voluntary sector

Oaklee Mullaghmonaghan 31 units

e) Provision under Rental Accommodation Scheme

29 units

f) Affordable units provided by Council

Monaghan 10 units under construction

Carrickmacross 3 units under construction

Cllr Conlon asked:

- (k) The recent County Council Budget documents detail the number of housing applicants throughout the towns and county. Monaghan Town is listed as having 261 applicants and the County Council (rural areas) listed as having 161 applicants. However, in the recently published Assessment of Housing Needs published by the Department these figures are considerably lower with Monaghan Town at 234 and County Council at 132 applicants and similar discrepancies for all the towns. Why the variation, and please give explanation as what is meant by 'Net Need' as listed in the Departments figures.

Reply: *The figures provided by the Council are those returned to the DOEHLG after the assessment was carried out. The preliminary results for the 2008 Local Authority Social Housing Needs Assessment gives the DOEHLG analysis of those figures and extracts those in net need. These are the households who require social housing as distinct from those households on the waiting list whose need can be met from other options like the rental accommodation scheme.*

Cllr Conlon asked:

- (l) With the increasing reliance of apartment units being included into the Councils housing stock, what are the technical specifications/guidelines for both concrete build and timber frame construction in regard to limiting noise transmission and maximising sound attenuation between units? Are these considered satisfactory/adequate by the Housing Section?

Reply: *Technical Guidance Document E of the Building Regulations contains the guidelines for concrete build and timber frame construction in regard to limiting noise transmission between dwellings.*

Cllr Conlon asked:

- (m) Within the compulsory Building Energy Rating (BER) measurement scale from A-G, where do the most recently acquired Council housing units rate for energy efficiency?

Reply: *The recently completed Local Authority houses in Newbliss have Building Energy Ratings between B3 and B2.*

- (n) Are there plans to conduct a Building Energy Rating assessment on Council housing stock with a view to initiating a remedial scheme that will improve energy efficiency of same? Is funding available through Sustainable Energy Ireland for such an assessment/remediation initiative.

Reply: *The legal requirement is that 'any property offered for sale or letting either by a private owner/landlord or Local Authority on or after 1st January 2009 will require a Building Energy Rating (BER) Certificate in accordance with the EC Energy Performance of Buildings Regulation 2006. (SI No. 666 of 2006)'. Monaghan Local Authorities is prepared to comply with the regulations from 1 January 2009. No funding is available to carry out BER assessments.*

Cllr Carville asked:

- (o) In view of the current economic climate and the pressures faced by many families in paying mortgages, can Monaghan County Council confirm what reduction in interest rates have been passed on to borrowers from the Council under the Affordable Housing Scheme or Tenant Purchase Scheme since January 2007?

Reply: *The following rates applied to variable rate housing loans issued by the Council over the past two years.*

<i>From</i>	<i>Rate</i>
<i>1 Jan 2007</i>	<i>4.50%</i>
<i>1 Apr 2007</i>	<i>4.75%</i>
<i>1 July 2007</i>	<i>5.00%</i>
<i>1 Sep 2008</i>	<i>5.25%</i>
<i>1 Dec 2008</i>	<i>4.75%</i>
<i>1 Jan 2009</i>	<i>4.25%</i>

- (p) How much has Monaghan County Council spent in total on engaging Consultants to carry out tasks and studies for the Council in each of the years 2002-2007?

Reply:

<i>2002</i>	<i>€665,963.03</i>
<i>2003</i>	<i>€1,375,504.81</i>
<i>2004</i>	<i>€610,693.30</i>
<i>2005</i>	<i>€217,814.09</i>
<i>2006</i>	<i>€385,869.71</i>
<i>2007</i>	<i>€604,008.87</i>

Excludes engineering consultants engaged on Housing, Roads and Water Services projects

Cllr Carville asked:

- (q) Has Monaghan County Council made any contact with or had any contact from Louth County Council in relation to the management of the Waterworks plant at Toome, Castleblayney and the resultant flooding of roads in the Annadrummond-Toome area and what measures does Monaghan County Council intend to take to deal with the matter in terms of road improvements and when?

Reply: *At the September 2008 meeting of Monaghan County Council the Council agreed to appoint a delegation to meet with Louth County Council. With regard to the flooding of the roads it was further agreed that this would be discussed at the Next Roads and Environment Strategic Policy Committee Meeting which is scheduled for the 13th January next.*

- (r) Has the National Roads Authority responded to the ongoing concerns of members of the Council and of Castleblayney Town Council and of the public in general concerning the safety aspects of the Castleblayney By-Pass, in particular the need for slipways at the Ballybay Road and Shercock Road junctions and for public lighting at all junctions?

Reply: *The NRA are still considering the feasibility report and cost estimate, prepared by our consultants, for the provision of exit slip lanes and public lights at junctions on the Castleblayney Bypass.*

- (s) In relation to the Castleblayney By-Pass:

- a. How much has the contractor been paid to date and how does this compare to the overall tender price?
- b. Does the Contractor still expect to be off site in April 2009?
- c. How many landowners have settled with the Council to date?
- d. How many landowners cases are still outstanding and what is the status of these?
- e. How does the entire costs to date for the By Pass compare to Budget?

Reply: *To date the contractor has been paid a net total of €57.6m as compared to the conciliators recommended overall total of €59.8m. The latest programme submitted by the contractor indicates that all works will be completed by April 2009. To date 107 landowner cases have been settled. There are seven cases outstanding of which three are under negotiation, two have been listed for IFA Assessment and two have not submitted a claim. The entire cost for the scheme is still within the budget.*

Cllr Crowe asked:

- (t) In the interest of safety for children and all residents in housing estates such as Ard na Lorgan etc in Castleblayney. Will Monaghan County Council erect 3 ton limit signs to restrict articulated lorries from entering such estates and thus ensuring the safety of all?

Reply: *The situation will be monitored to assess the extent of HGV's entering the estate over and above service vehicles i.e. bin lorries, oil delivers. If it becomes apparent that there is an issue then it will be dealt with in consultation with the Garda Siochana.*

Cllr Crowe asked:

- (u) Will Monaghan County Council ensure that all estates in their control in the Castleblayney area are gritted and would it be feasible to have reserve bins of salt pellets placed in hilltop estates such as Ard na Lorgan?

Reply: *Monaghan County Council as part of the salting programme grit the housing estates in the Castleblayney Area. As requested the Council will also provide a salt bin at Ard Na Lorgan.*

- (v) Will Monaghan County Council please give an update on the proposed small walls and fencing for Ard na Lorgan in Castleblayney? Will those who have affordable houses be able to avail of this scheme also?

Reply: *There was no proposal to provide any "small walls" in Ard na Lorgan. There was a proposal to obtain an estimate of the costs of providing small steel bow-top railings and gates to subdivide and enclose the front gardens of the dwellings. The cost of providing railings and gate to the local authority-owned houses was deemed excessive in light of the housing maintenance budget.*

- (w) In relation to the transferred responsibility for the Special Housing Aid for the Elderly Scheme from the HSE to Monaghan Co. Council:

(i) What is the situation in relation to the 140 applications for works totalling in excess of 400,000 euro which remains outstanding. Will the HSE honour these applications?

(ii) What role will Monaghan Co. Council have in the administration of these applications?

(iii) CAMCAS, the Social Economy Company, carried out such works for the Housing Aid for the Elderly. What will be their role for the new roll out of this scheme?

Reply: *An additional allocation of €1.7m was granted by the Department of the Environment Heritage and Local Government to the Health Services Authority on 29 November 2008 to assist in the completion of works under the Special Housing Aid for the Elderly Scheme. Monaghan County Council awaits direction from the Department in relation to these applications. New applications are handled by the Council under the Housing Aid for Older People Scheme. Camcas Ltd. has no statutory role under the scheme, but may be contracted by applicants to carry out works.*

Cllr Carthy asked:

- (x) Will the Council consider erecting an additional public light at Magheross, Carrickmacross, onto an existing ESB pole opposite Fir Tree Cottage, in order to improve public safety in the area?

Reply: *The Area Engineer's Office will prepare a proposal for consideration and prioritisation at the next Road Area Committee Meeting.*

Cllr Carthy asked:

- (y) How many planning applications were received by Monaghan County Council in 2008? Of these how many (numbers and percentage) were:
- Granted
 - Refused
 - Further information sought
 - Appealed to An Bord Pleanala

Of applications appealed to An Bord Pleanala, in how many instances was the decision of Monaghan County Council overturned?

Reply:

<i>No. of Planning Applications decided at 30/11/08:</i>	<i>1361</i>
<i>No. of Planning Applications granted:</i>	<i>1148</i>
<i>% Of Planning Applications granted</i>	<i>84%</i>
<i>No. of Planning Applications refused</i>	<i>213</i>
<i>% of Planning Applications refused</i>	<i>16%</i>
<i>No. of further information sought</i>	<i>783</i>
<i>% of further information sought</i>	<i>58%</i>
<i>No. of Planning Applications appealed</i>	<i>32</i>
<i>No. of decisions overturned</i>	<i>12</i>

The refusal rate from September to the end of November stands at 9%.

- (z) What road works does the Council intend to carry out on the Carrickmacross/Drumcondrath Road in 2009? When is it expected that these works will commence?

Reply: *A 1.5km section of this road at Rock Chapel is included in the pavement restoration improvement programme for 2009 that has been submitted to the Department of Transport for funding.*

- (z1) As of 31st December 2008, how many applicants are seeking housing from Monaghan Local Authorities? What were the corresponding figures for the year-ends of 2007, 2006, 2005, 2004?

- What plans, per electoral area, does the Council have to house these applicants?

Reply: *The Housing Assessment of Needs is carried out every three years. The DoEHLG published the results of the 2008 assessment in December, which is as follows:*

<i>Authority</i>	<i>Net Need 2005</i>	<i>Net Need 2008</i>
<i>Monaghan County Council</i>	<i>151</i>	<i>132</i>
<i>Carrickmacross Town Council</i>	<i>191</i>	<i>151</i>
<i>Castleblayney Town Council</i>	<i>114</i>	<i>104</i>
<i>Clones Town Council</i>	<i>51</i>	<i>69</i>
<i>Monaghan Town Council</i>	<i>196</i>	<i>234</i>

Details of the funding allocation for the 2009 housing construction programme is expected to issue in early 2009.

Cllr Treanor asked:

- (z2) When will Monaghan County Council produce a plan to address the dangerous bends on the Killeevan/Analore/Cladown section of the R183?

Reply: *Monaghan County Council is advancing a study on the R183 route between Clones and Castleblayney to assess the feasibility of improving sections of the route and where appropriate prioritise sections for applications for funding in the future.*

- (z3) (i) When will public lighting be erected at Analore Bridge?

Reply: *The County Council currently has no plans to erect public lighting at Analore Bridge in the near future. It is currently on a list of schemes waiting funding.*

(ii) Can the lights be solar powered?

Reply: *It is unlikely that the lights would be solar powered due to the wattage of light required and the duration of their lighting up time. However, the council will contact the ESB to determine if solar powered lights are feasible for this location.*

Cllr Keelan asked:

- (z4) Will the Manager outline the procedure in relation to the tender process for large and small Council led developments? Is there any provision within the process to take into account local employment and other benefits to the local community?

Reply: *All Council led projects must be procured in accordance with:*

- *Monaghan Local Authorities Procurement Procedures, September 2008; and*
- *Public Procurement Guidelines, July 2004 (National Public Procurement Policy Unit)*

In most cases the restricted procedure is used to procure Design Teams or Contractors. This is a two stage process where only those parties who meet minimum requirements in regard to professional or technical capability, experience, expertise and financial capacity to carry out a project are invited to tender.

This procedure consists of:

- *Placing adverts in local/national press and on the Governments etenders website seeking expressions of interest from suitable parties. A briefing document and prequalification is normally provided to applicants upon request,*
- *In event that the project value exceeds the relevant EU threshold, a contract notice is placed in the OJEU,*
- *Submissions are opened in the presence of nominated elected members and reviewed by an Assessment board. The information submitted maybe used to shortlist applicants to the number been invited to tender (as stated in the projects documentation/advert),*
- *Detailed tender pack is then issued to short listed applicants. This tender pack utilises the new Department of Finance form of contract,*
- *Submissions are opened in presence of nominated elected members and assessed using the criteria set out in the projects tenders pack.*

- *Recommendation made by Assessment board to County Manager regarding appointment.*

It is not possible to include in the assessment criteria local employment and other benefits to the local community as this would be in breach of EU procurement directives.

Cllr Keelan asked:

- (z5) In relation to the Carrickmacross bypass (Kavanagh Way), which was opened in January 2005, are there any outstanding claims for compensation by residents or landowners? In relation to the contract itself, are there any outstanding works to be completed, such as planting or extra public lighting?

Reply: *There are presently five outstanding claims for compensation to landowners. Two of these landowners have yet to submit a claim for compensation.*

- (z6) In relation to Inniskeen Village, what plans have Monaghan County Council to put in place a second pedestrian crossing adjacent to the traffic island in the centre of the village to serve the school in particular and also others using the facilities in the general area?

Reply: *Monaghan County Council has applied for funding to the Department of Transport under the Low Cost Safety Improvement Scheme Grant for funding for these works.*

- (z7) In the interest of road safety have Monaghan County Council, in conjunction with the National Roads Authority, made any progress in relation to putting in place right turning lanes at some of the most dangerous junctions on the N2 Carrickmacross – Castleblayney road, such as the very dangerous junctions at Aghvilla and Tullyvaragh as examples, and in relation to the Broomfield area itself, have the council any plans to put in place traffic calming measures to facilitate people using the school, filling station and other businesses in that general area?

Reply: *An application has been made to the NRA for funding to carry out safety measures at the Aghavilla junction and also to provide right turning lanes at Minister's Cross and Broomfield Junction on the N2. It is hoped that this funding will be provided in 2009.*

- (z8) Have Monaghan County Council made any progress in relation to the establishment of an Energy Agency for the county? Have we a dedicated Energy Officer in the County? Have we a strategy going forward in relation to the very important issue of climate change?

Reply: *The Council has no plans to establish an Energy Agency, however the Council's Environment Department monitors energy use, recycling and sustainability within the local authority.*

Cllr Humphreys asked:

- (z9) When do Monaghan County Council expect to commence work to provide much needed additional car parking spaces at Scoil Mhuire, Rockcorry?

Reply: *The County Council is proposing to alter the existing footpath adjacent to Scoil Mhuire, Rockcorry in January 2009 to provide additional car parking spaces for the school.*

- (z10) What plans have Monaghan County Council to improve safety at the junction on the R183 leading to Gael Scoil Eois, Killeevan?

Reply: *The County Council currently has no plans to alter or realign the junction onto the R183 leading to Gael Scoil Eois, Analore. School warning lights were erected on the R183 in 2007 to alert motorists to the presence of the school and the junction ahead. A review of the junction will be carried out in early 2009 to determine if any additional low cost works can be carried out to highlight the junction further.*

18. Notices of Motion:

(a) Cllr Martin proposed, Cllr Treanor seconded and it was resolved,

“That Monaghan County Council recognises the positive way that allotments contribute to the social, environmental and recreation life of the county and does all that is feasible to make provision for allotments for the jurisdiction of the County Council of Monaghan where appropriate and applicable as outlined in Section 8 & 39, Acquisition of Land (Allotments) Acts, 1926 & 1934 and the Local Government Act 2001 - Section 67 Schedule 13”

In proposing the motion Cllr Martin suggested that the Council compile a list of possible areas where land might be available for allotments and that this would be circulated to Farmers Market groups and to the Council Members.

(b) Cllr Martin proposed, Cllr Keelan seconded,

“That Monaghan County Council, in conjunction with the other local authorities in the county and other interested bodies/groups draw up and implement a 4 year strategy, reviewed every 12 months, to ensure that our forward thinking and dynamic County impacts positively on climate change. This first 4 year strategy will run until the Kyoto deadline of 31st December 2012”.

In proposing the motion Cllr Martin called on the County Manager to look at the introduction of energy saving measures in Council buildings, such as the use of solar panels, the utilisation of rainwater collection and distribution systems, insulation etc. He also suggested the use of electric cars. He enquired as to the Council policy on the use of anaerobic digesters for the disposal of waste.

Cllr Keelan seconded the motion and enquired if the Council had dedicated Energy Officers who were looking continually at issues of efficiency. A number of members spoke to the motion.

In responding to the issues raised the County Manager stated that the Council had made provision in the Council's 2009 Budget for the appointment of an Energy Officer on a 50-50 basis with Cavan but this had subsequently been deleted from the budget. The Council

were undertaking a number of energy saving measures throughout the various departments.

Mr. P. Clifford, Director of Services advised that there was a committee within the Council staff which were looking at energy use within its buildings and he would bring a report to a future meeting.

Cllr Conlon referred to the cost factor involved in implementing energy saving initiatives as well as carrying out an assessment of the Council's housing stock in accordance with the Building Energy Rating. He asked that the report would include a breakdown of the financial cost of what the Council wanted to do in this area.

Cllr Martin's motion was put to the meeting and agreed.

(c) Cllr Coyle proposed, Cllr Crowe seconded

"That Monaghan County Council meets with Cavan County Council, Ballybay Town Council and Cootehill Town Council to discuss the development of the Dromore Water System."

In moving the motion Cllr Coyle stated that the Dromore system which extended from Doohamlet to Tullyvin outside Cootehill, is one of the most important water systems in the county. It has the potential to be a major tourism attraction but it needs to be developed. He proposed a coordinated approach to such a development between the four local authorities mentioned with Monaghan County Council being the lead agency. Cllr Crowe seconded the motion and stated that he believed there is unlimited tourism potential for both Monaghan and Cavan if this area were to be developed. A number of members spoke to the motion.

The County Manager stated that he would write to the other local authorities inviting them to nominate three members and that the Tourism Officer would facilitate the meetings.

Cllr Coyle's motion was put to the meeting and agreed.

(d) Cllr Carthy proposed, Cllr Crowe seconded

"In the interest of the safety of road users and considering the effectiveness of warning bollards at junctions on our national roads, Monaghan County Council hereby agrees to erect green & white bollards at junctions along regional routes and local roads where deemed necessary by Roads Area Committees."

In moving the motion Cllr Carthy referred to the needs for the green and white bollards at junctions along regional and local roads. He referred to a number of junctions on the following roads where these would be appropriate – Carrickmacross-Kingscourt Road; Carrickmacross – Culloville road; Carrickmacross – Ballybay road and Carrickmacross – Drumconrath road. Cllr Crowe seconded the motion and concurred with the comments of Cllr Carthy.

Mr. J. McGrath, Senior Engineer roads indicated that the NRA had funded these bollards where the road wasn't signed. New signs have been erected at all road junctions with the townland or road number on them. The erection of additional bollards would be a major funding issue given the dense road network in the county.

Cllr Carthy stated that it would be up to the Roads Area Committees to deem where these bollards are necessary and to take cognisance of the cost.

Cllr Carthy's motion was put to the meeting and agreed.

(e) Cllr McNally proposed, Cllr Keelan seconded.

“That this Council, in conjunction with Louth County Council, immediately examine the possibility of giving Killanny Village status as it has a Church, Community Centre, Football Grounds and Shop and is a very important area in South Monaghan”.

Cllr McNally stated that Killanny village is an attractive place to live, has its own facilities and access to the road network. However it finds itself in the unusual situation that the facilities outlined in his motion are located in Co. Louth which complicated the matter in terms of Co. Monaghan declaring the location a village. He had spoken to the Council's Senior Planner who had confirmed that this could be pursued by the residents. Cllr Keelan seconded the motion and stated that Louth County Council is currently reviewing its County Development Plan and perhaps a submission could be made during that process.

Mr. D. Fallon stated that the Council would see this as a positive development. Mr. Hughes had spoken to the Senior Planner in Louth and they were receptive to the idea which would be to the benefit of the local community.

Cllr McNally's proposal was put the meeting and agreed.

On the proposal of Cllr McNally seconded by Cllr Keelan it was agreed that the Council invite the Killanny village residents to make a submission to Louth County Council and that a meeting would be arranged with the Louth Area Committee members on the matter.

19. Votes of Sympathy:

The Council agreed to extend votes of sympathy to the following:

- *Willie McKenna on the death of his mother Margaret McKenna, Dernamuck, Emyvale, R.I.P.*
- *Maria McKenna, member of Council staff on the death of her uncle Sean Watters, Clontibret and U.S.A. R.I.P.*

19. Votes of Sympathy (contd.):

- Hazel Field, member of Council staff on the death of her aunt, Ruth Oliver, Clontibret, R.I.P.
- Rosemary Meade, member of Council staff on the death of her brother Thomas, R.I.P., Kingscourt and Navan.
- Maureen Nulty, Tullynaskeagh, Carrickmacross on the death of her husband Thomas R.I.P. Thomas was a former member of Carrickmacross Town Council outdoor staff.

20. Conferences:

On the proposal of Cllr McElvaney, seconded by Cllr Kieran, it was agreed that the Council be represented at the following conferences by the Members listed.

Promoting Authority	Subject/Theme	Venue	Dates	Members
Institute of International & European Affairs	Agriculture & climate change	Dublin Castle	9 th January 2009	Vincent P. Martin Jackie Crowe John O'Brien Benny Kieran Owen Bannigan Pat McKenna Heather Humphreys
Antrim Tourism Conference	Activities Tourism	Dunadry Hotel Muckamore Dunadry Co. Antrim	23 rd -24 th January 2009	Sean Conlon Hugh McElvaney Pat McKenna Heather Humphreys Seamus Coyle
Centre for Cross Border Studies	4th Annual Conference ICLR D	Letterkenny	22 nd -23 rd January 2009	Pat Treanor David Maxwell Gary Carville John Keenan Padraig McNally Robbie Gallagher

Prior to the conclusion of the meeting Cllr P. McKenna referred to an incident involving a member of the Council's staff that occurred out of office hours. The County Manager stated that he was not sure of the details of the situation and he did not think this was the appropriate place to raise the issue. Cllr McKenna agreed to forward written details of the alleged incident to the County Manager. It was agreed that the Council would go into Committee for any further debate.

The meeting then concluded.

Signed:

Meara

Meeting Administrator

Date
