

**Minutes of Adjourned Council Meeting held in the Mtek Building,  
Knockaconny, Monaghan on Monday 19<sup>th</sup> November 2007 10.00 a.m.**

**Chair:** Cllr G Carville, Mayor

**Present:** Cllrs Bannigan, Carthy, Conlon, Coyle, Crowe, Gallagher, Humphreys, Keelan, Keenan, Martin, Maxwell, McElvaney, B. McKenna, P. McKenna, P. McNally, O'Brien and Treanor.

Mr. D. Nelson, County Manager, Mr. M. Fitzpatrick, Mr P. Clifford, Mr D. Fallon and Mr A King, Directors of Service, Mr John Murray, Head of Finance, Mr A Hughes, Senior Planner, Ms. C. Thornton, Meetings Administrator and Ms. A. Mackle, A/Staff Officer.

**5. Planning Application to An Bord Pleanála by Quinn Group Limited.**

Cllr Maxwell, Chair of the Planning, Economic Development and Water Services Strategic Policy Committee gave a report on a meeting the SPC Members and a number of Councillors had with the Quinn Group Limited Consultants on November 14<sup>th</sup> 2007. A copy of the minutes of the meeting were also circulated to all present.

The Quinn Group indicated that the reason they had sought to locate this development at this site was because Ballykelly contained a major substation already and power can be fed through underground cables from this development to it.

The SPC agreed that a number of recommendations be brought forward to the Council for approval, as follows:

**Traffic** – In view of the fact that a significant portion of the south Monaghan population use the Stonetown Road, LP1143, to commute to and from Dundalk we would recommend that a direct access be provided from the proposed site on the LP1143 to the R178 in County Monaghan.

**Devaluation** – Consideration should be given to the devaluation of property and a positive commitment should be given not to oppose future development.

**Emissions** – We recommend that due consideration should be given to the effect of emissions from the plant on the local community, in particular, the nearby school.

***Cllr Maxwell proposed, Cllr Keenan seconded that the foregoing submission be forwarded to An Bord Pleanála.***

Cllr Conlon said he felt the submission was too vague, it asks for consideration but does not specify actual aims and objectives.

Cllr McNally asked that more detail be included in this submission, for example some of their decisions arose from discussions with the local residents. The road proposed for use is not up to a suitable standard. He was also of the view that despite what the Quinn Group had said at the meeting significant efforts had not been made to acquire the land in question. The Members had also tried to seek a guarantee from Quinn Group Limited that they would not object to any future development of the area. Quinn Group Limited had said future development of the area should not be a problem but had given no absolute guarantee, this should be pursued.

Mr. Adrian Hughes, Senior Planner, replied that the Planning, Economic Development and Water Services Strategic Policy Committee report is an addendum to a technical submission that had been submitted by the Manager to the November meeting of Monaghan County Council. This report relates to the impact of the proposed development on County Monaghan only.

In relation to the issue of emissions, there is no role for the Council in controlling emissions from the proposed plant - this is the responsibility of the Environmental Protection Agency. Regarding devaluation this was raised at the meeting by a member of the public. In relation to the road, only ten metres of it is located within County Monaghan's jurisdiction. If the Members feel that the Planning SPC submission is too vague they may add to it.

In response to a number of queries regarding the right of the general public to attend Strategic Policy Committee meetings, the Mayor and the Meetings Administrator, read extracts from Standing Order No. 10 which clarified the matter.

***Cllr McElvaney proposed an amendment - that the Members object to consideration of the Planning Application from An Bord Pleanála by Quinn Group Limited in respect of construction of a new 450 Megawatt Natural Gas fired electricity generating station at Toomes, Louth, Co Louth until further information is available. Cllr P McKenna seconded the proposal.***

A vote by show of hands on Cllr McElvaney's amendment resulted in 2 for, Nil against, 15 abstentions. The amendment was agreed. The substantive motion was put to the meeting and was defeated on a vote by show of hands which resulted in 2 for, 12 against, 3 abstentions.

***Cllr Conlon proposed, Cllr Keelan seconded that under the heading Emissions that the following wording be included - that quarterly reports on emissions from the proposed plant be made available to the Environment Section of Monaghan County Council"***

A vote by show of hands on this proposal resulted in 15 for, 1 against, 2 abstentions. The Mayor declared the proposal carried.

The Mayor indicated he was putting Cllr Maxwell's proposal to the meeting. A vote by show of hands resulted in 15 for, 2 against 1 abstention. The Mayor declared the proposal carried.

## **7. Annual Financial Statement & Auditors Report**

Following a discussion on various aspects of the Annual Financial Statement & Auditors report, the Members agreed to note the report.

## **10. Appointment of Audit Committee**

The Mayor referred to a notification from the County Manager confirming that following consultation with the Party Whips, he had approached Mr. Eamonn Callaghan, Mr. Des Sheridan and Mr. Gerry Magee to invite them to be external members of the proposed Audit Committee. All three persons had agreed to sit on the Audit Committee. The Members agreed with the appointment of Mr. Eamonn Callaghan, Mr. Des Sheridan and Mr. Gerry Magee to the Audit Committee.

In addition to the three external members, the Manager advised that two Council Members, retired or sitting, were also required. It is therefore necessary to seek nominations from the Members.

Cllr Maxwell proposed, Cllr Bannigan seconded that Cllr Humphreys be nominated to sit on the Audit Committee.

Cllr B. McKenna proposed, Cllr Treanor seconded that Cllr Carthy be nominated to sit on the Audit Committee.

*As there were no other proposals the Mayor declared Cllrs Humphreys and Carthy elected to the Audit Committee.*

In response to a query from Cllr McElvaney, the County Manager stated that the external members would receive a gratuity of €2,000 each. There was no provision for a payment to the Council Members appointed to the Committee but that he would make enquires to the Department to see if such a payment could be made.

## **16. Water Services Investment Programme**

Mr. David Fallon, Director of Water Services said this report had been produced to comply with the Water Services Act, which requires Water Services to submit a plan to the DoHELG detailing their plans for the next six years. This report updates existing legislation and informs the DoHELG of licensing issues. The report covers the following areas: -

- Issues facing Monaghan County Council in 2008 – Compliance with the Water Services Act, Adoption of a Strategic Water Plan and compliance with the Water Pricing Policy

- Plans for capital projects in Monaghan, Carrickmacross, Castleblayney, Clones and Ballybay
- Monaghan Water Conservation Plan
- Small Public Water And Sewerage Schemes

A brief debate took place on this item, however, owing to time restrictions, it was agreed by the Members to place this item on the December Agenda.

## **15. Presentation by RPS Consulting Engineering**

The Mayor, Gary Carville welcomed Mr. Michael Mongan and Ms. Susan Joyce, Consultants with RPS Consulting Engineers to the meeting. He invited them to make a presentation to the Council on the Part 8 process – N2/N54 Inner Relief road in Monaghan Town. He also welcomed the Members of Monaghan Town Council who had been invited to view this presentation.

*Cllr Gallagher proposed, Cllr McElvaney seconded that a second meeting be held, if necessary to discuss what would be presented to the Members especially if there was new information or an alternative route presented here today.*

Mr. Michael Fitzpatrick, Director of Services asked the Members to view the presentation and then they could arrange an alternative meeting date if needed. He asked the Members to give a strong indication today if they wished to proceed with this route or seek an alternative one as this item had been on the agenda for the last eight years. The National Roads Authority would fund an inner relief route, however an alternative outer route would probably have to be self-funded.

Mr. Michael Mongan from RPS Consulting then gave a presentation to the Council during which he outlined the following:

The N54 is the main Belfast – Galway and Monaghan – Clones – Cavan Road. One of the objectives of Monaghan’s County Development Plan 2007 – 2013 was to complete the N2/N54 Link Road from Clones Road to Coolshannagh

### **Benefits**

- The benefits of completing this road includes removing through traffic and reducing town traffic, this creates safer roads and
- Improving accessibility to the town and its environs
- Reducing journey time for people travelling along this route
- It opens up lands surrounding the town and promotes economic development

### **Background**

- 20<sup>th</sup> September 2004 – The Council adopted N54 IRR (Route X)
- Various surveys were conducted throughout 2005
- June – 2006 – the NRA approved proceeding with Part 8
- July - Oct 2006 Revisions to Design and in October 2006 the Scheme was represented to the Council and put on public display.

- Jan – August 2007 the Scheme was put on hold and in August new lands were made available, a topographical survey was conducted and in September the scheme was modified.

### **Principle Changes to the Design since 2006**

- There is a reduction in the cross section at Barrack lane with a provision of pedestrian facilities and parallel parking for Barrack Street residence
- Milltown Road will be realigned and have a new link from N54 to Milltown road.
- There will be a new junction layout at the Clones Road; a traffic signal junction would replace the roundabout and the Scotstown Road realigned.
- New access arrangements on the N54 for Agrihealth Ltd, Mohan's and McConnors

### **Alternative Tie in to the N2/N12 were examined with the following results**

- Restricted area between Monfort House and Monaghan Co-op
- A roundabout would have vie arm layout
- There was an alignment constraints with two river crossings
- There would be an impact on lands zoned for agriculture.

### **Summary of N54 Inner Relief Road**

- 1.8 km of Single Carriageway Road
- 2 lane with Hatched Median
- 3m Combined footpath and cycleway
- 2 signalised junctions and 3 priority junctions
- 1 over bridge and retaining structures
- Milltown link road

### **What is Next**

- Briefing the Elected Members
- Public Notice followed by Displays
- Public submission reviewed and response in a planning report
- Scheme formally proposed at February 2008 Council Meeting
- Commencement of flood studies and ground water studies
- Once the Part 8 Planning is complete it must go through a CPO process, detailed design, contractor procurement and construction.

The County Manager, Declan Nelson said this project was part of the three projects the NRA had planned for Monaghan Town

- (1) **N2 Monaghan Town Bypass Phase 1 - N2 Coolshannagh to Corlat**
- (2) **N54 Link Monaghan Inner Relief Road**
- (3) **Monaghan Bypass Phase 2 - N2 Emyvale to Monaghan road realignment**

The Coolshannagh to Corlat Bypass had been completed, the NRA had stated they would fund the N54/N2 Monaghan Inner Relief Road and plans for the N2 Emyvale to Monaghan road realignment have been put on hold. Planning permission had been granted to developers along the route and this took account of the proposed route of the road. Both Developers and Auctioneers had informed potential homeowners that a new road was planned for the area. This inner relief road would alleviate the congestion on Park Road and High Street as well as diverting traffic away from the Town Centre. It is a town road and minimum speed limits will apply. The NRA have stated they will not fund the outer route – if this route is rejected there is no other route on the agenda.

In response the Members raised the following queries/issues: -

- For people travelling from Cavan and Clones towards Monaghan town this road is a nightmare.
- Canal View, Woodlands and Knockroe are new estates along the Clones road, which are adding traffic pressure to this road.
- This Inner Relief road will not alleviate the traffic, there are a number of schools and business on this road that cause a lot of traffic problems
- Perhaps another traffic survey should be conducted and this would establish the volume of road users along these routes and would help establish where this traffic was going to.
- Planning permission for Riverside should never have been granted as placing a road down the middle of a housing estate would never be feasible.
- What system would be put in place to prevent children accessing the road?
- Changing the Inner Relief route, bringing the road further down towards the swimming pool and existing at Mullaghmatt will only cause more congestion.
- Is there any possibility of this road existing out between Monfort House and the Mona factory pass Ballyalbany Bridge while the other exit could be placed around Century Homes?
- The installation of two sets of traffic signals along the new proposed route would only serve to hold up traffic and cause further problems.
- Planning this route should benefit the town of Monaghan in the long term as opposed to this short-term solution presented here today.
- The main objection to the proposed route was the proposal to route the road through the Riverside estate.

*On the proposal of Cllr McElvaney, seconded by Cllr Gallagher it was agreed that Monaghan County Council seek a meeting with the Department of Transport and the National Roads Authority to voice their concerns over the proposed N54 Link Monaghan Inner Relief Road. The Oireachtas Members should also be invited to attend*

Cllr Maxwell proposed carrying out preparatory work on the feasibility of carrying out work on the Ballyalbany Bridge, Mona/Monfort house exit and at least if it is proven this route is not feasible we can then look at the Riverside route in more detail.

**Susan Joyce gave the following reply to a number of queries:-**

- The N2 provided no clear route/alignment for the inner relief road.
- It would be very difficult to tie back the route from Ballyalbany with the major developments within the area.
- The topography at the Ballyalbany Bridge and Monfort House exit is very difficult, this route would need large embankments to support a road structure.
- The Inner Relief route as shown is what the NRA will fund at the moment, the outer relief road is a long-term objective.
- RPS Consultants had conducted a traffic survey and had found that this inner relief road will remove five thousand cars from this road daily.
- Sixty percent of the road users on this road were going into Monaghan Town therefore the closer they brought this Inner Relief road to the town the more benefit it would provide.

The County Manager said the reason access point at the Clones Road was changed was that there are four separate business entities at Agrihealth which would have had implications for quality control, etc. It would not have been feasible to proceed with the original plans - the only option available to the Council would be to re-locate them which would not be financially possible.

Following further debate it was agreed that RPS Consultants would re-visit the issue of access onto the N2 north of Riverside and report back to the Council with costings, etc.

The meeting then concluded.

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_  
Meara Meeting Administrator

Date \_\_\_\_\_