

Ceantar Bardasach Carraig Mhachaire Rois – Baile Na Lorgan
Comhairle Contae Mhuineachain



The Municipal District of Carrickmacross – Castleblayney
Monaghan County Council

Minutes of proceedings of the Municipal District Monthly Meeting held in Carrickmacross Civic Offices, Riverside Road, Carrickmacross, Co. Monaghan on Monday the 26th of February 2024 at 14:20pm.

Present: Cathaoirleach Aoife McCooey

Cllrs. Colm Carthy, Noel Keelan, PJ O’Hanlon, Peter Conlon, Aidan Campbell

In Attendance: Carmel O’Hare, Director of Services, Damien Thornton, A/District Co-Ordinator, Paul Carragher, Senior Staff Officer, Julieann O’Reilly, Assistant Staff Officer

Presentation: Carrickmacross Town Centre First Plan update

- **Kevin McNally, A/Town Regeneration Officer and James Hennessey, The Paul Hogarth Company**

Cllr. O’Hanlon:

Thanked the presenters.

Queried what kinds of costs will be involved.

Noted the importance of connecting the Convent Lands area to the town centre.

Cllr. Carthy:

Thanked Kevin and James for the presentation.

Acknowledged the significant amount of public engagement during the development of the Plan.

Hoped that funding applications based on the Plan will be viewed positively.

Cllr. Conlon:

Remarked that this project ticks all the boxes and expressed his enthusiasm .

Commented that he was delighted to see engagement with the local schools.

Advised that he looks forward to seeing the outcomes.

Stated that he would not like to see car parking removed from the Main Street.

Cllr. Keelan:

Commended the team for the presentation.

Remarked that he does not want to see reduced footfall in the town because of online shopping.

Commented that branding the town is vital.

Queried when it is hoped to see progress and works commencing?

Cllr. McCooey:

Thanked the presenters for their report.

Commended the team for the huge public consultation carried out.

Queried if there are similar opportunities for Castleblayney.

A/Town Regeneration Officer, Kevin McNally, advised that some of the projects highlighted in the Plan are already progressing. Outlined a number of funding streams that will be available to progress other projects.

Presentation: East Border Region and Weev – EV chargers in the border counties

- **EBR CE Pamela Arthurs, EBR Programme Manager Dette Hughes and Weev, Thomas O’Hagan**

Cllr. McCooey:

Congratulated the delegation on the scale of the project.

Cllr. O’Hanlon:

Thanked the delegation for attending.

Noted the importance of having this infrastructure.

Complimented *Weev* on their professionalism.

Commented that the EBR, even during difficult times in Northern Ireland, never wilted in their efforts – all parties worked together.

Cllr. Carthy:

Expressed thanks for the presentation and commended his colleagues who are members of the EBR.

Stated that the Executive need to highlight the fact that we have these fast EV chargers in the county and suggested fingerpost signage could be used.

Cllr. Campbell:

Welcomed the delegation to the meeting.

Remarked that it is great to see investment on the ground and it is a good news story for Carrickmacross.

Concurred with Cllr. O’Hanlon’s comments about the EBR.

Cllr. Keelan:

Expressed thanks to the delegation for all their work.

Remarked that having this type of infrastructure will give confidence to people to buy electric vehicles.

Cllr. Conlon:

Wished to echo the sentiments of his fellow members.

Commented that he is delighted to have this asset in Carrickmacross and remarked that it is another step on the green pathway.

Cllr. McCooey:

On behalf of the MD, offered any required assistance to the EBR and commented that she would love to see similar in Castleblayney, Oram and Inniskeen.

EBR CE Pamela Arthurs commended the elected members and Executive, remarking that MCC is currently more proactive than any other LA involved.

1.0 Confirmation of Minutes

On the proposal of Cllr. Keelan and seconded by Cllr. Conlon, the minutes of the January 2024 Monthly Municipal District Meeting, held on Monday the 22nd of January 2024, were adopted.

2.0 Matters Arising

Cllr. Keelan:

Asked if the large branch/tree stuck in the River Fane in Inniskeen village can be dealt with.

Reply – This MD is actively monitoring the river water levels. This will be removed once it is safe to do so.

Queried if it is correct that the MD only have one patcher out doing works.

Reply – This MD has only ever had one patcher.

Stated that lorries are getting stuck at Magee's Bridge, Inniskeen and suggested that signage could assist with this.

Reply – This will be investigated.

Advised that nets are needed at the Cloughvalley play park.

Reply – This MD is currently seeking quotations.

Cllr. Campbell:

Noted that Ballynacarry Bridge is going for Part 8 planning. On the proposal of Cllr. Campbell and seconded by Cllr. Keelan it was unanimously agreed to write to John O'Dowd, Minister for Infrastructure, Northern Ireland to advise him of works and to seek funding.

Commented that while he supports Shared Island Funding for the A5, our own roads need to be looked after also.

Cllr. O’Hanlon:

Fully supported Cllr. Campbells proposal.

Commented that Shared Island Funding needs to be fair to all.

Cllr. Carthy:

Welcomed the funding for the A5 but noted that the N2 Ardee – Castleblayney does not seem to have received funding.

Sought confirmation that the lights on the Drumconrath Road are turned on.

Reply – ESB has advised that they hoped to have the matter resolved next week.

Asked if the Community Centre Committee in Magheracloone have been contacted.

Reply – an invitation will be extended.

Cllr. Conlon:

Commented that the district’s roads are in a bad state, and that we need to come up with a plan to resolve this issue. Noted that there is only so much we can do with the funding provided.

Asked for an update on the barrier at Essexford Bridge.

Reply – the Executive is currently seeking quotations for these works.

Requested an update on tree cutting on the Convent Hill as these works need to be completed by Friday.

Reply – The Executive is actively following up with the landowner concerned.

Cllr. O’Hanlon:

Queried whether it is possible to carry out “hot patching” similar to last year and requested that this be reviewed.

Reply – Will review and advise at the next MD meeting.

3.0 Correspondence

- i. Acceptance of invitation to February 2024 meeting – Brendan Smith TD and Matt Carthy TD.
- ii. Acknowledgement forwarded from Brendan Smith TD re: motion regarding additional funding.
- iii. Response from Niamh Smyth TD re: motion regarding roads underspend.
- iv. Response form Niamh Smyth TD re: dedicated cyclist pedestrian facilities at Inniskeen
- v. Proposed presentation on Housing Capital Projects in the MD – Niall O’Connor
It was unanimously agreed to have this presentation at the March 2024 MD meeting.
- vi. Letter from Carrickmacross-Carhaix Town Twinning Committee

The elected members wondered if funding can be sought for this group, similar to last year.

Director of Services, Carmel O'Hare advised that the request for this must be done via Corporate Services.

vii. Letter from Carrickmacross Festival Committee

On the proposal of Cllr. O'Hanlon and seconded by Cllr. Conlon it was unanimously agreed to approve the use of the mentioned public spaces.

viii. Acceptance of invitation to rescheduled meeting in March 2024 – Brendan Smith TD and Niamh Smyth TD.

Cllr. O'Hanlon expressed his grievance with the "standard responses" being forwarded to the elected members from the local Oireachtas members, further commenting that Minister Ryan has no interest in rural roads.

Following a discussion surrounding the wording of the motion, on the proposal of Cllr. O'Hanlon and seconded by Cllr. Conlon, it was unanimously agreed to send the following motion to Taoiseach Leo Varadkar and Tánaiste Micheál Martin:

"In County Monaghan we receive 50% of the funding that we require to do our roads properly. In Carrickmacross – Castleblayney Municipal District, we receive €2.1 million, we need €4.2 million, with a deficit of €28 million for roads rated 1-4. 80% of our people are employed in small – medium enterprises. Roads are more unsafe than five years ago; it is a crisis situation. We are pleading with you to please review the money we receive from the Department of Transport. It is not fair to the people of rural Monaghan and rural Ireland."

Cllr. Carthy commented that huge amounts of money is being spent on Active Travel around the country and opined that repair and maintenance of existing road infrastructure should be carried out before creating new infrastructure.

Cllr. McCooey stated that the current funding is completely inadequate and remarked that under the current Minister, the rural roads are being forgotten. Cllr. McCooey stated that the MD are doing all they can with the resources provided.

4.0 MD Coordinator's Report

Cllr. Campbell:

Expressed thanks to the MD team and Director of Services, Carmel O'Hare, for all their work. Commented that it is good to see the backlands project in Castleblayney progressing.

Welcomed the €500,000 funding announced for Black Island and looks forward to the Part 8 Planning process commencing.

Remarked that it is fantastic to see that a funding application has been submitted to the Department for the refurbishment of the Market House in Castleblayney.

Cllr. Carthy:

Requested that members are notified design team are for Carrickmacross Workhouse project and advise of previous projects they may have completed.

Reply – Once the design team are appointed, this request will be made.

Queried whether the Active Travel projects have been updated to reflect the recent funding announcement.

Reply – Awaiting a response to a Councillor question on this matter.

Cllr. McCooey:

Queried whether there is a confirmed timeline for the Shercock Road / Mile Hill junction.

Reply – no update at present.

Acknowledged works carried out regarding town centre regeneration in Castleblayney and stressed the importance of connecting McGrath Road to the town centre.

Cllr. Keelan:

Acknowledged the works of the MD team and Director of Services, Carmel O'Hare.

Acknowledged that the Public Realm Scheme in Inniskeen is progressing, albeit slowly.

Requested that the Executive investigate an alternative to a pedestrian/cyclist bridge crossing.

Reply – The Executive will explore other avenues of funding for the provision of a bolt on pedestrian/cyclist bridge crossing and investigate acceptable alternatives to a dedicated pedestrian/cyclist bridge crossing.

5.0 Q&A

Questions raised by Cllr. Colm Carthy for the February 2024 meeting of Carrickmacross/Castleblayney Municipal District Council:

1. Does the MD executive intend to, as per last year's event, provide a sensory space for this year's St Patrick's Day parade?

Response:

The Municipal District Executive does intend to provide a sensory space for this year's St Patrick's Day parade. As per last year's event, it is intended to house the sensory space at the Market Square, Carrickmacross.

2. What is the up-to-date progress on the Bandstand for the grounds of Carrickmacross Civic Offices and has anything progressed further on my proposal to introduce a Campervan Parking area?

Response:

It is envisaged that a tender for the engagement of a suitable works contractor, to construct the proposed Bandstand, shall issue to the market in late Q1 2024.

The Executive are currently progressing the development of a masterplan for the enhancement of the Convent Avenue area of the town, including areas along and adjacent to the Convent Avenue Walk. The feasibility of the introduction of a campervan parking area is included in the Terms of Reference for the development of the masterplan.

3. Has Swim Ireland provided a date for when the Pop-up Swimming pool will be made available for Carrickmacross? If so, when is it expected works will begin on the project?

Response:

Swim Ireland has tentatively suggested that subject to their confirmation of the suitability of the identified preferred location, and their retaining/recruiting of suitably qualified pool attendants, the proposed pop-up pool may be available for Carrickmacross towards the end of May 2024. Swim Ireland are to conduct a site suitability assessment within the coming weeks. Pending a successful outcome, site preparatory works shall commence shortly thereafter.

4. When is it expected road markings will be carried out on the Church Hill junction (Kingscourt road), Carrickmacross and the entrance to Cluain Alainn estate, Culloville Road? Also, has the council carried out a review of existing road markings in both Carrickmacross and Castleblayney to determine a street marking programme for the short to medium term?

Response:

The Municipal District Executive are currently in the process of procuring a Road Marking and Lining Contractor for 2024. It is intended that road marking and lining Works to the Church Hill junction and the entrance to Cluain Alainn estate shall be undertaken in early Q2 2024.

Existing road markings and lining are subject to on-going review by technical staff. Any required remedial works are scheduled on the essential repairs and maintenance list, and attended to as soon as is reasonably practicable.

5. There are a number of tree/hedge trimming projects with the Council, some of these projects are on our list to be done for a couple years; what plans are in place to start addressing these.

Response:

The Executive has appointed an arborist to undertake assessments for a number of potential tree/hedge trimming projects in this Municipal District. The outcome reports from these assessments shall provide the basis for a programme of essential tree/hedge trimming works. It is anticipated that any such works will be undertaken in September/October 2024.

Questions raised by Cllr. Noel Keelan for the February 2024 meeting of Carrickmacross/Castleblayney Municipal District Council:

6. What is the up-to-date position in relation to the public realm plan and car parking strategy for Inniskeen village, including, funding available to implement the plan, what works can we expect to see completed this year?

Response:

Monaghan County Council received a funding allocation of €250,000, under the Town and Village Renewal Scheme, towards the provision of public realm, heritage and amenity enhancements in the Village Heart and St. Mary's Space areas of Inniskeen Village. Detailed design, including the development of a car parking strategy, is nearing completion, and it is envisaged that works shall commence in mid-late Q2 2024. The exact scope of works to be completed shall be confirmed upon the conclusion of the tender process for the engagement of a suitably qualified works contractor.

7. When is it hoped to have a plan prepared for the provision of additional car parking spaces, including improvements to the access into Deerys Terrace, Inniskeen as requested by local residents?

Response:

The Executive are currently reviewing parking and access arrangements at Deerys Terrace to ascertain the need for any additional parking and enhanced accessibility requirements.

8. In light of funding now available what plans have the council to roll out the reclaimed asphalt scheme given the large numbers of roads in the area that are in need of resurfacing including the access roads into Donaghmoyne Village?

Response:

The following criteria will be used to determine the appropriate roads for the Reclaimed Asphalt Trial:

Phase 1 - Selection Criteria:

1. PSCI Rating 1-4
2. Proximity to Production Depot (30Mins)
3. Traffic Volumes (TBD)
4. % HGV's
5. Site suitable for overlay

Phase 2 - Selection Criteria:

1. Detailed non-destructive testing to be carried out on roads to determine suitability, assessing:
 - a. Existing Pavement Strength
 - b. Subgrade Strength
 - c. New Pavement Design

It is estimated 2 roads will be completed in 2024 under the Reclaimed Asphalt Programme.

9. What is the up-to-date position in relation to the provision of road safety measures adjacent to the Donaghmoyne village Playpark as requested by the local development association?

Response:

The Executive has secured funding under the *2024 Safety Improvement Works on Regional and Local Roads* programme to implement road safety measures adjacent to the playpark in Donaghmoyne Village. It is anticipated that these works shall be completed in Q3 2024.

10. What is the up-to-date position in relation to the roll out of the bicycle rental scheme for the Inniskeen and wider area given that public liability insurance seems to be the major obstacle to getting this scheme in place? Will the council examine the possibility of running the scheme if no other alternative presents?

Response:

Recent negotiations with a prospective scheme operator proved unsuccessful however, the Executive has since received an expression of interest from an established bike hire company. It is intended to commence negotiations with this party within the coming weeks.

Questions raised by Cllr. Aidan Campbell for the February 2024 meeting of Carrickmacross/Castleblayney Municipal District Council:

11. Regarding the public lighting in Main Street and the surrounding streets in Castleblayney with so many of the lights are not working.

- a) Can the MD provide an update on this?
- b) When will this issue be resolved?

Response:

The Executive have identified the individual problematic public lights along Main Street and surrounding streets in Castleblayney and reported them to the responsible lighting contractor for repair. The lighting contractor has confirmed that all LED lights will be fully functional within the coming weeks.

12. When is hoped that the work to resurface Muckno Street and York Street in Castleblayney will commence?

Response:

It is anticipated that resurfacing works to Muckno Street and York Street in Castleblayney shall commence in early Q3 2024.

13. With the roadside bank slipping away along the roadside on the L4620 on the road out of Inniskeen in Lacklom.

- a) What plans has the MD to alleviate this?
- b) When will this work commence?

Response:

- a) The Executive shall arrange for a site investigation to establish the root cause of the slippage and enable the design of feasible remedial works.
- b) The Executive shall explore all potential sources of funding to implement the required remedial works as soon as is reasonably practicable.

14. What is the update on the CCTV in Castleblayney?

Response:

Following a presentation to the National CCTV Advisory Committee on Friday the 19th of May 2023, the Committee advised that they would be recommending the approval of the CCTV scheme to the Garda Commissioner's Office. The Executive continue to await approval or otherwise from the Commissioner's Office.

15. With the recent announcement of funding for Active Travel.

a) What is the list of Projects for the Castleblayney/Carrickmacross MD?

b) When will work commence on these?

Response:

Awaiting a response from the Active Travel Unit.

Questions raised by Cllr. Aoife McCooey for the February 2024 meeting of Carrickmacross/Castleblayney Municipal District Council:

16. Can the MD provide an update on applying to the TII for a departure from standards with regards to lighting at both Toome on the N53 and Ministers cross at Broomfield on the N2?

Response:

Due to the specialised nature of assessing a warrant for public lighting and, if deemed necessary, preparing a lighting design at these locations, MCC is in the process of procuring a Lighting Consultant to prepare a TII Departure application. As soon as this is complete, the Elected Members will be furnished with a report.

17. Can the MD provide an update on plans for an outdoor gym for Oram village?

Response:

The Executive has submitted a funding application under the *Peace Plus* programme for the provision of an outdoor gym in Oram village.

18. Can the MD provide details on road safety measures for Oram village?

Response:

The Executive has secured funding under the *2024 Safety Improvement Works on Regional and Local Roads* programme to implement road safety measures in Oram Village. It is anticipated that these works shall be completed in Q3 2024.

19. Can the MD give an update on any plans to redesign the footpath on Beech Corner, Castleblayney, which comes out too far resulting in the back tyre of cars mounting the footpath when making a left turn onto the Dublin Road. If plans are not in place currently, can this be added to a list of works?

Response:

It is intended to carry out upgrade works to the footway at Beech Corner, Castleblayney in conjunction with the planned resurfacing works to York Street. It is anticipated that the planned resurfacing works to York Street, Castleblayney shall commence in early Q3 2024.

20. Can the MD provide details on road safety measures for the Dublin Road, Castleblayney. With a particular focus on traffic management at the two schools: Castleblayney College and Castleblayney Boys School. Suggested works may include traffic calming, a pedestrian crossing, flashing signage.

Response:

The Executive shall arrange for a site assessment to determine the need for additional road safety measures along the Dublin Road, Castleblayney. Thereafter, the Executive shall explore all potential sources of funding to facilitate the design and implementation of any required road safety measures identified.

Questions raised by Cllr. Peter Conlon for the February 2024 meeting of Carrickmacross/Castleblayney Municipal District Council:

21. When is the latest draft of the local area action plan due for submittance / review?

Response:

The Municipal District, Planning and Town Regeneration sections are working closely with the consultants to finalise the Carrickmacross Local Area Action Plans. Discussions are ongoing with regard to the final form of the document, and it is hoped that it will be available for review in early Q2 2024.

22. With the further deterioration of our local roads, will the council commit to the "Top tar Patch" on sections of roads that are "Repeat" offenders on the patching list?

Response:

Current road maintenance budgets do not lend themselves to adopting a singular approach to the treatment of road surface defects. The treatment method to be employed is considered on a case-by-case basis having regard to the severity of the defect(s), prevailing weather, and available budgets.

23. When will the works on the low-cost safety schemes commence?

Response:

It is anticipated that these works shall commence in Q3 2024.

24. What is the update on the Sensory playpark for Carrickmacross?

Response:

It is envisaged that construction works shall commence in early Q2 2024. The works programme shall be confirmed once a suitable works contractor is appointed.

25. What is the up-to-date position in relation to the development of masterplan for the Convent Avenue and environs, including the development of a pedestrian link to the town centre via Distillery Lane?

Response:

The Executive has prepared a draft plan indicating how the Convent Avenue could be linked to Carrickmacross Town Centre, via Distillery Lane. Following preliminary discussions with relevant landowners, the Executive is further proposing to develop a Masterplan for this area. The proposed study area includes the Convent Lands / Bath Avenue area to the south of Carrickmacross Town Centre.

To progress the preparation of the Masterplan, the Executive has appointed the *Paul Hogarth Company* to review the development proposals of relevant adjoining landowners and to identify the optimum route for the proposed pedestrian link. On the 29th of January 2024, an initial meeting was held with key landowners regarding their development proposals.

The appointed consultants are currently reviewing these proposals. It is envisaged that a draft concept Masterplan shall be available for consideration towards the end of March 2024.

6.0 VOS/VOC

Votes of sympathy were extended to Ian & Clare Marron on the death of Peadar Duffy (RIP); the family of John (Seán) McCoy (RIP); Pat Freeman on the death of Molly Freeman (RIP); Tommy Swinburne on the death of Peggy Swinburne (RIP) and Patrick Doherty & family on the death of Bernard Doherty (RIP).

A *Vote of Congratulations* was extended to Our Lady's Secondary School, Castleblayney on winning the Ulster A Ladies GAA U20's.

9.0 A.O.B

Cllr. Keelan:

Stated that the access roads to Corduff village and Donaghmoyne village need to be addressed.

Advised that the LT41102 is in a dangerous state.

Cllr. Carthy:

Requested that the Executive write to New Baze to seek an update.

Stated that streetlights on Ard Ross Avenue and Rockdaniel road need to be dealt with.

Advised that there had been a piece in the local newspaper last October about a new Local Link bus route (Castleblayney – Oram – Newry) and requested that the Executive seek clarity on this.

Cllr. O'Hanlon:

Remarked that the local Minister has put it on the record that the Nuremore Hotel will stay as a hotel and also commended Matt Carthy TD for raising this issue in the Dáil.

Stated that confirmation is needed that it will remain / come back into being as a hotel and commented that this will be an issue to raise at the meeting with local Oireachtas members.

Cllr. Carthy:

Noted that MCC have made investment to walking routes around this area.

Cllr. Campbell:

Advised that there are bad slumps around “Dick Adare’s “and the top of Mullyash needs attention.

Stated that NRG, based in The Ridge, announced a further 125 jobs.

Remarked that the provision of a second enterprise hub building in Castleblayney needs to be explored.

Cllr. Conlon:

Stated that discussions are ongoing in the background regarding the Nuremore Hotel and indicated his confidence that there will be a positive outcome as there is a will to see the right outcome.

Cllr. McCooey:

Stated that the provision of public toilets in Castleblayney needs to be kept on the agenda.

The meeting concluded at 17:15.

Cathaoirleach

Date

Meeting Administrator