Minutes of Manorhamilton Municipal District Meeting held in Meeting Room 1, HSE Headquarters, Manorhamilton on Monday 19th October, 2015

Members Present: Councillor Mary Bohan
Councillor Frank Dolan
Councillor Padraig Fallon
Councillor Felim Gurn
Councillor Justin Warnock

And Councillor Sean McDermott, Cathaoirleach of Manorhamilton Municipal District presiding

Officials Present: Mr. Frank Curran, Chief Executive
Ms. Mary Quinn, Director of Services, Housing and Community, Corporate Services, Cultural and Emergency Services
Mr. Shay O’Connor, Senior Engineer, Infrastructure
Mr. Padraic MacSHERA, Senior Executive Engineer, North Leitrim Area Office
Mr. Bernard Greene, Senior Planner
Mr. Martin Donnelly, Executive Technician, Planning
Ms. Sinead Flynn, Meetings Administrator
Ms. Annette Lee, Clerical Officer, Corporate Services

Cathaoirleach of the Municipal District, Councillor Sean McDermott welcomed Mr. Frank Curran, Chief Executive to the Manorhamilton Municipal District meeting.

MMD 15/129 19/10/2015
Deimhniu Miontuairisci

Proposed by Councillor Mary Bohan, seconded by Councillor Padraig Fallon and UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED:

“That the Minutes of the Meeting of the Manorhamilton Municipal District held in Meeting Room 1, HSE Headquarters, Manorhamilton, Co. Leitrim on Monday 21st September, 2015 be adopted.”

MMD 15/130 19/10/15
Speed Limit Bye Laws for Housing Estates

The Members were previously circulated with a report to consider the speed limit bye laws in housing estates in the Manorhamilton Municipal District. The report as circulated appears as Appendix 1 to the Minutes of this meeting in the Minute Book. Mr. Shay O’Connor, Senior Engineer outlined that the public consultation process on the proposed 30km/hr speed limits in housing estates in the county took place from 31st August to 30th September 2015 and that no submissions were received during this consultation period. Mr. O’Connor advised that the speed limit bye laws will be submitted to the Council for approval at their November meeting.
Mr. Frank Curran, Chief Executive advised that the Council was in the process of preparing the 2016 budget. He outlined that funding has decreased significantly since 2008 when the budget was €47 million compared to last years budget of €34.5 million. Mr. Curran advised the Members that Leitrim has the lowest rate base in the country, staff numbers have reduced significantly and the local property tax remains at the same rate as last year after the members resolved not to vary the tax for the year 2016.

Mr. Curran also advised that the roads budget will be presented to the members in February 2016 and that the budget for water services is determined by Irish Water. He informed the members that the GMA of €75,000 was on a par with General Municipal Allocations across the country.

Mr. John McKeon, Financial Management Accountant gave an overview on the General Municipal Allocation for the Manorhamilton Municipal District. A copy of the report as circulated to the Members appears as Appendix 2 to the Minutes of this Meeting in the Minute Book. Mr. McKeon outlined the Budget 2016 process and the position in relation to the General Municipal Allocations. He outlined that the GMA is the discretionary funding made available to Municipal District Members for allocation in the draft budgetary plan and is dependent on the total level of income and the non-discretionary costs that must be met as a first call on that income. He outlined that the Draft Budgetary Plan sets out how much is allocated to the Municipal District and that the overall GMA is €75,000 broken down on the basis of population, settlement hierarchy, residents associations etc across the Municipal Districts with €28,050 allocated to the Carrick on Shannon Municipal District, €25,454 to the Manorhamilton Municipal District and €21,496 to the Ballinamore Municipal District. In relation to the Manorhamilton Municipal District GMA he advised that this is currently broken down across Housing Estate Management, Floral Pride, Adopt a Road, Amenities/Tidy Towns and Community Tourism and Arts Grants. He acknowledged that the amount of money available is small. He advised however that the Local Roads Budget will be available to Members and will be presented in February once the Roads Allocations are notified.

The Cathaoirleach of the Municipal District, Councillor Sean McDermott thanked Mr. McKeon for his presentation and invited questions from the Members.

Councillor Justin Warnock stated that the GMA is very disappointing and that there is very little money available when it is divided between all services. This was supported by Councillor Gurn and Councillor McDermott.

Councillor Mary Bohan also expressed her disappointment regarding the extent of funding available and stated that she had hoped for an increase in the funding available this year. She stated that she attended the floral pride awards in Carrigallen recently and that the awards presented does not justify the amount of voluntary work that takes place. She stated that she feels the awards are an incentive for local community groups to enter the competitions and enhance the appearance of their towns and villages.

Councillor Bohan expressed her concern regarding last years road discretionary budget and the allocation on the basis of population rather than road mileage. She outlined that the Manorhamilton municipal district has greater road mileage than other municipal areas. This was supported by Councillor Fallon.
Mr. Frank Curran advised the members that the roads budget will be discussed in February and that funding will be allocated to the roads that require improvement. He explained that road funding is allocated on a population basis as the population gives an indication of road usage and mileage occurring in an area.

**Part 1 – Notice of Motions**

*MMD 15/132*
*19/10/15*  
*Abbeymannor Hotel, Dromahaire*

**To consider the following Notice of Motion submitted by Councillor Mary Bohan;**

"What progress has been made in relation to the notices served on the owners of the Abbeymannor Hotel in Dromahair?"

**Report by Director of Service, Planning, Community and Economic Development**

"The Council served Notices on 4 individuals identified as being the owners of the property. The Notices served were issued under Section 59 of the Planning and Development Act (requiring works to be undertaken to repair and prevent damage to a Protected Structure) and under the Derelict Sites Act requiring repairs and the cleaning up of the area (to prevent the area and building from remaining derelict.

The Council has received written responses from 2 of the owners of record advising that they are not owners of the property. The 2 remaining recipients are deceased and their estates have not provided any response.

The Council will now formally confirm the Section 59 (1) Notice. However, it is open to the Recipients to appeal them to the District Court within a 2 week period.

To date none of the works required by either or the Notices have commenced.

The Council is disappointed that the recipients of the Notices have not complied with them, however, as the period for compliances has not expired they are not in breach of the Notices.

As the property is subject to live Notices, where failure to comply may result in legal action having to be taken against the recipients, the Council is unable to make any further comment at this time."

Councillor Mary Bohan stated that there is great concern among the residents in Dromahair and again reiterated the derelict state of the building. She outlined her satisfaction with the work the Council is doing.

Councillor Frank Dolan supported this motion.

Mr. Bernard Greene, Senior Planner informed the members that the Council was working within the legal process and that ownership is being disputed. Councillor Frank Dolan stated that the Council is a long time trying to establish ownership of the hotel and needs to engage with the banks to progress the establishment of ownership.
Refurbish Local Authority Houses

To consider the following Notice of Motion submitted by Councillor Mary Bohan;

"What steps can the Council take in order to refurbish local authority houses quickly for new tenants. In this Municipal District, there seems to be long delays from the time of allocation to the tenant getting into the house."

Report by Director of Service, Corporate Services & Housing

"It remains the Council's priority to 'turn-over' vacant dwellings and have them available for re-allocation at the earliest possible date, however, as outlined hereunder a number of mitigating factors impact on the time taken to refurbish, re-allocate and tenant a vacant local authority property.

When a property becomes vacant, a survey of the property is completed by our clerk of works in order to establish the extent of the work required to the property prior to its re-allocation. It should be noted that some properties are returned in a very poor condition and require substantial works to be completed in order to enable reallocation. It should also be noted that there continues to be a high level of properties being returned to Leitrim County Council on an ongoing basis. To date in 2015, while there have been a total of 41 No. New Tenancies created (New Lettings) there have also been a total of 41 No. Properties returned to Leitrim County Council. This high turnover level generates a significant level of pre-letting repairs as invariably all properties require some level of pre letting repairs prior to re-allocation.

Where the works required are very substantial, the house may be included for submission for possible funding under the Voids Programme. If this is the case, the details of the Property and the estimated cost of the works are submitted to the Department as part of our submission for funding under the Voids Programme. If the application for Funding is successful and Funding under the Voids Programme is approved, Leitrim County Council is required to comply with Procurement Requirements in order to have the required works completed under Contract. This requires that Contract Documentation be prepared and the works advertised for Tender and Tenders invited. Following receipt of Tenders, all Tenders must be assessed under a number of criteria including, Value for Money, Health & Safety requirements for Contractor and other relevant criteria. The successful Tenderer is then notified and a Contract Commencement Date is agreed. It should be noted that where a Property is included in the Voids Programme, the works completed to the Property are substantial in nature and include all or some of the following – Energy Efficiency Upgrades, Installation of new Heating Systems, Internal Refurbishment and Decorating, Installation of Windows and/or Doors, External Works including remedial works to Boundary Walls, External Painting, Installation of new footpaths or Remedial Works to existing footpaths, Installation of Level Access Facilities and a range of other works. These works in themselves take a substantial period of time to complete. On completion of the required works under the Voids Programme, the Property is then allocated.

In 2014, Leitrim County Council refurbished a total of 15 No. Properties under the Voids Programme. In 2015 a total of 9 No. Properties have been included in our Voids Programme and works have commenced on 7 No. of these Properties with the 2 remaining Properties currently at Procurement Stage."
The Cathaoirleach of the Municipal District, Councillor Sean McDermott outlined that Motion No. 7 in Councillor Padraig Fallons name also related to the issue of local authority houses and he proposed that it be taken in conjunction with Motion No. 3. This was agreed by the Members.

**To consider the following Notice of Motion submitted by Councillor Padraig Fallon:**

"What is the average waiting time for local authority tenants in relation to having housing issues/repairs carried i.e. what is the average time for repairs to be completed in tenanted properties once a repair request has been logged by the tenant."

**Report by Director of Service, Corporate Services & Housing**

"All repair/maintenance requests are logged by Leitrim County Council on the database system for response. In 2014, a total of 615 No. maintenance / repair requests were logged and to date in 2015 a total of 558 No. maintenance / repair requests have been logged. All requests received are categorised as Emergency, Urgent or Routine.

Emergency repairs are classified in this category if they present an immediate danger to the occupant or a member of the public or to the property itself. The Council aims to complete requests logged as emergency repairs within a period of 2 – 3 days. To date in 2015 no requests received have been classified as emergency, however from previous instances of items logged as such, the Council would always respond within the required period of 2 – 3 days.

Repairs are classified as urgent if there is a risk that the property will be seriously damaged. The Council aims to complete urgent repairs within a period of 3 weeks. Of the urgent repair requests logged and closed to date in 2015 the average time taken to complete these is 8 days.

Routine repair items are classified in this category where the repair is necessary but is not deemed as emergency or urgent. The Council aims to complete routine repairs within the shortest possible timeframe having regard to resource constraints. To date in 2015, the average time taken to complete routine repair requests is 13 – 14 days.

There is an ongoing issue in relation to the Council having to respond to maintenance requests which are the responsibility of tenants and this contributes significantly to the high level of maintenance requests currently logged (615 No. In 2014 and 558 No. To date in 2015). This is placing a strain on both the staffing and financial resources of Leitrim County Council. However, the Council is currently revising and updating the tenant handbook which will be circulated to all Council Tenants. This new Tenant Handbook will clearly specify tenant maintenance responsibilities and these requests will not in future be dealt with by Leitrim County Council."

Councillor Mary Bohan expressed her concern about the length of time it takes to get local authority houses turned around with the number of people that are currently on the housing lists. Councillor Bohan proposed that the Council call on the Government to provide additional resources to carry out repairs in local authority houses.

Councillor Padraig Fallon supported the motion.

Ms. Mary Quinn, Director of Services advised the Members that to date in 2016, 41 no. Houses have been returned to the housing stock. She stated that there is a very strong focus on the refurbishment vacant houses with the aim of dealing with these by early spring 2016 and the Council has a comprehensive voids reinstatement programme ongoing. Ms. Quinn advised the members that there
is a high number of refusals on houses and a significant number of those that are available for letting are in areas of low demand.

Ms. Quinn informed the members that the Council proposes to bring a policy on Choice Based Letting to the next Strategic Policy Committee.

She further outlined that there will always be financial and human resource constraints and that there is a budget for housing which has to be maintained.

Councillor Sean McDermott paid tribute to the Council staff for dealing with emergencies so quickly and effectively.

**MMD 15/134**  
**19/10/15**  
**Raheelin Bridge**  

To consider the following Notice of Motion submitted by Councillor Padraig Fallon;

"I propose that repairs be carried out at Raheelin Bridge. This bridge is on a sharp u-bend, part of the walls on either side have collapsed. Road users and the local community are seeking repairs to be carried out and the bridge to be widened."

**Report by Senior Engineer, Roads**  
"Repair works on Reheelin bridge located on Local Road L61212-3 will commence later this year when labour resources allow, following the completion of the current Road Works Programme."

Councillor Padraig Fallon outlined his satisfaction with the reply.

**MMD 15/135**  
**19/10/15**  
**Winter Maintenance Programme**  

To consider the following Notice of Motion submitted by Councillor Frank Dolan;

"I will ask Leitrim County Council to have Road Number R286/278 included in the Winter Maintenance Programme for the coming winter."

**Report by Senior Engineer, Roads**  
"The Annual Winter Service Plan which will be presented to the Council at the November Council Meeting has over 350km of roads identified as the priority winter maintenance routes. The R286/287 is not on the identified priority routes for routine treatment. The Council does not have the capacity to extend this service to other roads not included in the Annual Winter Service Plan at this time."

Councillor Frank Dolan expressed his disappointment that roads R286 and R287 are not included in the Annual Winter Service plan 2015/2016. He stated that last year, despite a mild winter a number of cars had to be abandoned due to the conditions of these roads. Councillor Dolan expressed his disappointment that there is insufficient funding to include these roads on the winter gritting programme.
Mr. Shay O’Connor, Senior Engineer informed the members that there are currently five gritters in operation which are working four to five hours each night and sometimes up to ten hours. He continued stating that every road cannot be kept ice free and that the Council keep 350km of roads in the County gritted each winter.

Councillor Mary Bohan queried if these roads could be considered for gritting in severe weather conditions. Mr. O’Connor advised that he will refer the matter to Sligo County Council for consideration.

MMD 15/136  
19/10/15  
Roads Programme 2016

To consider the following Notice of Motion submitted by Councillor Frank Dolan;

"I will ask Leitrim County Council to have Road Number L4232 included in the roads programme for 2016."

Report by Senior Engineer, Roads

"Road number L4232 at Fenagh will be assessed shortly and considered for inclusion in the 2016 Area Programme subject to priority. Routine Maintenance works will be carried out on this road in the coming weeks if required."

MMD 15/137  
19/10/15  
Upgrade of Primary Care Services at Kinlough

To consider the following Notice of Motion submitted by Councillor Justin Warnock;

"I ask Leitrim County Council to write to the HSE, on behalf of the people of Kinlough, Tullaghan and the surrounding areas, for the immediate upgrade of its Primary Care Services at Kinlough, to meet the growing demands of this community. This community needs an adequate GP Service, appropriate services for our 600 + children under the age of 18, services to meet the needs of our older population and people with mental health issues."

Councillor Justin Warnock stated that the GP service is being dwindled out quietly with the speech and therapy for young children service no longer available.

Councillor Mary Bohan and Councillor Padraig Fallon supported the motion.

MMD 15/138  
19/10/15  
Upgrade Signage

To consider the following Notice of Motion submitted by Councillor Justin Warnock;

"I ask the Senior Area Engineer to have the signage upgraded on two dangerous bends on the R281 at Gilbride’s on the Kiltyclogher Road and have Eircom replace their unsafe pole which dangerously hangs out over the road at this location."

Report by Senior Engineer, Roads

"An assessment of the existing road signage will take place and new signage erected if necessary. Eircom will be contacted in relation to there pole in question"
**Hedges on the R221 Road at Annaghboy**

To consider the following Notice of Motion submitted by Councillor Felim Gurn;

"I request an update on this issue raised previously. The hedges on the R221 Road at Annaghboy are so overgrown that school buses and refuse lorries are unable to negotiate the road safely. The entrance to the commonage area serving the O'Donnell's Rock turf allotments is unsafe with the appearance of large potholes “the size of a car”. As a result of the downturn in the economy more and more people are exercising their turbary rights on the bog and the subsequent increase in traffic is resulting in this become a health and safety issue."

**Report by Senior Engineer, Roads**
"Following a recent inspection of Local road LT4221 at Annaghboy it was noted that the road side hedges have now been cut back. The road to the commonage area serving O'Donnell's Rock has not a sealed surface and it is not a public road. Leitrim County Council has no responsibility to maintain this section of road."

Councillor Felim Gurn advised that there is natural and beautiful scenery from O'Donnell's Rock and now there is no funding to maintain the roads in this location. The motion was supported by Councillor Padraig Fallon who outlined that the road is not a public road and there are no local improvement schemes or community involvement schemes available.

Councillor Justin Warnock stated that people should be made aware that there is no funding available for maintaining these roads and that there will be no money in the future.

**Resurfacing Works on LT4231**

To consider the following Notice of Motion submitted by Councillor Felim Gurn;

"I request an update on this issue raised previously. I have been advised that this road (from Micheál Flanagan's house to Patricia McKenna's house) has not been resurfaced during the past twelve years. As a result potholes are causing a severe problem for road-users. Due to the non-maintenance of the roadside culverts and ditches surface water cannot dissipate after heavy rainfall and flooding occurs. Grass is growing on the centre of the road."

**Report by Senior Engineer, Roads**
"Road number LT4231 at Curry Killarga will be assessed shortly and considered for inclusion in the 2016 Area Programme subject to priority. Routine Maintenance works has been carried out on this road in recent weeks."

**Potholes on L61181**

To consider the following Notice of Motion submitted by Councillor Sean McDermott;

"Can potholes be filled on road number L61181. This road leaves off the Manorhamilton to Rossinver regional road."
Report by Senior Engineer, Roads
"Local road L61181 will be assessed shortly and routine maintenance works carried out if required"

MMD 15/142
19/10/15
Cul-de-Sac Signage

To consider the following Notice of Motion submitted by Councillor Sean McDermott;

"I request the Council to improve signage on the way up to Sean Mac Diarmadas house from the Kiltyclogher side. There are two cul- de-sac roads leading off the local road that takes you to the Homestead of Sean MacDiarmada and this can be very confusing for visitors."

Report by Senior Engineer, Roads
"A review of the existing signage in place for the Sean Mac Diarmada homestead will take place in the coming weeks"

Ms. Mary Quinn informed the Members that the next meeting of the Manorhamilton Municipal District will take place on Monday 16th November, 2015 at 2.30pm.

This concluded the business of the meeting at 14.40pm.

SIGNED:
Councillor Sean McDermott
Cathaoirleach, Manorhamilton Municipal District

DATE: 16th November 2015

SIGNED:
Shane Tiernan
Meetings Administrator