

Miontuairiscí / Meeting Minutes

Ordinary Meeting

Ashbourne Municipal District

10.00am, 08th October 2024, Ashbourne Civic Offices

Cathaoirleach, Councillor **Alan Tobin** presided.

Councillors Present: Suzanne Jamal, Amanda Smith, Conor Tormey, Helen Meyer.

Apologies/ Absent:

Councillors Present via Zoom: Joe Bonner

Officials in Attendance:

Director of Service: Barry Lynch

Executive Engineer: Mel Cronin

Meetings Administrator: Áine Bird

Assistant Staff Officer: Stephen Carey

Clerical Officer: Kathryn Fox

1.0 Confirmation of minutes of the Ordinary meeting held on 03rd September 2024

The minutes of the meeting held on the 3rd of September 2024 were confirmed on the proposal of **Councillor Conor Tormey** and seconded by **Councillor Amanda Smith**.

2.0 Matters arising from the Minutes

There were no matters arising.

3.0 Expressions of Sympathy and Congratulations

Sympathy was extended to:

- Paul Cahill, Council employee on the death of his brother Mark Cahill
- The Family of the former Minister Mary O'Rourke
- The family of the late Councillor John Naughten Roscommon

4.0 To receive an update on projects from EirGrid.

Eirgrid representatives- Grainne Duffy, Jason Kenna and Aisling O'Mahony gave a project overview update regarding the Fingal to East Meath Grid Reinforcement. They said that this is due to the growth in the region, the current system nearing capacity with an increase in the demand for electricity. Currently they advised that Eirgrid is at the project development stage and looking at the best technology options and the areas/zones under consideration. They said that a planning application will then be submitted in 12-18 months' time.

Information events are scheduled in a number of locations during October and submissions can be made to the Eirgrid Portal.

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The members thanked the representatives and raised the following:

- Underground is the preferred option.
- Referred to solar farms in Kilbride where there's extra capacity here.
- Referred to the impact on the public and the digging up of roads that have been re-instated.
- Feel that these consultations are premature.
- Enquired to the Community gain and the amount of funding.
- Asked to the start/finish dates of works and if underground or overhead.

Eirgrid advised that they are commencing the consultations early to seek out knowledge, and any concerns. They said that they are at the project development stage and deciding on options and will present again when the preferred option is agreed. They advised that once planning permission has been granted, they will have a better idea of start dates and the total the Community fund will amount to.

5.0 Statutory Business

5.1 Planning

- 5.1.1** To consider the taking in charge of Milltown Meadows Ashbourne and the making of a declaration that the roads within these developments shall be public roads in accordance with Section 11 Roads Act 1993 and the Planning & Development Acts 2000-2022.

Neville Carolan, Building Control updated on the taking in charge process and said that the statutory display period has passed with no submissions and therefore recommend the taking in charge of the roads and services within this development.

A discussion ensued whereby the members raised several concerns regarding the estate which is under the management of the Voluntary Housing Body Cluid. They referred to leaking water meters, lack of maintenance to the trees and grass, graffiti on the walls, sculptures need replacing, signage and lining requires updating.

The members were advised that the roads, footpaths and public lighting are the only services that the council take in charge and at the time of the inspection all services were compliant with the requirements of Meath County Council.

The members agreed that the TIC be deferred until these items were addressed.

5.2 Transportation

- 5.2.1** To receive a Progress Report on works undertaken/planned for Ashbourne Municipal District.

The report circulated in advance was noted and the following raised:

- Commended on all the works being undertaken.
- Enquired when road lining will take place.
- Referred to the skilled works carried out by our own team recently and requested that this be highlighted to the CE.
- Suggested that a tree cutting fund be available countywide.
- Complimented the Council, Uisce Eireann and Coffey contractors on works carried out on the Kentstown road which were completed on time.
- Enquired on the Arborist report and if members could be made aware of the trees being cut/trimmed.

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- Referred to the weedkiller being sprayed on wild growing areas.
- Wotton residents referred to hedges being cut, and debris left on road.
- Garden City residents doing a clean and if rubbish could be collected.

The engineer responded accordingly and said there's a delay with the road marking contractor, the Arborist has been appointed and the inspection/report is currently underway – the Tree Surgeon contract will then go to tender based on the Arborist report, suggested submitting areas that should not be included for spraying, and these will be referred to the contractor.

5.3 Corporate Affairs & Governance

- 5.3.1** To receive a proposal for the naming of the road from Thomas Ashe roundabout to Millbourne.

The members were advised that this was a motion discussed in 2022 by the MD and referred to the commemoration committee for consideration. The committee proposed the name Mulcahy Road which was referred to the MD meeting of October 2022 for consideration. The item was deferred to a later date for more discussion.

On the proposal of **Councillor Alan Tobin** and seconded by **Councillor Conor Tormey**, members agreed to the naming as per the briefing document circulated.
Cllr Helen Meyer on behalf of her party was not in agreement with the proposal.

The proposal will now be referred to the CPG for consideration.

- 5.3.2** To note the Municipal District Allocations submitted by Councillors on behalf of Ashbourne Municipal District

The allocations were noted. Members were reminded to submit applications for processing as the closing date had now passed.

6.0 Notice of Question

6.1 Submitted by Councillor Conor Tormey

"I ask that Meath County Council provide a rubbish bin at the junction of Racehill, leading to St. Mary's School."

Response:

Ashbourne Municipal District have procured compactor bins for this location and for some of the new bus stops constructed on the R135. As there is a proposed pedestrian crossing at Tudor Grove/Millennium Garden, we intend to incorporate a new compactor bin on the proposed pedestrian crossing footway area, the exact location will be determined in due course.

The response was noted.

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6.2 Submitted by Councillor Alan Tobin

"Can I ask for an update on Ned's cottage and the possible timeframe for the cottage to be available for public use, are there many modifications required and if so at what cost?"

Response:

The property has not yet been transferred by the developer to Meath Co. Council, as there are some works to be completed and re-inspected prior to the Council agreeing to the transfer. Once confirmation is received that the works have been completed, the Council will arrange the necessary inspection.

Assuming a satisfactory outcome to this process, a use will then be sought for the building which requires minimal funding input from the Council.

The response was noted.

6.3 Submitted by Councillor Helen Meyer

"To ask the council to provide a detailed update on the skatepark for Ashbourne."

Response:

The tender process for the skate park is at an advanced stage with a preferred contactor identified. As part of the project, the Office of Public Works must give consent under S50 of the Arterial Drainage Act 1945. Some additional information has been requested by the OPW in connection with this process and the provision of this is being arranged through the design consultants. The S50 procedure must be completed before works can proceed.

The response was noted.

7.0 Notice of Motion

7.1 Submitted by Councillor Conor Tormey

"I call on Meath County Council to erect bus stops at Rathfeigh Cross on the N2, where it intersects with the L1002."

Supporting information subject to the motion being proposed, seconded, and considered:

The provision of bus stops is a matter for the National Transport Authority and the relevant bus operators. Meath County Council does not have a direct responsibility for the provision of such infrastructure, our primary function in relation to bus stops is the approval (or revocation) of stopping locations for licensed bus transport services. A request can be submitted to the NTA directly via email to oireachtaslaiison@nationaltransport.ie (for Elected Representatives) with "Bus Stop Request" marked/included in the subject line. Additionally, as the N2 is a National Road, this location falls under the remit of the National Roads Authority.

Meath County Council, in conjunction with the NTA and TII, are currently undertaking a review of bus

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infrastructure along the N2 corridor. The Rathfeigh Cross area is included in this review.

The motion and response were noted on the proposal of **Councillor Conor Tormey** and seconded by **Councillor Alan Tobin**.

7.2 Submitted by Councillor Alan Tobin

"I call on Meath County Council to designate and initiate part 8 on the site recently vacated by the OPW for a small playground and council staff welfare office/canteen."

Supporting information subject to the motion being proposed, seconded, and considered:

The response to Cllr. Tobin's notice of question, which was provided at the September Municipal District meeting, set out the criteria being considered, in a review of the future use of the site at Ashewood/Hunter's Lane, namely:

1. The significant investment that has already taken place in the Ashbourne Linear Park and the planned further investment in the new skate park.
2. The overarching priority as expressed by the Members for the provision of a new park for the town.
3. The need to improve permeability within the town which will provide easier access to existing recreational facilities
4. Future district operational requirements.

With regard to item 4, the Council's Transportation Department will carry out a review of its depot facilities, which will include an assessment of the suitability of this site, to meet operational requirements within the MD.

In conclusion, it would be premature to initiate any Part VIII application process in advance of the conclusion of this review.

The motion and response were noted on the proposal of **Councillor Alan Tobin** and seconded by **Councillor Amanda Smith**.

7.3 Submitted by Councillor Alan Tobin

"I call on the Council to carry out a survey, in conjunction with Councillors, to determine possible priority areas for pedestrian crossing in Ashbourne, for example Killegland/Broadmeadow streets."

Supporting information subject to the motion being proposed, seconded, and considered:

Requests for new or upgraded pedestrian crossing facilities can be added to a list of new works requests and will be considered for inclusion in future works programmes, based on the prioritisation of schemes following an engineering screening/evaluation assessment. Part of this assessment will take cognisance of future transport projects and strategies such as the Ashbourne Public Realm Plan and Local Area Plan, which will consider objectives for future pedestrian requirements.

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Ashbourne Municipal District and Meath County Council Transport have designed, procured and constructed several pedestrian crossing facilities in Ashbourne MD. An example is a crossing for Tudor Grove in Ashbourne is currently designed and is at public consultation stage.

Regarding the existing pedestrian facility on Killegland Street (Tesco to McDonalds), a traffic survey was requested by Ashbourne Municipal District to determine options for upgrading the existing pedestrian facilities. This survey was carried out in July 2024 and has eliminated some of the lower threshold options, i.e. the type recently installed at Garden City. There are also preliminary design options for pedestrian crossing facilities at the T-junction of Broadmeadow Castle and Castle Street.

The motion and response were noted on the proposal of **Councillor Alan Tobin** and seconded by **Councillor Suzanne Jamal**.

7.4 Submitted by Councillor Helen Meyer

"In advance of commencing the R135 roadworks south of Ashbourne, that the Council undertake a comprehensive assessment of the ongoing R135 Active Travel Cycle network works."

Supporting information subject to the motion being proposed, seconded, and considered:

The Infrastructure Guidelines (IG) sets out the value for money guidelines for the evaluation, planning and management of public investment projects. These Guidelines replaced the Public Spending Code requirements for capital expenditure and the arrangements set out in the IG apply to all public bodies and all bodies in receipt of Exchequer capital funding.

Where required, departments and agencies (such as the NTA, URDF, TII etc.) draw up their own sector specific procedures for evaluating, planning and managing public investment, which align with the IG. In the case of the works carried out in Ashbourne, Meath County Council comply with the comprehensive reporting requirements set out in these documents throughout the stages of each project development commensurate with the size and scale of the individual proposal under consideration.

The motion and response were noted on the proposal of **Councillor Helen Meyer** and seconded by **Councillor Alan Tobin**.

Cllr Meyer said that an analysis needs to be undertaken of the total cost of the current works. Barry Lynch replied that a review of the current works must take place prior to closing out the final account and reports.

8.0 Correspondence

There was none.

9.0 Any Other Business

Gillian Mangan, Engineer, updated on the Housing Estates proposed for inclusion in the 30km special Byelaws for housing estates. She said that these will be placed on public display and will revert with any submissions and proposed changes for approval.

The members noted the update.

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The members raised the following items:

- Enquired why the 3 bed homes in Millrace do not have baths.
- Asked why the Choice Based Letting scheme is used.
- Referred to the Choice Based Letting (CBL) scheme and why it is used for some housing developments and not for others.
- How do applicants know when houses are being advertised through the CBL scheme.

Barry Lynch, Director advised that the CBL scheme allows applicants to bid for a house in an area that they are interested in residing in. He said that the scheme is updated weekly. All Housing applicants were written to at the launch of CBL and there was a subsequent mailshot to encourage use of the scheme. It was also noted that the members have a log on to see what properties are available each week. He said that he would revert regarding when the scheme is updated.

The meeting concluded at 11.45am

Signed:

Cathaoirleach