

## **COMHAIRLE CHONTAE NA GAILLIMHE**

### **Ceantar Bardasach Chonamara** **Municipal District of Conamara**

#### **Minutes of the Meeting of the Municipal District of Conamara held in the Council Chamber, Aras an Chontae, Galway on the 11th September 2017 @ 1.00 p.m**

#### **I LATHAIR:**

##### **Baill:**

Cllr. N. Byrne Cathaoirleach,  
S. Walsh, S. O'Tuairisg, S. Ó Cualáin,  
T. Ó Cuarraoin, N. Thomas, E. Mannion  
T. Welby

##### **Oifigigh:**

G. Mullarkey, Head of Finance  
D. Mitchell, S.E Roads & Transportation  
P. Breathnach, S.E.E Conamara  
E. Lydon, Area Engineer, S. Conamara  
M. Ní Chionna, Senior Engineer, Roads  
V. Loughnane, Senior Planner  
B. Dunne, Assistant Planner  
J. Russell, Executive Planner  
S. Groarke, Meetings Administrator

##### **Apologies:**

Cllr. T. Healy

#### **1. Minutes of the MD of Conamara Meeting held on the 6-6-2017 CMD 17033**

The adoption of the Minutes of the Meeting held on the 6-6-2017 was proposed by Cllr. E. Mannion and seconded by Cllr. N. Thomas.

#### **2. Matters arising from the Minutes CMD 17034**

Cllr. E. Mannion raised her concern about the situation concerning the replacement for the Area Engineer for North Conamara based in the Clifden Office. She expressed her wish for more certainty as regards this role as there is a lot of work to be done. She acknowledged the fact that Padraic Breathnach was providing cover at present. She also enquired if the Councillors would be notified when the proposed revision to the Speed Limits are advertised and M. Ní Chionna confirmed this. Cllr. N. Thomas referred to his query at the previous

meeting whether it is intended to surface dress the laybys on the Bunnakill-Maam Cross road. D. Mitchell advised that he is awaiting a response from TII in regard to this. Comh. S. O'Tuairisg also referred to the query he raised at the previous meeting in regard to the local input to CES schemes i.e provision of land, labour etc and confirmation that these schemes are covered for insurance and are taken over by the Council on completion. D. Mitchell confirmed that the Council provides insurance cover and is responsible for maintenance when they are taken in charge. He also enquired in regard to revised speed limits for Tiernea/Lettermore and was advised by M. Ní Chionna they have been reviewed. Comh. S. O'Cuailain referred to the periodic signs for speed limits adjacent to schools and advised that some schools remain open during the summer.

### **3. Update on the N59**

**CMD 17035**

Cllr. N. Thomas referred to the Clifden-Derrylea section of the N59 and proposed the resolution that this be progressed by the Council through the Part 8 Planning process as there were no restrictions there as regards the SAC. This proposal was seconded by Cllr. S. Walsh and agreed. He also proposed a Part 8 for the section of the N59 from Letterfrack to the Bridge at Actons and this was agreed. D. Mitchell advised that the Council was awaiting the result of an assessment from T.I.I in regard to the best way to progress the section between Clifden-Derrylea. He stated that he will also check the position as regards the design for Letterfrack and revert back on this. He also referred to the possibility of funding for overlays in 2018 for the N59 west of Maam Cross. Cllr. N. Thomas enquired whether the Council should apply the Part 8 process now in order to speed up progress as it would be viewed as a definite start. D. Mitchell again referred to the fact that TII were currently assessing the Clifden-Maam Cross section and would provide the Council with an update in due course. He advised that as regards a Part 8- consultants would have to be appointed to undertake a ground investigation and this would take time. Cllr. S. Walsh stated that the Council is the road authority for the County not TII and it has to be proactive as regards this –TII will not instigate a Part 8 for Clifden-Derrylea. He advised that the 9 Councillors want this done as this will give the Council leverage as regards progress on the remainder. He also referred to the fact that €5 million was lost as a result of the Bord Pleanála refusal. D. Mitchell referred to the fact that the method statements for Bunakill-Maam Cross have been agreed and the same process would be required for Derrylea. He stated that everyone wants to see progress on the Clifden-Maam Cross section of the N59 and expressed his opinion that political pressure will also be required for this. Cllr. E. Mannion cited the progress to date including the completion of the overlay at Bunakill-Oughterard, the design for Letterfrack and the agreement to the method statements for Bunnakill-Maam Cross. She advised that in regard to the section between Clifden-Derrylea that TII did not want the project split. She also requested better markings for Recess car park which adjoins a dangerous stretch of road and this would highlight the difference between them. Cllr. T. Welby referred to the delegation from the N59 Action Campaign at the meeting in February and the comment made which questioned the commitment of some of the Councillors to the N59 upgrade- he stated that it was vital that national and local politicians work together on this. He referred to the meeting with the Minister Shane Ross T.D Minister for Transport and the fact that local politicians such as Eamon O'Cuív T.D and the Cathaoirleach of the Municipal District of Conamara were not invited. He also welcomed the work done to date on the overlay and progress with the method statements. Cllr. N. Byrne complimented the way the contractors completed the overlay at Oughterard-Bunnakill with minimum delays and minimum adverse effect on tourists. She welcomed the possibility of future funding for more overlays on the N59. She

expressed her agreement with the views of Cllr. Welby concerning the way the meeting with the Minister for Transport was arranged and welcomed the positive news in regard to the method statements.

#### **4. Bus Facilities in Conamara**

**CMD 17036**

D. Mitchell advised that the Council has to assess the designs prepared by the National Transport Authority (NTA) for the proposed bus facilities including shelters at Oughterard, Moycullen and Spiddal. He stated that the NTA will provide funding for these once the designs are approved and suitable sites have been identified. He confirmed that Council officials have met representatives of the NTA on site but it appears that the site in Spiddal opposite the secondary school is a problem. Comh. T. O'Curraoin advised of a layby opposite the chemist in Barna where he proposed he would meet with P. Breathnach to discuss its suitability. Cllr. N. Thomas enquired about the design specifications as the bus stop in Spiddal is not on a National road and was advised by D. Mitchell that they will all be designed to the same standard. Comh. S. O'Cualáin advised that the design of the bus shelter at the Conamara Coast was good whereas the one at Carraroe is poor. Cllr. N. Byrne welcomed the fact that the Council was assessing the designs and advised of the importance of accessibility for wheelchairs and prams.

#### **5. Bridge at Oughterard**

**CMD 17037**

D. Mitchell advised that the Council is engaged in discussion with TII at present in regard to the provision of a new bridge for Oughterard. Cllr. E. Mannion referred to the €250,000 allocation in regard to the Village Upgrade Scheme for Oughterard in 2019. D. Mitchell advised that this is provided from the Discretionary Grant but this funding is not sufficient on its own. Cllr. S. Walsh advised of the expectation in Oughterard for progress on the bridge and enquired if the €250,000 could be initially used for a preliminary design and also the position as regards NPWS. P. Breathnach advised that NPWS are on board as regards the proposed footbridge but it was the proposed road bridge which NPWS held up on account of the pearl mussel habitat. He advised that TII should provide the funds for the proposed bridge as it is on a National Secondary route. Cllr. T. Welby advised that the design should be initiated through the planning process. Cllr. S. Walsh stated that Sean Kyne T.D and other Oireachtas members should be approached in order to assist progress on this. Cllr. N. Byrne advised of the danger to school children posed by the existing bridge and that she had discussed the funding issue with M. Timmins A/DOS during the summer. She stated that certainty was required on this and wished to keep this item on the Agenda to highlight awareness.

#### **6. Works on Piers**

**MD 17038**

Comh. S. O'Cualáin advised that funding has been allocated for works on piers in Conamara but they may not go ahead as there is no Engineers available to draw up plans and supervise the works. He stated that plans should have been drawn up earlier in the year and it would be difficult for contractors to undertake works in late autumn with short days and high tidal conditions. M. Ní Chionna advised that Ciaran Wynne is assigned to the major capital works proposed for the Inis Meáin and Inishere Piers. D. Mitchell stated that the Council received funding for works on 5 piers and the problem associated with the lack of engineering staff

was well flagged. He stated it was intended to undertake works on 2 of the piers by direct labour and the Roads Section will do its best to progress them with the resources available. In response to a query from Cllr. E. Mannion he advised that a detailed assessment is required to be undertaken in regard to Roundstone Pier and a survey of the structural works will be done this year. Cllr. N. Thomas raised his concerns concerning Sruthán Pier at Carraroe in regard to the urgent need to treat the slippery surface. He advised of the potential for an accident similar to that which occurred at the Pier in Buncrana, Co Donegal. He stated that he knows a company which can design a permanent feature such as a barrier/double gate for the slipway which would suit the fishermen and other users and will be cost effective. He advised that the Council should take a serious look at this. Cllr. E. Mannion requested an update on Inishere Pier and was advised that this will be provided at the next meeting.

## **6. Update on the R-336**

**MD 17039**

D. Mitchell & M. Ní Chionna advised that M. Timmins A/DOS had to attend the meeting in Tuam but he had briefed them on the current position in regard to the R-336. They advised that he is seeking funding from T.I.I in order to pay what is due to RPS Consultants and get them to provide a route selection report and recommendation on the preferred routes. This should involve a reduction in the number of the current alternative routes which will be freed from planning restrictions. They stated that this will be difficult to progress and the process may have to be repeated again but it is anticipated that the eventual outcome will be a choice between 2 emerging routes. Comh S. O'Tuairisg advised that this new road is badly needed as the traffic between Spiddal and Galway has increased and is sometimes chaotic. He stated that it is important to work towards getting rid of the planning restrictions on most of the current alternative routes- some of these are there since 2006 with other routes added to the process in 2009. He advised that some families are waiting on planning permission since 2006 –but there is also no guarantee that the Government will provide funding for the proposed R-336. Cllr. N. Thomas advised that this is the first time he has heard an alternative version to what was previously outlined to the Councillors i.e that the outcome of the GCOB planning process had to be awaited to determine the emerging route for the R-336. He stated that it is important that RPS narrow it down to 2 routes. He stated his opinion that they should discuss the Spiddal-Moycullen route more to determine if it is a viable alternative. Cllr. S. Walsh enquired if the Councillors could have a meeting with RPS Consultants in regard to the R-336. He advised that RPS did not examine the scenario of using the existing road network i.e the Rahoon-Aille an Phreacháin road. He stated that the public will not mind the widening of existing roads and described how roads are built for windfarms such as near Lettergunnet. He advised that the Brown route may not be feasible and that they should look at the existing road network with RPS. Comh. T. O'Curraoin stated that the planning for the proposed R-336 was badly handled in the past and they should agree on a route through Conamara which will also cater for broadband, a cycle route and a railway line. Cllr. E. Mannion stated that the priority is to free up the existing routes and examine the feasibility of the 2 emerging routes. She advised that the Councillors may be faced with a tough decision in the future. Comh. S. O'Cualáin stated that he is in favour of getting rid of most of the existing routes as soon as possible and advised of the need to consider the suggested alternative route. Cllr. T. Welby stated that 5 of the original Councillors supported the Brown Route which as the former DOS Frank Gilmore advised was not feasible as it is too far from the populated areas. He stated that the Brown route is on designated lands and has given rise to false hope as it will not get approval from Bord Pleanála. He stated that at this stage the Councillors have been discussing it for 8 years and the Consultants have been paid substantial fees. He

stated that consideration of the alternative route will mean reactivating the public consultation process again. He advised that a decision on the selection of the best route can be made when the Consultants present their report and recommendation. Cllr. S. Walsh stated that RPS may recommend a route which would be difficult to secure agreement on. D. Mitchell advised that the consultant's report and recommendation will determine progress on the matter. Cllr. N. Byrne welcomed this as a sign of progress and hoped for a positive outcome.

## **11. Cathaoirleach's Business**

**CMD 17040**

N. Byrne welcomed Eamon Lydon who is the new Assistant Engineer based in the Carraroe Office to the meeting. She referred to the problem associated with the turnover of staff and its adverse effect on Council services. Cllr. E. Mannion advised of the official opening of the 40<sup>th</sup> Clifden Arts Festival by the President Michael D. Higgins on Wednesday 13-9-2017 at 7.00 p.m. Comh S.O'Tuairisg enquired if the Council could make an application under the Minor Flood Relief program in regard to Teach An Phobail, Inverin and Coláiste Lúrgan in regard to clearing the river of debris. Comh. S. O'Cualáin enquired if the Council will seek funding in 2018 of €45,000 in regard to the bridge at Recess which is not safe. He also enquired about the footpath at Cill Chiaráin and if the work will go ahead. D. Mitchell advised that he will check the position as regards the bridge at Recess and that the Council's own staff will undertake the works on the footpath. Cllr. N. Thomas referred to the placing of signs for knotweed and advised that now was the ideal time for spraying. He enquired about the €30,000 allocation for Tully school which has not all been spent and was advised by M. Ní Chionna that she will check these matters. He also referred to the problem with bumps on the surface of the N59 and the responsibility of landowners to cut branches of trees which are overhanging from their property over the public road—he advised that a survey should be undertaken to identify trees and hedges which pose a danger to road users. D. Mitchell advised that T.I.I have provided funding in regard to the bumps on the N59 and he would check the matter with P. Breathnach. He referred to the hedge/tree cutting program and will request the Area offices to identify current requirements for same—he advised that the Council has contacted landowners about their responsibilities as regards overhanging trees. Comh. T.O'Curraoin stated that the hedges at Paddy's Cross have not been trimmed enough. Cllr. S. Walsh referred to the safety issue concerning the junction at Tigh Tommy and Puiríní and enquired if the Council would use the CPO process. D.Mitchell advised that the cost associated with CPO would be prohibitive and it would be more advisable to undertake negotiations with the landowners.

## **10. Date & Venue for Next Meeting**

**MD 17041**

It was agreed that the next meeting would be held commencing at 1.00 p.m on Monday 6-11-2017 in the Council Chamber.

***CROCHNAIGH AN CRUINNIU ANSIN***