



**Minutes of Rathkeale Area Committee Meeting
Held in County Hall, Dooradoyle,
on 27th February, 2006 – 10.30.a.m.**

Present In the Chair : Councillor D. Naughton.

Members Present : Councillors J. Griffin, T. Neville, J. Sheahan, K. Sheahan.

Officials Present : P. O'Connor, Asst. Co. Manager, B. Martin S.E.E., G. Liston, E.E., K. McMahon, E.E., T. Breen, S.O., D. Troy, S.E.P., S. Hayes, A.O., M. Spillane, Resettlement Officer, T. Tarpey, S.E.

Deputation : I. Meade, M. Brennan.

Minutes of Area Committee Meeting held on Monday, 23rd January, 2006.

The Minutes of the Area Committee Meeting held on Monday 23rd January, 2006, were adopted. Proposed by Councillor J. Griffin, and seconded by Councillor K. Sheahan.

The Chairman and Members agreed to receive D. Troy, Senior Executive Planner, for a brief outline on the proposed review of the Rathkeale Town Plan.

Rathkeale Town Plan Review :

D. Troy, S.E.P., informed Members a review of the Rathkeale Town Plan would be commencing in March, 2006, and would involve meeting with local groups and identifying issues. It was anticipated the Review would be completed within 9/10 months. A Meeting in the Rathkeale Community College on Monday, 27th March would follow an initial meeting with the West Limerick Resource Group at 8.00.p.m., to which Members would be invited to attend.

Councillor K. Sheahan queried the involvement of the West Limerick Resource Group in the consultation process, and questioned if the elected Members were being informed as an afterthought, despite it being their remit to adopt/approve the final Plan.

Councillor J. Griffin questioned whether external consultants were being engaged for the Town Plan Reviews. He stressed the importance to the Senior Executive Planner that the Area Members be fully informed at all stages of the Town Plan Review process. Councillor Griffin also remarked on the condition/cleanliness of the new headquarter offices, especially the Meeting Room being used, and requested Management be made aware of the Member's comment.

D. Troy, S.E.P., in response to Members questions, confirmed the involvement of the West Limerick Resource Group in the Review process was to utilise the Town Plan to identify different sources of funding. Mr. Troy also confirmed all Town Plan reviews were conducted/prepared in-house without recourse to private sector consultants.

Deputation from Rathkeale Playground Group.

M. Brennan, Rathkeale Playgound Group, informed Members the Playground Committee had been lobbying for a Playground in Rathkeale since 2000, and were suggesting the proposed playground be included as part of the new Library/headquarter development at New Line. Other locations in the town had been considered but deemed unsuitable by the Committee. Ms. Brennan emphasised there were limited facilities in Rathkeale for children, and should a playground be provided, it would be fully utilised.

I. Meade, Rathkeale Playground Committee, stated that 54% of the children in the local primary school were from a traveler background and that play facilities were badly needed. The Committee had spoken with Councilors and T.D.'s and had been disappointed at the lack of progress on the issue.

Councillor D. Naughton informed the Playground deputation the playground item would be discussed by Members after they withdrew from the Meeting, and following these discussions Officials would issue a response to their Playground request. Officials would also be requested to identify if specific special needs funding for a Rathkeale playground were available.

Councillor J. Sheahan accepted there was a strong case for playground facilities in Rathkeale, and was of the opinion such playground facilities should be provided in every town.

Councillor T. Neville requested the Rathkeale Playground be integrated as part of the Library/headquarters development at New Line, as had been indicated on the first draft plan proposals.

Councillor K. Sheahan expressed his support/agreement with Councillor T. Neville in relation to the provision of a playground in Rathkeale Town, but reminded the Committee of a Notice of Motion agreed by the Area Committee in August of 2005, committing the fixed equipment playground to Askeaton as part of the Swimming Pool Development – he requested the Motion as adopted in the Minutes, be confirmed – the adopted Minute was provided to Councillor Sheahan and the detail contained therein, verified as requested. Councillor Sheahan stated significant monies were available in the Development Fund, and Members should take a double-barrel approach at the March Area Committee Meeting for the provision of playgrounds at both Askeaton and Rathkeale.

Councillor J. Griffin stated his unease and concern at public reaction, should the Library and Area Headquarter project be stalled to facilitate provision of a playground within the confines of the proposed development. He suggested the Committee await the Playground recommendations of the Community & Enterprise Section at the March Committee Meeting. Councillor Griffin recommended access to the parking area in the new development be restricted to the opening hours of the Area Office, and requested representations made by him, for the provision of a two metre block wall between the new development and adjoining landowner - Dr. M. Curtin - be recorded in the Meeting Minutes.

Councillor D. Naughton recommended the Re-cycling Centre at New Line be incorporated as part of the proposed “Bring Centre” at Fairhill.

Councillor T. Neville suggested all public lands held in Rathkeale Town suitable for playground facilities be identified and evaluated by the Community and Enterprise Section, with a recommendation to the elected Members for the March Area Committee Meeting.

B. Martin, S.E.E., informed Members the Playground Proposals for 2006 item, had been re-scheduled to the March Electoral Area Committee Meeting. It was anticipated the Community and Enterprise Section would outline their proposals and recommendations for the Rathkeale Electoral Area at this Meeting. He was agreed with the sentiments of Councillor Griffin that the Rathkeale Playground not be included as part of the Library/Headquarter development - such an amendment would require a re-vamp of the car parking area and preparation of a new site layout plan that would necessitate the Part 8 Planning process being re-visited. This amendment to the plans would delay the Library/Headquarter project by several months.

P. O'Connor, Assistant County Manager, informed Members a programme was required for the provision of playgrounds in the County, with parameters set to address community need and population. The favored location for playgrounds would be town parks, such a location avoiding the pitfalls of "ownership claims" if located in a housing estate.

Presentation to Members by Council's Housing Outreach Worker.

M. Spillane, Housing Resettlement Officer, circulated a report to Members outlining the Resettlement Officer's role in a local authority.

Councillor D. Naughton queried if the City environs were included within the Resettlement Officer's remit. Councillor Naughton spoke of the need for a housing upgrade/modernisation grant system to cater for the older Council housing stock that had been purchased, and was lacking modern standard facilities such as central heating.

Councillor J. Griffin questioned whether there were any particular homeless "blackspots" in the County, and was aware of persons in the Rathkeale Area in need of help/support. Councillor Griffin also queried if the eighteen persons in temporary accommodation, and twenty-one persons in unfit/inadequate accommodation was a true/accurate figure for homeless persons in County Limerick.

Councillor K. Sheahan complimented the Resettlement Officer's presentation to Members, but requested a definition of what constituted homelessness. Councillor Sheahan outlined two cases that he wished to discuss privately with the Resettlement Officer - the first case being a mother and child with an involuntary sharing problem, the second case being a middle aged man with means that cannot be accessed, and living in exceptionally poor conditions.

Councillor T. Neville referred to the plight of persons who, following a marriage breakdown, technically have ownership of a half house that cannot be occupied, as the Courts system has given full residency rights to the spouse and children. The person in these circumstances is not considered eligible for local authority housing due to the value of the asset - an asset that cannot be used - and can be effectively homeless, and forced into an involuntary sharing arrangement with family and friends.

P. O'Connor, Assistant County Manager, informed Councillor Neville the Council was depending on the legal system for advice in regard to the issue raised. Mr. O'Connor informed Members the housing rent supplement allowance was transferring from the Health Services Executive to the local Councils, this allowance being payable only in respect of persons on the Housing List.

M. Spillane, Housing Resettlement Officer, confirmed the Housing Needs Assessment carried out in March of 2005 included the City environs. Ms. Spillane confirmed persons were not deemed homeless unless registered as such with the local authority, and accepted the number of homeless persons was possibly higher than the numbers contained in the assessment. Ms. Spillane stated there was a co-ordinated strategy between several state bodies, and included the Health Services Executive, Hospitals, Probation/Prison services, and Cuan Mhuire addiction treatment centre.

Councillor J. Sheahan spoke in relation to cases where elderly single persons, who had inherited family homes in isolated rural areas of the County, were living in sub-standard conditions, that lacked the basic standards of modern housing. Councillor Sheahan stated he was also aware of specific cases where professional help was needed. He proposed three Special Area Meetings be set aside annually, to brief Members on Housing updates/issues. The proposal was seconded by Councillor D. Naughton, and supported by Councillors J. Griffin, T. Neville, and K. Sheahan.

To consider request from the Dromore Angling Club to lease Council Lands at Bleach Lough, Kildimo.

Councillor K. Sheahan proposed the leasing of lands at Bleach Lough to the Dromore Angling Club as outlined be agreed. Councillor J. Griffin seconded the proposal, with Councillors D. Naughton, T. Neville and J. Sheahan supporting the proposal.

S. Hayes, A.O., informed Members a draft copy of the lease would be circulated to Members, prior to proceeding to full Council.

Extension of Shannon Estuary Water Supply Scheme.

S. Hayes, A.O. tendered apologies on behalf of the S.E.E., Water Services, who was unable to attend the Meeting due to a prior engagement. Mr. Hayes circulated an information sheet detailing the water treatment systems in both the Bleach Lough and Shannon Estuary Water Schemes. He also confirmed Officials were attending the High Court, Dublin, in relation to the ongoing issues on the Shannon Estuary Water Supply Scheme Extension to the Pallaskenry/Kildimo area.

Councillor K. Sheahan described the treatment system being used at the Bleach Lough Treatment Plant as archaic, especially when compared to the state-of-the-art Shannon Estuary Water Supply Plant. He stated in his experience, the water from the Shannon Estuary Plant has always been of consistent quality.

Proposed Flooding Relief Measures at Foynes.

S. Hayes, A.O., informed Members discussions for wayleave access for the drainage works were ongoing with the landowner, and Members would be informed if there was a breakthrough

Gortadroma Landfill.

T. Tarpey, S.E., requested an amendment to the adopted Minutes of 23rd January, 2006 be noted in the Minutes of February Meeting - this amendment to adjust/reduce the 2005 landfill tonnage figure for the Gortadroma Landfill Site from 53,000 tons to 43,000 tons. Members were agreed to this request.

Mr. Tarpey confirmed a Non-Compliance Notice had been served by the EPA during January in regard to odors, and had instructed that performance is improved – odor monitoring was conducted three times daily at the landfill site.

Councillor J. Griffin questioned what actions were proposed by the Council to ensure compliance with the Environment Protection Agency's Notice.

Councillor D. Naughton spoke of ongoing odor complaints from residents adjacent to the landfill site, and on foot of the EPA Notice, what was the long-term solution to the problem.

T. Tarpey, S.E., stated there had been difficulties with a contractor engaged for the landfill capping process. A new contractor had been appointed and "capping" would re-commence in mid-March, and it was anticipated these works would eliminate/prevent odors.

Question submitted by Councillor K. Sheahan :

I will ask at the next ordinary Meeting of the Rathkeale Electoral Area that a report be furnished to Members outlining proposals for dealing with illegally parked caravans, unauthorised sewerage connections, and toilet facilities constructed without planning permission at Monk's Hill, Rathkeale.

Councillor K. Sheahan acknowledged the reply received from the Senior Executive Officer, Planning, and was satisfied with the response.

Notice of Motion submitted by Councillor T. Neville :

I will move at the next Rathkeale Electoral Area Committee meeting that drainage works be carried out on the Orchard Road (Kilmacknearla/Kilmacow Granagh/Kilfinny) when the upgrading of the Kilfinny Group Water scheme along this road takes place.

Councillor T. Neville stated he had spoken with the Rathkeale Roads Executive Engineer, and this was an opportunity to undertake road drainage as part of the full road re-instatement works, that would follow from the upgrading of the Kilfinny Group Water Scheme.

G. Liston, E.E., informed Members a section of 500 metres of the mentioned roadway remained to be completed, and the works could not be undertaken as part of the Water Mains contract. The cost of these works would be approximately €30,000, and could be part funded from the Roads Discretionary allocation. These drainage works would involve deepening of the water table and pipe installation, and ideally completed prior to full road re-instatement works. Mr. Liston confirmed the 2006 Rathkeale Area Roads Programme was scheduled as an agenda item for the March Committee Meeting.

Councillor J. Griffin recommended the works as outlined be funded from the Roads Discretionary budget, and included in the 2006 Roads Programme.

A.O.B.

March Rathkeale Electoral Area Committee Meeting :

Members agreed a Special Area Committee Meeting for Housing issues, would be held on Tuesday, 28th March, 2006, in Rathkeale, at 10.30.a.m. This Meeting to be followed by the March Area Committee Meeting at 11.30.a.m.

That concluded the business of the Meeting.

Signed: _____Chairman.

Dated this **28th** day of **MARCH, 2006**.

Secretary.