

Municipal District of Dundalk - December 2021

Minutes of the Meeting of the Municipal District of Dundalk hosted over MS Teams on Tuesday 7th December at 5.15 p.m.

In attendance:

Leas

Cathaoirleach: Cllr. K. Meenan

Members: Councillors M. Butler, E. Corrigan, C. Keelan, S. Kelly, A. McKevitt, L. Reilly, J. Reilly, T. Sharkey, A. Watters, M. Yore.

Apologies: Councillors M. Doyle, E. Coffey.

Officials: Gráinne Tuomey, Meetings Administrator
Paddy Donnelly, Director of Services
Martin McCreech, Senior Executive Engineer
John O'Hagan, Senior Engineer
Aoife Lawler, Senior Executive Officer
Elaine Daly, Administrative Officer

All persons attended remotely including all officials.
Leas Cathaoirleach Cllr. K. Meenan chaired the Meeting.
Paddy Donnelly, Director of Services stood in for Frank Pentony.

Minute No. 114/21

Confirmation of Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on Tuesday, 2nd November 2021 were confirmed on the proposal of Cllr. Maeve Yore and seconded by Cllr. Marianne Butler.

Minute No. 115/21

Matters Arising

- Update of Minute no. 97/21 & 104/21 was requested. Members were advised that the bin which had been removed following burning at the AIB would be replaced before Christmas.

Minute No. 116/21

Housing Progress Report

Members discussed the report as issued and Paddy Donnelly, Director of Services, advised on all Housing items raised.

The following items were highlighted by the members:

- Hallidays Mill legal transfer was expected to close that day.

- Cox's Demesne had not been given exemption for works during COVID and had so been delayed. Expected delivery was now in Q1 2022, additional funding has been sought.
- Housing Team were discussing grant funding for Cox's with Departemnt.
- Part 8 on Mount Avenue likely to be before Members in January.

Minute No. 117/21

Operations and Marine Progress Report

Members discussed the report as issued Martin McCreesh, Senior Executive Engineer advised on all Operations items raised.

The following issues were highlighted:

- Traffic Light sequencing issues raised would be checked.
- Members were advised drainage was looked at as part of any resurfacing programme.
- Out of 22 Traffic speed checks carried out on areas highlighted for speed, only 3 met the criteria for works to be done, as a result only known accident spots would be check in future.
- A request for a plot index map for historic graves at Dowdallshill Graveyard would be referred to Willie Walsh.

Members noted the good response of Customer Services and Operations that day to issues raised due to Storm Barra.

The following non-operations issues were raised:

- Unauthorised buildings/structures were a matter for planning enforcement.
- Smell at Jenkinstown should be referred to staff in Environment in first instance who can advise, but thought this was due to seaweed getting caught on structures.
- A 'Do not consume notice' - issued by and a matter for Irish Water

Minute No. 118/21

Infrastructure Report

Members discussed the report as circulated at the meeting and John O'Hagan, Senior Engineer responded on all Infrastructure Matters with Paddy Donnelly, Director of Services responding also on some matters.

The following matters were noted:

- Balmers Bog - ESB to issue report.
- There is no set time line on Coastal Erosion Works funding.
- Proposed route of Greenway from Carlingford has several options, report that issued was first draft.
- Omeath regeneration works update requested.
- St. Nicholas Quarter update and presentation request will be referred to Alan Sherry, Senior Executive Officer.

Minute No. 119/21

Dundalk Allocation of Members Community Grants

Distribution of the allocation of Members Community Grants was:

Proposed by: Cllr. Maeve Yore

Seconded by: Cllr. Antóin Watters

And resolved.

Minute No. 120/21

Active Travel Update

Elaine Daly, Administrative Office on Active Travel introduced herself to the Members and gave them a briefing on proposed Active Travel measures in Dundalk which was well received. John O'Hagan, Senior Engineer also contributed and both Elaine and John responded to Members queries raised. Safety at junction crossings, on street parking and a request to extend the scheme to Castletown Road and the two schools in the area were discussed.

Minute No. 121/21

Notice of Motion

Proposed: Cllr. Maeve Yore

Seconded by: Cllr. Seán Kelly

“That Louth County Council organise an Independent Engineers road safety audit and an Independent Engineers written opinion of the auto track sweep path analysis carried out at Rock Road/Sandy Lane, junction due to town and village funding for footpath upgrade in May 2021.”

Reply from Mr. Frank Pentony, Director of Services, Planning, Infrastructure and Economic Development:

LCC do not intend to carry out a road safety audit, the Independent Sweep path analysis demonstrates that buses can negotiate the turn in accordance with DMURS.

Cllr. Maeve Yore expressing dismay at ‘the adamant refusal by Louth County Council to give a written report’ on the works read a statement on her motion which suggested that proper procedures were not followed during works at this junction and questioned the safety of the works. Referring to page 7 of the Towns & Villages Scheme which directs, consultation with businesses, she advised that she was unaware of any businesses being consulted. She requested assurances from the Director regarding the safety of the junction.

Paddy Donnelly, Director of Services remarked on the repeated refusal of acceptance of the response from the Director and the damage to the working relationship between Councillors and Staff. He defended the professionalism of staff who were following the design and measures set out in DMURS guidelines.

Cllr. John Reilly advised he couldn't get his truck around it without crossing the white line and said that he thought the engineer had made a mistake which should now be rectified as it was unsafe.

Paddy Donnelly advised that he couldn't allow the suggestion that a safety mistake had been made, he himself was a qualified HGV driver and was aware that such drivers are allowed to cross the white line. He again advised that the junction was built to the safety standard and in accordance with national design.

The Leas Cathaoirleach Cllr. Kevin Meenan suggested that no malice was implied against Louth County Council Staff as he would not allow such discussion at the meeting.

Cllr. Tomás Sharkey referring to an email forwarded to councillors by Cllr. Maria Doyle from the Department which was a discussion on the continuous white line, said that while he was happy to support Cllr. Yore's motion, the specific design went out on RFT's and tender documents and he did not support the 'procedures were not followed' remark.

The Leas Cathaoirleach called for a roll call vote on the item.
All Councillors present voted in favour of the motion.

Minute No. 122/21

Notice of Motion

Proposed by: Cllr. Maeve Yore

Seconded by: Cllr. Seán Kelly

"That LCC install traffic calming measures at back entrance to St Peter's National School, Dromiskin on Model Farm Road and carry out traffic/ speed count and if deemed appropriate reduce speed limit on same."

Reply from Ms C. Duff, Director of Services, Operations:

School Gate Risk - Guidelines for Schools' published in August 2021 by the Road Safety Authority (A copy of which can be downloaded from <https://www.rsa.ie/road-safety/education/getting-to-school-safely>). The aim of these guidelines is to provide information and tools to assist school management to develop and implement a road safety action plan, in collaboration with their school community, to reduce the risk of any incidents occurring during the commute to and from school. It provides valuable advice on identifying the areas of concern in the school environment and offers suggestions on how best to address these issues. Schools should also consider applying for funding under safer routes to school.

The area engineer will visit the location and assess the accident records at the location and will make a recommendation whether a traffic / count survey is merited. Note traffic/ speed count surveys are now being prioritised for locations with an accident history to ensure that funding is allocated to the areas that will reduce / eliminate accidents and fatalities which is a priority under the National road safety program.

Cllr. Maeve Yore speaking on this motion stated that it was an accident waiting to happen with kids on bikes.

Minute No. 123/21

Notice of Motion

Proposed by: Cllr. Seán Kelly

Seconded by: Cllr. Maeve Yore

Motion: Cllr. Seán Kelly

“That Louth County Council carry out a safety audit and any works that are required including speed calming and signage at Mini Minds, Coulter Place, Armagh Road, Dundalk. Mini Minds is a childcare facility providing crèche and preschool services to 58 families and has 13 staff members. Given the numbers involved there are significant safety concerns at drop off times in both the morning and afternoon.”

Reply from Ms C. Duff, Director of Services, Operations:

Coulter Place is not taken in charge. The operators would be advised to implement a mobility and safety plan for their business.

Note traffic/ speed count surveys are now being prioritised for locations with an accident history to ensure that funding is allocated to the areas that will reduce / eliminate accidents and fatalities which is a priority under the National road safety program.

Cllr. Conor Keelan speaking in support of Cllr. Seán Kelly’s motion said it was progressive.

There being no other business, Cllr. Kevin Meenan wished everyone a Happy Christmas and complimented Councillors and staff on their work during the year, this was echoed by Paddy Donnelly, Director of Services on behalf of the executive and staff and the meeting concluded.

The Minutes were confirmed at a meeting of the Council held on:

Date: _____

Cathaoirleach: _____

Meeting Administrator: _____