

Derry City and Strabane District Council

**Minutes of Special Meeting of the Environment and Regeneration Committee
held in the Guildhall, Derry on Wednesday 26 June 2019 at 4.00 pm**

Present:- Members of Committee - Aldermen Devenney, Hussey and McCready, Councillors Dobbins, Duffy, Durkan, Jackson, McCann and McHugh.

Non-Members of Committee – Alderman Guy, Councillors J Boyle, Cooper, Louge and Reilly.

In Attendance:- Director of Environment and Regeneration (Mrs K Phillips) and Head of Environment (Mr C Canning).

Representing DfI Roads (Western Division) – Acting Divisional Roads Manager (Mr D McKinley) and Section Engineer (Mr R McCartney).

SER6/19 Notice and Summons of Meeting

The Director of Environment and Regeneration read the Notice and Summons for the Meeting.

SER7/19 Member Attendance and Apologies

The Director of Environment and Regeneration completed the Member Attendance Register and apologies were recorded from Alderman Ramsey, Councillors Burke, Ferguson, Hunter and McGuire.

SER8/19 Declarations of Members' Interests

There were no declarations of Members' interests.

Chairperson's Business

SER9/19 Condolences

The Chairperson referred to the death earlier that day of the civil rights leader Ivan Coer. He said Mr Cooper would be remembered as a politician of startling courage and conviction who passionately believed

in equality for all. He stated that few had contributed to peace as much as Ivan Cooper and was a massive political figure particularly with the SDLP Party. He extended his condolences to Mr Cooper's wife Frances and daughter Sinead and Bronagh.

Councillor Reilly, on behalf of the SDLP, expressed his condolences at the death of Ivan Cooper. He pointed out that the Mayor had opened a Book of Condolences for the late Mr Cooper in the Guildhall. He stated that Ivan Cooper had joined the SDLP Party on the basis of "one man one vote" and his death created a major loss for society.

Members from all Parties also paid tribute to the late Ivan Cooper and extended their condolences to his family.

SER10/19 To receive representatives from DfI (Roads Western Division) to discuss the 2019/2020 Annual Report-Spring

The Chairperson welcomed the Acting Divisional Roads Manager (Mr D McKinley) and Section Engineer (Mr R McCartney) to the Meeting.

The Acting Divisional Roads Manager pointed out that the report dealt with works completed across the Council area during the year 2018/19 and set out the Department's initial proposals for schemes to be undertaken in the year 2019/2020. Members would also be provided with an update on the strategic roads schemes that were being progressed and which would benefit the Derry City and Strabane District Council area.

The Acting Divisional Roads Manager pointed out that since 2013 the Department's budget had been insufficient to meet its needs and it relied on in year funding to deliver core services including public transport and winter gritting. This continued to be the case in 2019/2020. He stated that in Capital terms, the 2019/2020 allocation represented a reduction from the previous year. Almost 70% of this budget was taken up with committed or priority projects, leaving insufficient budget to meet the Department's responsibilities as custodian of some £40 billion of public assets; the Water and Sewerage network and the Roads and Public Transport systems.

The Acting Divisional Roads Manager explained that funding was allocated to the Division under two categories; capital funding for new works or renewal of infrastructure and resource funding for the day to day maintenance of its assets. On the capital side funding had allowed construction on a number of major schemes along the A6 to progress

and the A2 Buncrana Road scheme continued to progress through the development stage. Regarding the A5 Dualling project, a further consultation exercise around environmental matter had now concluded and the Department was currently considering the next steps with the scheme.

The Acting Divisional Roads Manager continued that Capital funding also influenced the Department's Structural Maintenance and Local Transport and Safety Measures programmes which, in any year, were based on available budgets. In the current year the Department welcomed a similar level of initial funding for Structural Maintenance when compared to the previous year with £75m being allocated, of which £10m had been set aside for a 'roads recovery fund' which was being used to address areas of immediate need across the road network. He stated that of this approximately £725,000 had been allocated to the Derry City and Strabane District Council area. He concluded that whilst this level of investment was welcome it still fell short of the £143 million required annually to maintain the road network in a reasonable condition.

The Acting Divisional Roads Manager then presented his report under the following headings providing Members with a brief update on the various schemes:

Strategic Road Improvements

- A5 Western Transport Corridor (A5WTC)
- A2 Buncrana Road
- A6 Dungiven to Drumahoe Dualling
- A6 Randalstown to Castledawson Dualling

Network Maintenance

- Structural Maintenance: Completed Works 2018-2019
- Routine Maintenance
- Winter Service
- Streetworks
- Planned Works

Network Development

- Local Transport and Safety Measures
- Completed Works 2018/2019
- Planned Works

Structures

- Completed Works 2018-2019
- Planned Works 2019-2020

Street Lighting

- Completed Works 2018-2019
- Planned Works 2019-2020

Network Planning

- Planning Consultations
- Private Streets

Members from all Parties thanked the Acting Divisional Roads Manager on his comprehensive report and then raised the following issues:

- Whilst welcoming progress in regards to the A5, A6 and A2 schemes referred to the importance of having these vital access points completed given their significance in terms of productivity.
- Referred to queries received from residents living in the area regarding the Department's plans regards the suggested removal of trees along a section of roadway on the A6 between Drumahoe and Dungiven and the potential impact thereof on existing developments. These trees currently provided protection for the concerned.
- Expressed concern at the impact on local residents of roadworks which were being carried out on the Ardmore Road, a stretch of roadway which was becoming busier and presenting problems.
- Enquired if upgrading works would be carried out to Caw Roundabout to facilitate the new housing development at Ballyoan which had been granted planning permission, bearing in mind the ongoing funding crisis. Expressed concern that if such works were not carried out the Caw Roundabout would not be capable of coping with the potential increase in traffic resulting from the proposed housing development.
- Sought a comparison on current budget allocation for the Western Division and the other three Divisions within the Department's remit.
- Queried if no money had been allocated in respect of street lighting across all of the Divisions.

- Concern was expressed at the lack of progress in regards to the payment of compensation to the stakeholders involved regarding the Vesting process at Drumahoe.
- Whilst concerns were expressed by Member of the SDLP Party regarding the brightness of the recently installed Led lighting at Culmore particularly for those residents in bungalow accommodation, a Member of Sinn Fein welcomed this scheme.
- Enquired if the proposed Bogside Residents' Parking Scheme would proceed, and, if not, a further consultation exercise would be required.
- In terms of agreeing a pilot area for the scheme referred to a number of concerns raised by residents and political representatives regarding the scheme.
- Referred to the need for residents to be made aware of the current position by the Department.
- Sought clarity on any proposed scheme and the anticipated timescales involved.
- Expressed concern at ongoing delays in the Bogside Residents' Parking Scheme and referred to fact that local residents had been anticipating a similar scheme in Chapel Road.
- Referred to the ongoing issue in regards to the adoption of private streets throughout the Council district with between 52-54% of streets not having been adopted and expressed concern at the limited budget which had been allocated to address this problem.
- Expressed concern at the limitations of enforcement action which proved a lengthy process.
- Referred to a Working Party previously established by Council to address the issue of un-adopted roads and enquired as to the current position in relation thereto.
- Whilst acknowledging the Department's suggestion that it had little influence over other government Department in regards to this issue sought alternative courses of action.
- Expressed concern at the response received from DfI following the submission of a recent complaint regarding an unadopted road when residents were advised that the Department would not be taking action and suggested that residents should take up a legal case with the developer.
- Expressed concern that not everyone was computer literate or had access to a computer to access the Department's on-line "Report a Fault" system which the public are being encouraged to use.

- Stressed the need to address the route problem - the reduction in the block grant and the subsequent limited budgetary allocations – at its origins.
- Suggested that Council adopt a more robust and strident campaign of opposition to the cuts imposed by the Treasury given the impact on local citizens.
- Reiterated the need for a more emphatic corporate response to the imposed cuts.
- Referred to the need to emphasise that these budgetary limitations and reductions in resources is not the responsibility of Council but is due to cuts imposed by central government.
- With regard to the A6 Dungiven to Drumahoe Dualling “this very significant investment will greatly improve road safety and journey times and reduce congestion” it was suggested that this would rather shift congestion given the issues which would have to be addressed at the end of the A6.
- Sought assurances that the mechanism would be put in place at the end of the route to disperse traffic into the area.
- Referred to similar issues which would arise with the progression of the A5 scheme at either end of the route New Buildings to north of Strabane and enquired if there were any accompanying plans with Translink to develop Park and Rides.
- Whilst welcoming the progression of the A6 referred to the need to address any potential problems which may arise.
- Sought clarification on the Department’s policy regarding potholes.
- Expressed concern at the ongoing problems in respect of potholes and the lack of budget to address this issue and referred to the need for a more holistic approach to be adopted towards addressing this problem.
- Referred to a Motion passed by Council regarding the non-use of pesticides for the treatment of weeds within the Council district as a result of which Council would contact a number of organisations suggesting that alternative methods be considered for the treatment of weeds.
- Referred to assurances given regarding the carrying out of a Traffic Survey regarding Bishop Street and sought clarification as to the current position in relation thereto.
- Reiterated the need to advise concerned residents regarding the current position in relation to the Bogside Residents’ Parking Scheme.
- Expressed concern that works on the footpaths at 75, 76 and 77 Woodend Road, Ballymagorry were incomplete and queried when it was anticipated that these would be carried out.

- Enquired if drainage works at Altnagelvin Roundabout had been completed.
- Acknowledged the excellent work being carried out by the Department give the budgetary limitations and anticipated that all pending projects would come to fruition.
- Whilst welcoming the grass cutting which had started along A routes, expressed concern that this exposed hidden litter and sought consultation between Council and DfI regarding their grass cutting schedule in order that the problem could be addressed as it arose.
- Enquired as to the level of quality assurance which existed in regards to grass cutting, particularly in the rural area.
- Referred to the possibility of planting wild flowers as opposed to grass given that these did not tend to grow as tall and would not require the same level of care in terms of cutting as well as improving the environment.
- Given that additional cuts were carried out if sight lines were affected, enquired as to the policy regarding additional cuts in regards to illegible signage due to over-growth.
- Referred to the proposed trialling of a 20 mph speed zone at Sion Mills School and requested that this be extended to Artigarvan School???
- Referred to the erection of speed ramps as opposed to speed bumps as a more effective form of traffic calming particularly along bus routes.
- Welcomed the successful adoption of 12 private streets but queried the number which remained outstanding.
- In regards to bridge repair works carried out queried why vegetation removal was not carried out on all bridges.
- In regards to the A6 referred to the possibility of a link between Drumahoe and Campsie which could alleviate some of the problems being experienced in terms of excess traffic.
- Referred to problems being experienced due to the increase in the number of HGV vehicles through Eglinton Village.
- Expressed disappointment at delays in the A5 scheme and referred to the need for a circular road to address problems which were being experienced.
- Whilst welcoming the adoption of a number of private street referred to the need for adoption to be carried out on all new completed developments.
- Expressed concern in regards to the 50ml requirement for the treatment of potholes which was not proving cost effective in the longterm.

- Appreciated that a change of policy would be required to address this current requirement but this could however prove more cost effective in the longer term.
- In regards to Eglinton Village referred to suggested connection between Maydown and the A6.
- In regard to HGVs understood that a pilot scheme had been carried out in Clady regarding the use of HGVs and suggested that a similar exercise be carried out in Eglinton.
- An update was sought in regards to a request submitted to an Official from dfi Roads to arrange a public meeting for residents of Eglinton to discuss the reasons why it was not possible to enforce a ban on the use of HGVs through the village.
- Referred to concerns expressed by a community group at two entrances to Woodvale Road.
- Expressed concern at the deterioration of Council road signage
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The representatives from DfI Roads responded as follows:

- In regards to the removal of trees along the Drumahoe Road confirmed that additional trees would be planted.
- Explained that the original large scale proposals in respect of the Bogside Residents Parking scheme would not proceed. However, a smaller scale scheme would be carried out, and, if successful, could be expanded upon.
- Confirmed that a further consultation exercise would be required, however, advice was currently being sought in this regard. This would constitute a different scheme which would involve the scaling down of a Vesting Order.
- Acknowledged the situation in regards to the upgrading of Caw roundabout to facilitate the proposed new housing development at Ballyoan.
- Affirmed that no budget had been allocated in respect of street lighting/replacement across any of the four Divisions.
- In regards to a delay in compensation payments explained that the Department encouraged land agents to submit a claim when the process was completed in respect of which 90% payment was made. Whilst this was normally paid without delay, payment could be postponed if difficulties were encountered regarding Proof of Title. Undertook to investigate and report back thereon.

- Undertook to refer concerns expressed regarding the Led replacement lighting to Street Lighting Section for investigation.
- Acknowledged concerns in regards to the progression Bogside Parking Scheme. Whilst unable to provide confirmation in regards to which areas would be included in the amended scheme, anticipated that on completion, this would provide a basis upon which to proceed.
- Assured that consultation did take place with NI Water on the issue of unadopted roads the objective being to develop a joint approach to address this ongoing problem.
- In regards to the issue of unadopted roads referred to the need for an acceptable bond to be in place and the Department continued to work with developers to encourage a completion of all works prior to exiting a site.
- Undertook to provide Members with a breakdown on the number of potholes existing in the Council area. Referred to the need to carry out necessary repair works in a timely fashion, however, this was essentially a resource issue.
- Undertook to update Members in relation to the Bishop Street traffic survey.
- Explained that a Weed Control contract was in place with an environmental contractor for the treatment of weeds through the mechanism of spraying micro-phosphate. Acknowledged that weeds presented a greater problem on flagged-stone surfaces and the Department did endeavour, when required, to replace old flagstones with a tarmac surface, thereby reducing the problem with weeds.
- Explained that the drainage problem at Altnagelvin Roundabout was on the inside of the structure.
- Acknowledged problems being experienced with regard to blocked gullies entering Irish Street which it was hoped would be addressed in the near future.
- Aware of proposals regarding a Residents Parking Scheme at Chapel Road.
- In regards to residents' dissatisfaction at the response received from DfI regarding the adoption of private streets, explained that the Department would take action in instances where an appropriate Bond was in place.
- Acknowledged Members' concerns regarding the Department's limited budgetary allocation.
- Assumed that any Departmental attempts to receive increased funding would be assisted by Councils engagement by way of support lobbying.

- Acknowledged concerns expressed regarding the online Fault reporting system particularly in regards to the elderly but assured that, whilst not the predominant method, faults could still be reported by telephone.
- In regards to concerns expressed in relation to the A5/A6 connectivity, and the completion of the dual carriageway at Newbuildings and Ballygawley explained that studies had been carried out regarding the erection of a ring road to provide connectivity for the A5 and A6. Acknowledged the need for connectivity.
- Referred to the possibility of a transportation study being carried out in respect of the City in order to demonstrate the necessary requirements and the impact of a ring road in terms of addressing the problem of connectivity.
- Explained that a pothole must measure 50ml in order to justify repair works being carried out.
- Pointed out that the policy developed by the Department adopted a risk assessment approach whereby busier roads would more readily attract resources to treat potholes. Repair works depended largely on traffic use.
- Undertook to email to Members a copy of the Department's policy in relation to the treatment of potholes.
- Acknowledged Members comments in regards to grass cutting.
- Understood a pilot scheme of planting wild flowers had been carried out and undertook to ascertain the outcome of the scheme for Members' information.
- Acknowledged Members' concerns regarding illegible signage due to overgrowth which was mainly due to a lack of input from landowners.
- Explained that resources were not available to address discolouration and mould on signage.
- Acknowledge the points raised regarding the trialling of a 20 mph speed restriction at Artigarvan School. Undertook to ascertain the criteria required for the implementation of a 20 mph restriction zone.
- Undertook to investigate the possibility of having speed ramps replace speed bumps particularly on bus routes.
- Was unable to advise on the number of private streets which remained unadopted but assumed this to be considerable.
- Could not advise on the reason why Castlederg Bridge had not been included in the scheme of repair works but suggested that this was due to the contractor appointed to carry out the works in that area.

- Noted the issues raised in regards to the A6 Drumahoe to Campsie.
- Whilst acknowledging residents' concerns explained that a traffic count would be carried out on the Tamnaherin Road in order to determine if traffic levels rendered it necessary to introduce legislation to prevent the use of HGVs through Eglinton Village. This area differed significantly from Clady where such a ban had been introduced.
- Undertook to address with the Official concerned the scheduling of a public meeting with residents from Eglinton Village to discuss the use of HGVs.
- Explained that the Department were currently actively working with NIE regarding the Glenrandel listed bridge. NIE were currently seeking additional information and works may be required with Planning Officers in order to finalise this. The design of the bridge had been agreed and it was anticipated that these works would go to tender in September 2019.
- In regards to the adoption of private streets, acknowledged that there were a considerable number of contactors whose standard of work was admirable.
- Explained that the maintenance/replacement of signage was a resources issue.
- Acknowledged that the current policy in regards to potholes was frustrating however the Department was obliged to operate within this context.

The Chairperson advised that the Director of Environment and Regeneration would present a report on the issue of unadopted roads to a future Meeting of Committee.

The Director of Environment and Regeneration requested that Members submit to her Directorate details regarding specific Council signage which required upgrading in order that these could be investigated. She stated that should Members request a comprehensive revival of all Council signage this would be addressed as part of the Rates Estimates process.

In response to a query from Alderman Hussey regarding the planting on wildflowers, the Director of Environment and Regeneration explained that Council had begun to incorporate wild flower meadows as part of its Bio-Diversity and Pride In Our City initiatives. She stated that this did not always prove straightforward as wildflowers matured best in poor quality soil. Council would endeavour to continue to incorporate this into its work.

The Meeting terminated at 5.40 pm

The meeting terminated at Time Not Specified