

Edenderry Area Committee

**MINUTES OF MEETING OF EDENDERRY AREA COMMITTEE
HELD ON WEDNESDAY 5th of February 2014,
IN THE TOWN HALL, EDENDERRY AT 3.30 p.m.**

Present: *Cllr Eddie Fitzpatrick; Cllr Ger Plunkett; Cllr Noel Bourke; Cllr John Foley; Cllr Liam Quinn; Cllr Fergus Mc Donnell*

In attendance: *Mr. Damien Grennan, Area Engineer; Mr. Dermot Mahon, SEO Housing; Ms Vivian O'Brien, A/SEE Water Services, Ms. Therese O'Meara, A/Town Clerk; Mr. Declan Conlon, Area Manager, Leonard Geoghegan, Assistant Engineer*

Apologies: *Cllr Finian O'Neill, Cllr Nichola Hogan*

1. Confirmation of Minutes

On the proposal of Cllr. Noel Bourke and seconded by Cllr John Foley the minutes of the December 2013 meeting were adopted.

2. Meeting Schedule for 2014

Therese O'Meara, Acting Town Clerk advised that the next meeting is scheduled for Wednesday the 2nd of April. Damien Grennan, Area Engineer advised that as allocations for roads grants have only been given to the Areas in the last few days another meeting will need to be held closer to the end of the month to agree on the Roads Programme for the Edenderry area. This approval will then need to be forwarded to the main Council meeting in March. It was agreed to hold this meeting on Wednesday 26th of February at 3.30pm.

3. Housing

Dermot Mahon gave the housing presentation. He advised that there is no significant change in the numbers on the housing list in the area. It currently stands at 531 up from 529 at the end of 2013. The highest demand for housing in the area is still Edenderry. There are currently 404 houses in stock in the area. There were 2 allocations recently, details of which were given to the members. There are currently 19 dwelling empty in the area, 1 of which remains as a long term void for which funding will need to be sought. Funding was made available by the Council at the end of 2013 to renovate 8 out of the 19 houses, 7 of which are now ready to let. Offers are ongoing. It is hoped that allocations will happen in the next 2 -3 weeks.

Dermot advised that there is no budget for capital works and no new schemes have commenced. He advised that funding may be allocated to acquire houses under RAS/Leasing.

The members were advised that Clúid have acquired 5 units in Carrick Aoibhinn. Nominations for same have gone to the group. All units are 2 bed apartments. No update is available in relation to the Nama units in Portarlinton. The Council will pursue this if the opportunity arrives, these units will be let through leasing. There are no changes in land banks.

In relation to Housing Grant, Dermot advised that a total of 24 grants were approved in 2013. There are currently 261 applications on a waiting list with a total of €732k available under the 3 different grant schemes for 2014. It is estimated that this will result in approximately 20-25

units being completed in the Edenderry Area in 2014. However additional applications will be received during the year.

Cllr Mc Donnell requested the average length of time that applicants are on the waiting list. Dermot advised that he didn't know if it was possible to generate this data and he felt that he didn't know the value that this information would have, bearing in mind the existing variables that occur between applicants.

Cllr Mc Donnell also queried the possibility of new tenants carrying out work themselves. Dermot advised, as previous stated at previous meetings, there is a minimum standard that a house must reach in order for it to be let. The amount of works carried out in pre let houses by Council staff have been reduced in recent times. Dermot advised that each tenant received a Tenants Handbooks which states their responsibility clearly.

Dermot advised that the Housing SPC are working on a document stating what structural work can be carried out by tenants once they seek approval for same from the Council i.e. building a boundary wall, building a shed, attic installation and/or small extension. The approval from the Council will state if supervision for this work is needed. Problems occur when work is carried out without approval/supervision. If supervision is needed it will be provided by the Council. Once approved by the main Council this SPC document will be send to all tenants.

Dermot advised that the average cost of pre lets work varies between €5-€15k. In relation to a query from Cllr. Mc Donnell Dermot advised that Affordable housing is no longer an option.

Cllr Bourke stated that house owners willing to submit their houses under the RAS/Leasing schemes should talk to the Council as there is no money available to build or to buy houses. These houses will be considered against the criteria set out. Cllr Bourke stated that he was glad that the Council could give extra funding for pre lets before Christmas. He queried the changes in relation to Improvement Grants. Dermot advised that the Council is waiting on the Department to send out a guidance document for same. The Housing Section are currently keeping records of people interested in this scheme and will forward the relevant forms to them when they are available.

4. Water Services

Vivian O'Brien, Acting S.E.E gave the Water Services report. She advised in relation to schemes under the Water Services Investment Programme (WSIP) as follows:

Edenderry Sewerage Scheme. The Preliminary Report has been approved by the DEHLG. Irish Water will review phasing of this scheme in 2014 with a view to progressing this scheme incrementally.

Water Conservation Projects. The Watermains Rehabilitation Contract No. 3 includes the replacement of watermain in Edenderry including backyard services. The Contracts documents are now almost complete. This scheme has been submitted to Irish Water as a project that could go to Tender in 2014.

In relation to other major schemes Vivian advised that discussions are ongoing with Irish Water to ascertain the requirements for upgrade works on all schemes.

Vivian advised that under the Rural Water Programme submissions have been received in the sum of €748,000. The Department have not sent out a request for submissions yet. It is hoped that funding will be applied for during January 2014. The deadline for GWS to submit their application for the Annual and Advance Subsidy for 2013/2014 is Monday the 30th of June 2014. In relation to **Takeover of GWS** Vivian advised that the Council are waiting on documents from Ballystrigg GWS. In relation to Bishopswood Treascon GWS Vivian advised that this work was approved in 2009 however the Council are waiting on legal paperwork for same. In relation to Shandra GWS Vivian advised the GWS are interested in a takeover but there is no funding available to proceed with the necessary works. In relation to Townspark GWS in Daingean Vivian advised that this scheme was approved for takeover in 2011 however the Council are waiting on legal paperwork which is currently with the Council's solicitor.

Cllr Quinn advised that he and other members had attending a meeting the evening before in Daingean where queries were raised in relation to Daingean WWTP. The residents are requesting that the Council keep this in mind and make Irish Water aware of same. A report on same has been carried out by the local community with a view to the Development Plan. Cllr Quinn asked if GWS are to be left unchanged and operated by the Council to which Vivian agreed.

Cllr Mc Donnell raised the query in relation to ongoing problem in Cokery in relation to leakage. He asked if house owner will be given time to rectify same once Irish Water take over and start issuing water bills. Damien advised that the Council are carrying out night surveys and if a leak is found on the customer side the Council will give help and advise where to find the leak. In certain cases we have done some work, for example in back yards. In other cases the Council have found the leak, marked the ground and the owner had to fix the problem. Cllr Mc Donnell queried if house owners can expect huge bills in cases where the mains are diverted on the opposite lawn and this effects their water pressure. Damien advised that he couldn't see this being the case. He advised that he would assume that the aim would be to have separate stop cocks, mains etc. Cllr Mc Donnell acknowledged the efforts of the staff from the Council who carry out this work.

Cllr Fitzpatrick queried how the Bishopswood GWS will work as it cover 3 counties. He hoped that the takeover will be done on the Offaly side as this could fall back to the Council. Vivian advised that in relation to GWS the Council have been instructed by Irish Water to operate as normal and to carry out any emergency work.

Cllr Fitzpatrick advised that there was no water in Portarlinton the evening before as there was a power failure on the Laois side. He stated that there should be generators to solve this problem. He also stated that there is a need for a reservoir on the Offaly side to contain water in case of an emergency.

5. Roads

Damien Grennan, Area Engineer gave the roads presentation. He advised that at present all available manpower is being used to deal with flooding, potholes and fallen trees. He advised that if there was a break in the weather they could catch up on the work. Cllr Quinn advised that the road to the motorway from Rhode village is deteriorating. He queried if Roadstone are responsible for the road to the county boundary as part of their planning conditions. Damien advised that he will find out if there is a special contribution for same. Cllr Foley stated that there is a need for a Council man on a bike with a shovel to open water cuts as in the past.

Cllr Plunkett praised the Council staff for the work they carry out on a daily basis with minimum resources. He advised that there is some money to be sought under the CIR schemes. He stated that we need money to solve problems and more man power.

Cllr Quinn queried the deadline for the CIR scheme. Damien advised that application that submitted to the Department as soon as possible once they are assessed and priced.

A map of the Croghan area was circulated to the members. The section from B to D is a private road. Damien requested the approval of the members in considering the possibility of taking this road in charge. He advised that the Council have maintained this road over the years. It was proposed by Cllr. Bourke and seconded by Cllr. Plunkett to accept this proposal for taking this road in charge.

The next Area meeting is set for 26th of February at 3.30pm to discuss the Roads Programme.

6. Any other business

Cllr Foley raised a query in relation to Sheehy's old garage on the Carrick road. He has had concerns from local people in relation to the storage of material on this site and the possible and health and safety issues here. He has also received concerns in relation to loose dogs at this location.

The Area Manager stated that he cannot discuss specific cases. He did advise that the Planning Section of Offaly County Council is dealing with this matter. The Council are hopeful to obtain a positive outcome.

This concluded the business of the meeting.

Signed: _____

Dated: _____