

NEWRY, MOURNE & DOWN DISTRICT COUNCIL

NMD/SC/

**Minutes of Special Council Meeting held on Monday 23 October 2017 at 6pm in
the Mourne Room, Downshire Civic Centre, Downpatrick**

In the Chair: Councillor W Clarke

In attendance: (Councillors)

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| Councillor T Andrews | Councillor P Brown |
| Councillor R Burgess | Councillor P Byrne |
| Councillor C Casey | Councillor G Craig |
| Councillor D Curran | Councillor C Enright |
| Councillor V Harte | Councillor H Harvey |
| Councillor T Hearty | Councillor L Kimmins |
| Councillor M Larkin | Councillor J Macauley |
| Councillor D McAteer | Councillor O McMahon |
| Councillor A McMurray | Councillor M Murnin |
| Councillor B Quinn | Councillor H Reilly |
| Councillor M Ruane | Councillor M Savage |
| Councillor G Stokes | Councillor D Taylor |
| Councillor J J Tinnelly | Councillor J Trainor |
| Councillor B Walker | |

(Officials)

Mr L Hannaway, Chief Executive
Miss S Taggart, Democratic Services Officer
Ms C Taylor, Democratic Services Officer

Also in attendance: Mr S Richardson, DfI Roads
Mr S Duffy, DfI Roads
Mr I Campbell, DfI Roads

SC/25/2017 APOLOGIES AND CHAIRPERSON'S REMARKS

Apologies were received from Councillors Bailie, Fitzpatrick, Loughran, Mulgrew, Doran and Hanna.

The Chair welcomed the Downpatrick Scouts in the public gallery who were sitting in tonight to see how local democracy worked.

SC/26/2017 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

**SC/27/2017 PRESENTATION BY DFI ROADS – SOUTHERN DIVISION
INTERIM REPORT OCTOBER 2017**

The Chairperson welcomed Mr S Richardson, Mr S Duffy and Mr I Campbell to the meeting and invited them to make their presentation.

Mr Richardson thanked the Chairperson for the opportunity to present the Interim Report and stated he hoped the earlier clinics held in Newry and Downpatrick had been useful and asked Members to provide feedback on the clinics. He introduced Ian Campbell to Members, saying he had replaced Cindy Noble who had gained promotion and he wished them both well in their new roles.

Mr Richardson highlighted the following :

- The Department for Infrastructure (DfI) had not received any significant additional capital or resource funding and therefore a limited service would continue for routine operational functions such as gully cleaning, street lighting repairs and grass cutting.
- During the summer period weed spraying was undertaken and one grass cut and one sight line grass cut undertaken and gullies were cleaned throughout the year as required.
- The DfI had received £11.2m of capital and £3m of resource funding but this had mainly been used to address funding in the North West.
- The DfI had allocated necessary funding to the winter budget and it was the intention to provide a normal winter service. Staff and plant had been on standby since the beginning of October, but so far no gritting had been necessary.
- The DfI had been allocated €2.55m of European funding for the design stages for road projects in the southern division and this would be allocated to the Newry Southern Relief Road which had moved into Stage 2 which would identify the line of the road. Stage 3 was the detailed design of the road. The funding was for design purposes only and not for construction.
- €1.5m of the European funding had been allocated to designing improvements on the Belfast to Dublin road between Loughbrickland and Hillsborough. This was not in the Newry, Mourne & Down District Council area, but it was a key link into the Council area.

Mr Richardson referred to the report, copy of which had been circulated to all Members, highlighting the following:

- A procurement strategy was being worked on for the Ballynahinch bypass.
- 2 days of public information events were being held in Newry relating to the current situation of the Newry Southern Relief Road.
- Resurfacing on the A25 was not yet completed, although the Report had stated it was complete. This work would be completed in early November.
- The pedestrian crossing in Crossgar had been upgraded and it was the intention to provide the new crossings at Hilltown and Dundrum.

- The extension to the park and share facility at Clough roundabout had been completed and it was intended to provide an additional facility along the A1 close to the junction at Sheepbridge.
- Only 7 sailings had been lost on the Strangford due to mechanical breakdowns and staffing problems.

Mr Richardson thanked all DfI and Council staff who had dealt with the effects of hurricane Ophelia and cleared the roads of fallen trees in a short space of time.

The Chairperson thanked the delegation for their presentation and stated questions would be taken by DEA, alphabetically.

Crotlieve

Councillor Tinnelly thanked Mr Richardson for the report, saying he had met with Ian Campbell and his team earlier in the day and looked forward to seeing his requests actioned.

Downpatrick DEA

- What plans were there to alleviate congestion on the one way system in Downpatrick ?
- What role did DfI have in the opening of the town centre car park which was currently in the hands of a council consultant and the decision of the lands which the old PSNI station was on?
- Was the Collins Corner project going ahead? Had the issue in relation to land in that area been solved?
- What operational difficulties had the projects on the Ballintogher Road, the Bonycastle Road and St Patricks Way incurred that they had been taken off the report and would they be back on the programme of work in future?

Mr Richardson responded to the queries as follows:

- DfI Roads were working with Council and the Department for Communities on a development project for the old PSNI site and how it could be best developed. This may or may not include a link road through the site depending on the proposal.
- A traffic management study of Downpatrick had recommended providing new traffic signals which would help to manage the traffic.
- There was a land issue at Collins Corner and DfI Roads were working to resolve it.
- There were a number of operational difficulties in the Collins Corner scheme and Stephen Duffy would write to Councillor Curran with how DfI Roads planned to take these forward.

Newry

- Was DfI the new name for Transport NI?
- Was the cost of the Southern Relief Road now lower based on design work needing to be done and would this make it easier to attract funding?
- Were there any measures planned to help the noise pollution on the A1 between the Five Ways junction and the Forkhill junction?
- The junction of Dorans Hill on the A1 was not fit for the volume of traffic and further housing developments were planned in that area. Could there be better signage at the junction of Watson's Road and the bridge junction as it was dangerous?
- Could the hole in the fence under the bridge at the Dorans Hill junction be fixed as a car could end up in the river.
- Were there any plans to make some of the 2 way streets in Newry one-way streets as this would improve traffic flow?

Mr Richardson responded to the queries as follows:

- DfI Roads was named Roads Service, then Transport NI as the Department took on public transport issues, and now it was called Department for Infrastructure Roads and Rivers. The amalgamation was to deal with flooding issues more effectively, which had been done successfully in the North West.
- Funding had been achieved for the design stages of the Newry Southern Relief Road. As part of the feasibility study the high level bridge had been reduced in cost. Options 4 and 5 were moving to Stage 2 and would be on show at the public information evens. If costs were less, the scheme would more likely be delivered.
- The phasing of traffic signals in Newry was being looked at, in particular an upgrade in Bridge Street.

Mr Richardson undertook to revert to Councillor Savage regarding noise pollution on the A1 between the Five Ways and the Forkhill junctions and also on the signage at the Dorans Hill/Watson's Road junction.

Slieve Croob

- Phoenix Gas were being blamed for the condition of the roads following laying of the gas pipes, did Roads Service examine the condition of the roads prior to and following this installation?
- How likely was the funding to come forward for the Ballynahinch Bypass?
- Although it was extremely difficult to cut back every junction, was there any way to identify health and safety concerns where sightlines that were important to safety highlighted?
- Gulleys had been blocked for a considerable amount of time which was causing flooding and denying people access to their homes. Can the Members assist priorities for gulley cleansing?

Mr Richardson responded to the queries as follows:

- Roads Service did inspect the roads and at one location an agreement had been reached with Phoenix Gas to surface dress the road when complete.
- There had been no further information in relation to funding for the Bypass however Roads Service were in a good position to take the project forward if funding became available.
- Resource budget was what it was and there was only one cut however sightlines were cut more often.
- Gully cleaning was difficult as some were very blocked and not possible to do normal cleaning at those locations.

Rowallane

- A7 Dorans Rock – would it be possible to set aside a piece of land for slow moving traffic to move into. There used to be a place on the Ballygowan Road for this and this had been removed.
- What did ‘developing a procurement strategy’ mean?
- Where there any plans to develop a park and ride scheme between Downpatrick and Crossgar for onward travel to Belfast?
- A7 Dorans Rock – when would it be proposed that Roads Service would be discussing with landowners who would be impacted by the works?

Mr Richardson responded to the queries as follows:

- Would take on board issue about lay-bys, know it had been raised before but would investigate again. Wont vest the land until the funding was in place therefore would not be in a position to speak to landowners as yet.
- Procurement strategy means some studies that could be done in advance so that the contract would be ready to proceed once funding was in place.
- Committed to providing park and ride facilities along main arterial routes into Belfast. Currently looking at sites in Downpatrick and Ballynahinch.

Slieve Gullion

- Concession Road in Cullaville was in a terrible state, it was throwing lorries into ongoing traffic and was a real deathtrap. It was a serious danger to the people in the area and needed sorting.
- There were a lot of gulleys which had not been emptied in years and full of silt which was blocking the pipes. This costs money in the long run and causes risks to people’s lives in the winter when water freezes on the roads.
- The rural roads were in a terrible state and health and safety had gone out the window.
- Roads were in a serious condition in the area with some roads impassable. Speeding was a serious issue particularly at schools and

churches and signage could be erected to encourage people to slow down.

- There was a lack of signage at Rocksborough Road coming into Dorsey, the chapel at Mullaghbawn down the hill and Chapel Road in Meigh.

Mr Richardson responded to the queries as follows:

- He would make a visit to Concession Road.
- Gulleys not being cleaned was not about saving money – he would take the issue of water lying on the roads back highlighting the concerns that exist due to lack of funding.
- Surface dressing was an important function and was an effective mechanism for saving the road. A number of schemes had not been completed within the area, however these would be picked up for next year.
- Speed was a huge issue in the area and the enforcement authorities such as police had ultimate responsibility. Positioning of speed limits was very important and investigations would need to take place. Traffic calming measures were not always popular and with the requests at 400 per year and the ability to only complete 1 or 2, the funding did not exist to carry out all that were requested.

The Mournes

- The quality of roads in the Mournes had deteriorated regardless of how many times people phone or email into the offices, site meetings were not granted. Was there a discrepancy in how budgets were allocated?
- A2 between Newcastle and Kilkeel very bad and something needed to be done. Tourists were being put off visiting again due to the state of the roads.
- Road signs at Spelga S to Moyaad Slievnaman road had been vandalised and need replaced.
- From Castlewellan Road, Rathfriland and Cavan Road junction eastwards to Ballycashowen Road needed resurfaced as the footway was unsuitable to walk on.
- Kilkeel Town from Greencastle Pier was not signposted.
- Annalong Village on the mountain side of the A2, a lot of pedestrians used the road and the footpath needed upgraded.
- A2 Coast Road and Moyaad road needed resurfaced.
- Could engineers look at the Kilkeel side of Rostrevor to ensure the road was still suitable for the heavy traffic that used it.
- Tollyframe Road, Moyaad Road, Dunavan Road to Cranfield – treacherous. Head Road and surface very bad in places.
- Kitty's Road had been waiting for ramps for 15 years.
- Valley Road past the playpark to GAA field leads onto a road with 50mph and was very dangerous.
- Could crash barriers be installed at the S at Spelga?
- Plans to upgrade the A2 existing 50 years ago, were there any plans in place or do the drawings still exist for this upgrade?

- Bloody Bridge – propose have a meeting on the site to discuss the issues that exist. If serious about seeing the Gateway to the Mourne project through, need to address the roads infrastructure.
- Traffic congestion in Newcastle – need for park and ride and overall work at the roundabout.
- Congratulate staff of Roads Service and Council for their swift actions during the recent storms. Along the Rock Area floods all the time and perhaps it would be beneficial to install flood barriers at the houses in the areas which would be a cheap alternative and reduce staff time having to assist in flood work.
- Speeding was huge issue especially at the Harbour area where cars are coming into the Southern end of Newcastle driving 80/90mph.

Mr Richardson responded to the queries as follows:

- Budget was fairly spread among the District and due to the limited service cannot do everything. Ultimately it depended on the usage of the road with rural roads generally having lower volumes of traffic they may not receive the interventions they once did.
- Would love to complete all requests however there were currently 103 requests for additional work on top of what was already and limited budget and there would be more added to that following the meeting.
- Searched for and unable to find any plans on the construction or development programme for A2.
- Would respond separately to all of the local areas raised above.

The Chairperson thanked the delegation for their attendance and extended the thanks of the Council to the team across the whole District.

There being no further business, the meeting concluded at 7.23pm.

For adoption at Meeting of Newry, Mourne and Down District Council to be held on Monday 6 November 2017.

Signed:

Chairperson

Chief Executive