

Special Roads Meeting

**MINUTES OF THE SPECIAL ROADS MEETING OF KERRY COUNTY COUNCIL HELD
IN THE COUNCIL CHAMBERS, ARAS AN CHONTAE, TRALEE ON 31ST MARCH 2008**

**MIONTUAIRISCÍ AN CHRUINNITHE SPEISIALTA BÓITHRE DE CHOMHAIRLE
CONTAE CHIARRAÍ A TIONÓLADH I SEOMRA NA COMHAIRLE, ÁRAS AN CHONTAE,
TRÁ LÍ, AR AN LUAN, 31 MARCH 2008**

PRESENT/I LÁTHAIR

Councillors/Comhairleoirí

J. Brassil
R. Beasley
B. Cronin
S. Fitzgerald
J. Sheahan
D. Healy-Rae
P. Leahy
P. McCarthy
B. O'Connell
T. Fleming
C. Miller

T. Buckley.
Ml. Connor-Scarteen
Ml. Gleeson
T. Fitzgerald
Ml. Cahill
Ml. Healy-Rae (Mayor)
B. MacGearailt
T. Ní Fhearaíosa
A. McEllistrim
Ml. O'Shea
L. Purtill

APOLOGY

Councillor/Comhairleoir

J. O'Connor

IN ATTENDANCE/I LÁTHAIR

Mr. T. Curran, County Manager
Mr. M. Corridan, S.E.
Mr. F. Hartnett, S.E.E.
Mr. J. Flynn, Director of Corporate Affairs
Ms. M. West, A.O.
Ms. K. Griffin, C.O.
Mr. P. Corkery, Customer/Communications Relations Officer.

Mr. C. O'Sullivan, Director of Services
Mr. G. MacNamara, S.E.
Mr. P. Teahan, A/S.E.E.
Mr. J. Breen, Director of Housing
Mr. D. O'Brien, S.O.

The meeting commenced at 2.30 pm.

Cllr. M. Healy-Rae, Mayor, commenced the meeting.

The Mayor and all Elected Members wished to express their condolences to the families of Michael and Denis Hanrahan, Moyvane, Aidan Breen, Kenmare, Gerry Moynihan, Gneeveguilla, Michael McCarthy, Mossie Horgan and Christy O'Donoghue, Kenmare (R.I.P.).

Cllr. M. Healy-Rae wished Mr. C. O'Sullivan every success in his new role and thanked the staff of the Roads Department on behalf of himself and the Elected Members.

Mr. C. O'Sullivan, Director of Service, outlined the programme of works for National Primary Routes, National Secondary Routes and for the Non-National Road Network as set out in the report, as circulated. He pointed out that funding from the National Roads Authority overall has reduced in 2008 and this is a major cause for concern.

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Some of the key elements of the programme were cited as follows:-

- National Roads Allocation is €18,637,449, broken down as follows:-
 - €9,068,440 – National Primary Routes
 - €9,569,009 – National Secondary Routes

National Primary Routes - the following was noted:-

€4m – N21 Castleisland By-Pass

€1.25m – Majors (Planning and Design):- Tralee By-Pass (€900,000)

Farranfore/Killarney (€250,000)

Castleisland/Farranfore (€100,000)

National Secondary Routes – the following was noted:-

- There has been a significant decrease in funding.
- Funding for Pavement Improvement Works has decreased by €0.5m
- No funding was allocated for realignment works on National Secondary Routes, which was very disappointing.
- €145,000 has been allocated for Planning/Design
- €800,000 allocation for the Bridge Replacement Programme – this is a decrease of €350,000 on the 2007 allocation; however the allocation of €200,000 for works on Laune Bridge is very welcome.
- €469,400 allocated for safety works at 4 locations on National Secondary Routes.
- €2.2m allocated for maintenance works on National Secondary Routes, which is an increase of €130,000 on 2007.

Non-National Roads Programme

- **Non-National Roads Allocation is €27,591,563, broken down as follows:-**
- Maintenance and Improvement allocations have increased for 2008; mainly due to the increase in funding from the Councils own resources.
- An allocation of €4.89m has been provided from Own Resources, as agreed at Estimates. Included in this is a sum of €308,750 for loan charges associated with the revetment works carried out at Inch on the R561 in 2001 and 2007.
- We are heavily dependant on Exchequer Funding for Non-National Roads – 82% of funding is provided by the Department of Transport.
- €10.9m is available for the Restoration Improvement Scheme.
- €4.03m is available for the Restoration Maintenance Scheme, which is an increase on 2007.
- Funding for the Discretionary Improvement Grant remains the same as 2007 at €1.186m, and includes €260,000 for improvement works to junctions and €742,000 for the improvement of roads not included in the Restoration Programmes.
- €1.4m is available for Discretionary Maintenance Programmes.

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- There has been an increase of €151,000 to €4.75m for Specific Improvement Grants. A total of 14 schemes will be funded under this allocation in 2008 with 5 of the schemes relating to bridge works.
- €319,487 is available for Low Cost Safety Improve Works, which is an increase of 11% on 2007.
- Non-National Road Upkeep has been allocated €6,296,750, which is an increase of €553,750 on 2007. This sum is considered inadequate to provide a full maintenance programme.
- A sum of €1,583,750 is available for Regional Road Upkeep. The sum of €1.06m will be spent on works such as cleaning watertables, opening inlets, elimination of localised flooding, junction maintenance, winter gritting, street cleaning, road signs and markings and general repair and emergency work. The balance is allocated to loan payment on the Inch Road, Traffic Control and Bridge Repairs.
- A sum of €4,663,000 is available for Local road Upkeep: €703,000 from the Discretionary Maintenance Grant and €3,960,000 from Own Resources.
- €50,000 is available for School Flashing Lights.
- €100,000 is available for the Collision Prevention Programme.
- A total of €783,000 has been set aside for County Councillors Allocations - €29,000 per Member. Members are requested to concentrate their allocations on roads related activities.
- The Emergency Call-Out System for Roads was introduced in 2007, and €100,000 has been allocated to this programme.
- €30,000 is available for emergency hedgecutting at junctions, but it should be noted that hedgecutting remains the responsibility of the landowner.
- In 2007, 519 roads related complaints were investigated by the Roads Enforcement Officer. 5,425 hedgecutting notices were issued, and €21,600 was received in fines for overloaded vehicles.
- €240,000 has been set aside for Community Involvement Schemes. This scheme was initiated in 1994 as a pilot scheme, and implemented in 1997. An assessment of older schemes is to be carried out, and €200,000 is available to surface dress old schemes.
- Allocation for Local Improvement Schemes is €1,335,000, which is a decrease on 2007. It should be noted, however, that CLÁR funding has not been received yet. There are currently 400 Local Improvement Schemes being assessed.
- €820,000 is available for Public Lighting. Out of this, €760,000 will be available for energy and maintenance, and €60,000 is available for the provision of new lights (15 lights in 3 locations). A full inventory of public lights in the County is currently being carried out.
- A Road Safety Education Officer was appointed in 2007. €260,000 has been allocated for the work programme.
- €890,000 has been put aside for road safety works.

Mr. O'Sullivan pointed out that the grants for road maintenance are inadequate. The funding for grass-cutting and street cleaning is also inadequate. The reduction in funding for the Local Improvement Scheme is very disappointing as it is a very successful scheme.

Mr. O'Sullivan also mentioned that all roads where accidents occur are investigated within 3 days to see if improvements can be made.

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Mr. O'Sullivan thanked the Roads Engineers, area and office staff for their help in putting this year's Roadworks Programme together, and the Members for their assistance at area level.

The Members discussed the programme at length. All the Members thanked Mr. Tom Curran, County Manager, Mr. Charlie O'Sullivan, Director, Roads, Transportation & Safety and his staff, administrative, technical and outdoor for the excellent works carried out in 2007 and for the production of the Road Works Programme for 2008.

Specific issues raised by the Members as follows:

- All members expressed concern at the decrease in overall funding.
- Disappointment was expressed with the NRA funding, especially the reduction in the National Secondary Improvement Grants. Lack of funding for the Ring of Kerry, especially for realignment works was a concern. It was felt that the N69 Tarbert to Tralee Road had received very little funding in comparison to the Tarbert to Limerick Road.
- Great disappointment was expressed at the reduction in funding for Local Improvement Schemes, especially with approximately 400 applicants on the list.
- The implementation of Chapter 8 regulations is causing concern, and while members understood the importance of health and safety at roadworks, they felt that some of the regulations would be difficult to implement on smaller roads, and would cause a lot of problems for Kerry County Council.
- Disappointment was expressed at the lack of progress on the Farranfore to Lissivigeen by-pass. While the €250,000 for design was welcomed, it was hoped that the road would have been started by now.
- Omission of the Farrankeal Road was noted, and concern was expressed over this as the road is in very poor condition.
- The funding for the Muckross Road was welcomed.
- The funding allocated for bridges was considered totally inadequate, and it was felt that this should be highlighted as a health and safety issue.
- The grant for Ballingar Bridge was welcomed, but it was stated that the lack of a bridge is causing great problems for landowners who have land on either side of the bridge. It is hoped that once the works start that Kerry County Council will make a commitment to continue with the works until the bridge is complete.
- Members were anxious that the Dale Road Phase II would go ahead, and expressed disappointment that the funding was gone on over-expenditure from the previous year.
- The Tralee and Castleisland By-Passes were welcomed by members, and it was hoped that these would be started as soon as possible, as they will be a major improvement in the County.
- It was felt that road safety awareness in Kerry has improved a lot, especially with the appointment of the Road Safety Education Officer, and compliments were paid to the informative Road Safety Roadshow which had been held recently.
- Hedgecutting – members requested a better breakdown of figures with regard to notices issued.
- Ballybunion Main Street – will this work be completed before the Tourist Season starts? Is the funding running low for this project?
- The practice of pothole repair in the County should be addressed. Could a more permanent material be used for the repairs?
- Members wished to know what effect Allman Quarry has had on the cost of producing bitumen products.
- Funding for Community Involvement Schemes was welcomed, especially the funding earmarked for maintenance of older CIS schemes.
- It was felt that the waiting time for the erection of Public Lights was too long, up to 3 years in some instances, and that this should be addressed.

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- It was also considered at great achievement that approximately 95% of roads in Kerry are in relatively good condition considering the large road network in the County.

Mr. Charlie O'Sullivan, Director of Services replied to the various queries raised.

- It is hoped to start works on the Ballingar Bridge at the end of the year.
- Ballybunion – it is hoped to do as much work as possible with the money available.
- Dale Road – it was disappointing that the funding was not increased.
- Pothole repairs are currently under review.
- Hedgecutting – 142 second notices were sent to persons who did not comply with the first notice.
- Local Improvement Schemes – Decrease in funding is disappointing, but it is hoped that further funding through CLÁR will be received. The criteria for LIS are set nationally, and representations would have to be made to get this changed.
- Allman Quarry has brought competition to the market, and has encouraged other providers into the market.

The replies were noted.

On the PROPOSAL of Cllr. T. Fitzgerald, SECONDED by Cllr. T. Ferris, it was agreed to adopt the 2008 Road Works Programme as presented. All members agreed.

Conferences:

On the PROPOSAL of Cllr. R. Beasley, SECONDED by Cllr. C. Miller it was agreed to authorise the attendance of Cllr. T. Fitzgerald at the conference on the theme “Effective Communication for Councillors” to be held in Letterkenny, Co. Donegal, from 4th – 6th April, 2008.

On the PROPOSAL of Cllr. R. Beasley, SECONDED by Cllr. C. Miller it was agreed to authorise the attendance of Mayor M. Healy-Rae at the conference on the theme “Inclusion Ireland AGM & Conference” to be held in Tullamore, Co. Offaly, on 11th & 12th April, 2008.

On the PROPOSAL of Cllr. R. Beasley, SECONDED by Cllr. C. Miller it was agreed to authorise the attendance of Mayor M. Healy-Rae at a Special Meeting with the Department of Agriculture, Fisheries & Food to be held on 2nd April, 2008.

The Meeting concluded at 5.00 p.m.

C. O Suilleabhain

Director of Roads, Transportation & Safety

Mayor of Kerry