

**MINUTES OF THE SPECIAL ROADS MEETING OF KERRY COUNTY COUNCIL HELD IN THE COUNCIL CHAMBERS, ARAS AN CHONTAE, TRALEE ON MONDAY, 23<sup>RD</sup> MARCH 2009.**

**MIONTUAIRISCÍ AN CHRUINNITHE SPEISIALTA BÓITHRE DE CHOMHAIRLE CONTAE CHIARRAÍ A TIONÓLADH I SEOMRA NA COMHAIRLE, ÁRAS AN CHONTAE, TRÁ LÍ, AR AN LUAN, 23 MARCH 2009.**

**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

T. Buckley  
Ml. Connor-Scarteen  
Ml. Gleeson  
T. Fitzgerald  
Ml. Cahill  
Ml. Healy-Rae (Mayor)  
B. MacGearailt  
T. Ní Fhearaíosa  
L. Purtill

**IN ATTENDANCE/I LÁTHAIR**

Mr. T. Curran, County Manager  
Mr. G. MacNamara, S.E.  
Mr. F. Hartnett, S.E.E.  
Mr. J. Flynn, Dir. Corporate Affairs  
Ms. M. West, A.O.  
Ms. K. Condon, C.O.  
Mr. P. Corkery, Customer/Communications Relations Officer

Mr. C. O'Sullivan, Dir. of Services  
Mr. P. Curry, S.E.E.  
Mr. P. Teahan, A/S.E.E.  
Mr. J. Breen, Director of Housing

**ABSENT/AS LÁTHAIR**

Cllr. A. McEllistrim  
Cllr. T. O'Brien

Cllr. Ml. O'Shea  
Cllr. C. Miller

**The meeting commenced at 10.30am.**

Cllr. T. Fleming, Mayor, commenced the meeting.

The Mayor and all Elected Members wished to express their congratulations to the Irish Rugby Team on winning the Grand Slam last Saturday, and to Bernard Dunne, World Boxing Champion.

Cllr. T. Fleming wished to thank Mr. C. O'Sullivan and all in the Roads Department on behalf of himself and the Elected Members for the work carried out during the year.

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 the programme was prepared in a difficult economic climate, and this leads to a greater level of uncertainty in relation to income from Government Departments and also in relation to own resources. Mr. O'Sullivan also noted that circulars have been received from the NRA and Department of Transport instructing Local Authorities not to enter into contracts without the approval of the Department of Finance. This may also have implications in delivering the 2009 Road Works Programme.

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

- National Roads Allocation is €18,537,019, broken down as follows:-
  - €13,377,753 – National Primary Routes
  - €5,159,266 – National Secondary Routes

**National Primary Routes - the following was noted:-**

Major Improvements – Works, Planning & Design - €11.79m in total.

Majors Works – €10.65m in total, allocated as follows:-

N21 Castleisland/Abbeyfeale - €650,000  
N21 Castleisland By-Pass - €10,000,000

Majors, Planning and Design - €1,140,000 in total, allocated as follows:-

N22 Tralee By-Pass/Tralee – Bealagreallagh - €700,000  
N22 Farranfore/Killarney - €440,000

National Primary Pavement and Minor Improvement Works - €850,000, which is a decrease of €250,000 on the 2008 allocation. The NRA is to decide where this allocation will be spent.

The allocation for the maintenance of National Primary Routes has decreased by €98,000.

€18,000 was received for safety measures at Clooncbgh, Currow on the N23.

**National Secondary Routes – the following was noted:-**

- There has been a significant decrease in funding.
- Funding for Pavement Improvement Works has decreased by €3.5m
- No funding was allocated for the N69 Listowel, which was very disappointing.
- €500,000 allocated for Pavement Surfacing Works, details of how and where this allocation is to be spent is to be agreed with the NRA.
- €300,000 allocation for the Bridge Rehabilitation Programme – primarily for works on Laune Bridge on the N70 at Killorglin.
- €276,500 allocated for safety works at 5 locations on National Secondary Routes.

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- €1,682,766 allocated for maintenance on National Secondary Routes, which is a decrease of approximately €500,000 on last year.
- No funding was received for Special Maintenance (ragwort), so this will have to be dealt with from the maintenance grant.
- Any surface dressing is to be approved by the NRA first.

### Non-National Roads Programme

- **Non-National Roads Allocation is €27,591,563, broken down as follows:-**
- An allocation of €4.739m has been provided from Own Resources, as agreed at Estimates. Included in this is a sum of €218,000 for loan charges associated with the coastal protection works carried out at Inch on the R561 in 2001 and 2007.
- It was noted that we are heavily dependant on Exchequer funding for the maintenance and improvement of the Non-National Road Network, with 83% of funding being provided by the Department of Transport.
- There is an increase in the number of Regional Roads to be maintained in the County due to the reclassification of some local roads in 2008.
- €10.9m is available for the Restoration Improvement Scheme.
- €4.03m is available for the Restoration Maintenance Scheme.
- Funding for the Discretionary Improvement Grant remains the same as 2008 at €1.187m, 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.
- €5.15m is available for Specific Improvement Grants. A total of 15 schemes will be funded under this allocation in 2009 with 5 of the schemes relating to bridge works.
- €227,600 is available for Low Cost Safety Improve Works, which is a decrease on 2008 allocation.
- Non-National Road Upkeep has been allocated €6,027,000. This sum is considered inadequate to provide a full maintenance programme.
- A sum of €1,514,000 is available for Regional Road Upkeep. The sum of €1.11m will be spent on works such as cleaning water tables, opening inlets, elimination of localised flooding, junction maintenance, winter gritting, street cleaning, road signs and markings and general repair and emergency work. €35,000 will be spent on Traffic Control and €150,000 on Bridge Repairs. The balance is allocated to loan payment on the Inch Road.
- A sum of €4,513,000 is available for Local Road Upkeep: €553,000 from the Discretionary Maintenance Grant and €3,960,000 from Own Resources.
- €20,000 is available for School Flashing Lights Maintenance.
- €100,000 is available for the Collision Prevention Programme.

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- 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 2008, 500 roads related complaints were investigated by the Roads Enforcement Officer. 7,000 hedgecutting notices were issued, and €16,050 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. It should be noted, however, that CLÁR funding has not been received yet.
- €903,000 is available for Public Lighting. Out of this, €848,000 will be available for energy and maintenance, and €55,000 is available for Public Lighting Improvement. A full inventory of public lights in the County is currently being carried out.
- €622,100 has been put aside for road safety works. There were 19 fatalities in 2008, despite significant investment in the road network over the last number of years. The Road Safety (Education) Officer was appointed in 2007, and has carried out trojan work in the promotion of road safety.

Mr. O'Sullivan pointed out that the grants for road maintenance are inadequate. The bulk of the funding received is spent in the County and goes back into the local economy e.g. labour, purchase of materials, and Kerry County Council always strive to provide value for money, and endeavour to maintain staffing levels.

Mr. O'Sullivan also mentioned there is a commitment to take the Tralee Ring Road Phase III through to construction.

Mr. O'Sullivan thanked the Roads Engineers, area and office staff for their help in putting this year's Roadworks Programme together, and the Mayor and 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 2008 and for the production of the Road Works Programme for 2009.

Specific issues raised by the Members as follows:

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- All members expressed concern at the decrease in overall funding, and the fact that the funding is not guaranteed.
- Funding for the Castleisland By-Pass was welcomed. Members were concerned about the effect on traffic while the by-pass is being constructed.
- The Tralee By-Pass is an important development, and Members wished to know how quickly this could be brought to tender.
- NRA funding for National Secondary Roads was considered totally inadequate. Disappointment was expressed at the lack of funding for the N69 Listowel to Tralee road, which is in a bad state of disrepair, especially in the Listowel area. The N67 Tarbert Island Road is in an appalling state, yet it has not received funding for the past 3 years, which is not acceptable. Disappointment was expressed at lack of funding for N86 also.
- Disappointment was expressed at the lack of progress on the Farranfore to Lissivigeen by-pass.
- 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, and that it was hoped that this project would commence as soon as possible.
- Members welcomed funding for the Dale Road, and asked if Phase I of this road will be finished with blacktop.
- It was acknowledged by Members that the bad weather during the year has caused a lot of deterioration on the roads in the County and it was hoped that enough funding would be available to prevent these roads from deteriorating further, however the reduction in maintenance grants would have an affect on this. Efforts should be made to clear blocked drains and culverts, and to improve inadequate drains.
- The practice of pothole repair in the County should be addressed. Could a more permanent material be used for the repairs?
- Funding for Community Involvement Schemes was welcomed, especially the funding earmarked for maintenance of older CIS schemes.
- Funding for Local Improvements Schemes was also welcomed, but Members felt that more funding could be provided for this worthwhile scheme, considering the number of applicants applying for the scheme.
- Public lighting – Members enquired about the cost of public lighting, and whether extra lights could be erected in some areas. Would lights be run by solar panel in the near future? Also, taking in charge of housing estates increases the number of lights in the charge of Kerry County Council, what are the cost implications of this?
- Street Cleaning – Members hoped that there would not be a reduction in funding for street cleaning, and that this service would be maintained and provided on a regular basis. The problem should be raised with nightclubs and fast-food restaurants, as this proves to be the main source of litter on streets at weekends.
- Litter on roadsides – Members felt that this was another issue that needs to be dealt with as litter being thrown from cars has to be cleaned up by area staff and has to be paid for using the maintenance budget.
- Disappointment was expressed at the loss of the Special Maintenance funding for the treatment of ragwort on National Primary and Secondary routes, especially as

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the ragwort will now have to be treated using funding from the ordinary maintenance grant.

- Members recognised that there is a major funding problem in the Country as a whole, and asked if the way money is being spent has been revised e.g. renegotiating plant hire prices or prices for supply of materials.
- Members raised issues with various roads in their Electoral Areas which were not included in the 2009 Roadworks Programme. These roads may be taken into consideration for the next Roadworks Programme.
- Members requested speed limit reviews for various roads in their Electoral Areas.

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

- The funding for the Castleisland By-Pass is welcomed, and the project will be progressed as speedily as possible.
- Value for money is a high priority for the Roads Department, and staff has been asked to renegotiate in terms of rates where possible.
- Taking in charge of roads/estates has financial implications for Local Authorities. Funding is limited in terms of works needed on roads in housing estates that have been taken in charge; however, these works are suitable for County Councillors Allocations.
- It is hoped to retain the figures for street cleaning, but may have to revise funding in this area.
- Issues raised regarding the ongoing running costs of Public Lighting will be raised at the next Transport SPC meeting.
- Speed limit reviews will be carried out when a report on the previous speed limits at Derryquay and Foilmore Schools has been prepared.
- Funding for the N69 will have to have the approval of the NRA. A submission has already been made to the NRA in this regard.

The replies were noted.

On the PROPOSAL of Cllr. P. McCarthy, SECONDED by Cllr. T. Buckley, it was agreed to adopt the 2009 Road Works Programme as presented. All members agreed.

The Meeting concluded at 2.00 p.m.

**Gerard O'Brien**  
**Meetings Administrator**

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**Mayor of Kerry**