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**MINUTES OF THE SPECIAL ROADS MEETING OF KERRY COUNTY COUNCIL
HELD IN THE CASTLEMAINE SUITE, MANOR WEST HOTEL, KILLARNEY ROAD,
TRALEE ON MONDAY, 3RD MARCH, 2014.**

**MIONTUAIRISCÍ AN CHRUINNITHE SPEISIALTA BÓITHRE DE CHOMHAIRLE
CONTAE CHIARRAÍ A TIONÓLADH I SEOMRAÍ CHAISLEÁN NA MAINGE, ÓSTÁN
AN MHAINÉIR, BÓTHAR CHILL ÁIRNE, TRÁ LÍ, AR AN LUAN, 3 MÁRTA 2014.**

PRESENT/I LÁTHAIR

Councillors/Comhairleoirí

R. Beasley
T. Buckley
P. Connor-Scarteen
J.J. Culloty
T. Ferris
S. Cosai Fitzgerald (Mayor)
M. Gleeson
D. Healy-Rae
P. Leahy
A. McEllistrim
B. O'Connell
M. O'Shea
J. Sheahan

J. Brassil
M. Cahill
B. Cronin
P.J. Donovan
J. Finucane
N. Foley
M. Griffin
J. Healy-Rae
P. McCarthy
T. O'Brien
P. O'Donoghue
L. Purtill
G. Wharton-Slaterry

IN ATTENDANCE/I LÁTHAIR

Mr. T. Curran, County Manager
Mr. C. O'Sullivan, Director of Services, Local Authority National Procurement Office
Mr. J. Flynn, Director of Corporate Affairs
Mr. J. Breen, Director of Housing & Community and Enterprise
Ms. A. McAllen, A/Head of Finance
Mr. F. Hartnett, S.E.E., Roads, Transportation & Safety
Mr. P. Teahan, A/S.E.E., Roads, Transportation & Safety
Mr. E. Scanlan, S.E.E., Roads, Transportation & Safety
Mr. P. Curry, A/S.E., Kerry National Road Design Office
Mr. G. O'Brien, S.E.O. Corporate Affairs
Mr. P. Corkery, Communications Relations Officer
Ms. M. West, A.O., Roads, Transportation & Safety
Ms. K. Doody, S.O., Roads, Transportation & Safety
Ms. G. Collins, A.S.O., Roads, Transportation & Safety
Ms. K. Condon, C.O., Roads, Transportation & Safety

ABSENT/AS LÁTHAIR

Cllr. S. Counihan

APOLOGIES/LETH SCÉAL

Mr. G. MacNamara, A/Director of Services, Roads, Transportation & Safety

The meeting commenced at 11.10a.m.

Cllr. S. Fitzgerald, Mayor, commenced the meeting.

Item 1. Consideration of the Road Works Programme 2014

Mr. Charlie O'Sullivan, Director of Services, outlined the Programme of Works for National Primary Routes, National Secondary Routes and for the Non-National Road Network as set out in the Roads Programme 2014, which was circulated to members. He pointed out that overall, funding has decreased 34% from 2013 and the following is a summary of points highlighted from his report:-

- Funding for National Roads is €9.6 million, down from €22.6 million in 2013, which is primarily due to the completion of the Tralee By-Pass.
- Funding for Non-National roads has reduced by €2.2m, which is a 29% reduction on 2013.
- Local Improvement Schemes again have no separate allocation. Local Authorities are permitted to use up to 15% of the Discretionary Grant for Local Improvement Schemes, but this would impact on the maintenance of public roads. It is planned to complete 4 schemes from the priority list this year (currently 146 on the list).
- €60,000 has been provided from County Councillors Allocations for an Emergency Hardship Scheme, and there is now a provision of €723,000 for County Councillors Allocations (€26,778 per Member).
- There has been a significant decrease in Regional and Local Roads funding (6.4%), which has an impact on the local economy. It is proposed to further restrict overtime and travel to reduce costs.
- The Specific Improvement Grant has now been suspended and replaced with a Bridge Rehabilitation Scheme with funding of €202,000 being allocated.
- Details of funding for Community Involvement Schemes have yet to be received. Members will be informed when details of the 2014 scheme are announced by the Department.
- The delivery of the 2013 Roads Programme was challenging. The greatest disappointment was the refusal by An Bord Pleanála to sanction the remaining sections of the N86 improvement scheme.
- The continuing decline in funding for maintenance and pavement improvement works presents a serious challenge on meeting the expectations of road users and local communities.

- The Wild Atlantic Way has provided Kerry County Council with funding of €200,000 to erect all of the required signage on this internationally recognised route. A submission has also been made to upgrade the 23 discovery Points along the route in the County and funding is anticipated in 2014 for this.

Details of the funding received for the recent storm damage was outlined by Mr. Frank Hartnett to the Members. A submission was made on the 03rd February 2014 for €21 million - €3 million was granted by the various Departments. The remaining €18 million was referred to the OPW as this money is required for coastal strengthening works. It was noted that the 3 Town Councils were included in the submission for funding. €280,000 had been incurred before the submission was made, and the Department has indicated that this funding will be allocated. A programme of works is now required. An additional submission was made on 28th February 2014, following the storm of the 12th February 2014.

The Members discussed the programme at length, and the Members thanked Mr. Tom Curran, County Manager, Mr. Charlie O'Sullivan, Director of Services, Mr. Ger MacNamara, A/Director of Roads, Transportation & Safety and all the Roads, Transportation & Safety Department's staff for the preparation of the Roads Programme for 2014. Members wished to acknowledge and compliment the works carried out by the Area Engineers, Outdoor Staff and the Area Offices.

The following specific issues were raised by the Members:

- Members expressed disappointment at yet another reduction in funding for Roads, especially where no funding has been received for National Primary Safety Measures and the suspension of the Specific Improvement Grant. Cllr. Johnny Healy-Rae stated that it was disappointing that a percentage of the Discretionary Maintenance Grant has to be spent on Local Improvement Schemes. Cllr. Norma Foley stated that the 50% reduction in funding over the last 6 years speaks volumes as to the priority of Central Government.
- Members wished to thank staff on behalf of the general public for the work carried out through the recent storms and flooding. Staff were working in extremely dangerous conditions, and the Members wished to recognise the great work carried out. The €3 million in funding to address the damage done during the storms is very welcome, but Members felt that further funding may be required. Cllr. Michael Cahill stated that roads need to be protected in areas like Cromane, Rossbeigh, Kells, Waterville, Ballyheigue and Ballybunion.
- Members discussed the funding received for the recent storm damage. Cllr. Michael Cahill expressed concern in relation to the National Plan – he felt that a proper plan was not in place. He stated that funding should be coming from one Department, and from the same source, not submitting to one Department and the funding coming from 3 Departments. He also felt that the funding would be tight, as Kerry has submitted an application for €30 million, whereas funding available for the entire Country is only €70 million. Cllr. Toireasa Ferris asked if €280,000 was enough to cover costs incurred for emergency works, and that if future correspondence from the Department regarding funding is received that all Councillors be informed immediately. Cllr. Ferris also asked for a written schedule

of works to be carried out following the storms. Cllr. Norma Foley asked how much funding had been applied for following the storm of the 12th February 2014, and how much of the funding received will be ring fenced for Fenit.

- Members discussed the recent flooding at Tullig, Castleisland. Cllr. Bobby O'Connell reported that Minister Brian Hayes has assured funding will be made available for flooding, especially for graveyards at Kilbanivane and Tullig on his recent visit to Kerry, once an application has been submitted under the minor works scheme. Cllr. Brendan Cronin stated that capacity of the culvert is not adequate when flooding occurs. An estimate of cost is required to rectify the problem as people's homes are at risk. Cllr. Danny Healy-Rae stated that he had requested that the capacity of the bridge under the road at Tullig be increased a number of years ago, and that he had been informed that the problem was at Glounsharoon. Cllr. John Joe Culloty stated that there is a bottleneck at Tullig with regards to flooding, and that works need to be carried out to rectify the problem under the minor works scheme. Cllr. Anne McEllistrim requested that the Roads Department liaise with the OPW in relation to this.
- Members stated that there seemed to be an issue with ponding occurring on roads and that this is causing a lot of the roads in the County to disintegrate. Members felt that if more staff were available to open drains and dykes, the issue may not be as serious as it currently is. In light of this, Members felt that the embargo on recruitment should be temporarily lifted to allow temporary staff be employed to address this issue. Cllr. Michael Gleeson noted that on the L-11017 there are 10 instances of serious ponding that will destroy this road over a couple of weeks. He felt that local people should be allowed to give their time to help sort out these roads. Cllr. Robert Beasley agreed that the ponding of water on main roads is an issue, and that drains are not open to allow the water to flow off the road. Cllr. Danny Healy-Rae also felt that the poor drainage is causing potholes e.g. around Mangerton Road. Also around Kilcummin, Park Hill – water is flowing down the road in this area leaving large potholes. People are paying road tax, property tax etc. and yet the roads are still left in appalling condition. Cllr. Johnny Healy-Rae reiterated this fact and stated that Dromuckley Road in Kenmare is in very poor condition due to lack of drainage and this road is not scheduled to be resurfaced until 2016. Cllr. John Joe Culloty stated that the County Bounds to Killarney is in very poor condition as the surface is wearing away. Cllr. Anne McEllistrim stated that a lot of good work is being undone by the increased level of rainfall and – water outlets need to be reopened. Cllr. Norma Foley supported the comments being made regarding ponding on roads.
- Members were disappointed that again there was no separate funding for Local Improvement Schemes. Cllr. Brendan Cronin stated that it is very disappointing that only 4 roads from the list of 146 will be repaired in 2014. He noted that at this rate it will take 36 years to go through the entire list, which is totally unacceptable given the fact that in some cases roads going to peoples houses are practically washed away. Drainage is a huge issue on these roads and this needs to be addressed. Cllr. Pat McCarthy proposed writing to the Minister to ask when it is intended to reintroduce Local Improvement Schemes. Cllr. Pat Leahy felt that a meeting should be held with the Minister regarding the issue. Cllr. John Sheahan stated that local people are not happy with the fact that they cannot receive

assistance to reinstate roads to their homes. Cllr. Norma Foley raised the issue of the Hardship and Emergency Schemes, and asked how far €60,000 will go towards repairing roads. Cllr. Toireasa Ferris agreed and stated that if the roads are in very poor condition this funding would not be adequate to do a reasonable number of roads.

- Members highlighted the issue of Public Lighting. Cllr. Brendan Cronin, Cllr. J.J. Culloty, Cllr. Anne McEllistrim and Cllr. John Sheahan raised the issue of the lack of public lighting in the village of Rathmore. Cllr. Brendan Cronin wished to know if the village will be included for extra lighting and at what cost. Cllr. John Sheahan noted that there are new lights on the westerly side of Rathmore, but nothing in the village. Cllr. Michael Gleeson asked if public lighting will be an issue when the County Council amalgamates with the Town Councils. Cllr. Johnny Healy-Rae felt that the public lighting in the County was a disgrace. He stated that the ESB seem to be repairing lights, but not replacing lights removed. There is no public light in the village of Castlecove at present, but there had been one before the estate was built. Cllr. Healy-Rae also highlighted lack of public lighting in places such as St. Joseph's Nursing Home, Killorglin and Waterville, where unfortunately an elderly pedestrian was knocked down and killed. Cllr. Patrick Connor-Scarteen stated that more efficient public lighting will save the County in the long term. He also requested that public lighting be extended to Ardbhearna Estate in Kenmare. Cllr. John Sheahan also asked if the public lighting policy for rural areas could be reconsidered, in particular where families are being subjected to anti-social behaviour.
- Members enquired as to the status of the Community Involvement Schemes, and when news of funding would be expected. Cllr. Anne McEllistrim asked if members of the public should start submitting forms for C.I.S. for 2014. Cllr. Pat Leahy stated that the C.I.S. is a great scheme and that it was disappointing that no funding had been announced to date.
- Members raised the issue of roadside trees, in light of the recent storms. Cllr. Brendan Cronin noted that on the road from Killarney to Fries, a lot of trees had fallen onto the road and the situation needs to be addressed. The landowners need to be asked to remove the trees. Cllr. Michael Gleeson stated that he had raised the issue of the height of trees along the roadside as a Notice of Motion at the November 2013 Council meeting, and that the height permissible along roadsides needs to be addressed. Cllr. Pat McCarthy wished to know how much of the €280,000 spent before and after Christmas was spent on cutting and removing fallen trees from roads following the recent storms as under the Roads Act, 1993, landowners should be responsible for this.
- Members noted that some areas in need of repair were not receiving any funding, which is disappointing. Cllr. Michael Cahill mentioned the Ring of Kerry route. Cllr. Michael Gleeson noted that the N22 is becoming unsafe, and roads around Killarney National Park are disintegrating. He also wished to note the importance of roads coming into the county. Cllr. Robert Beasley noted that the Ballybunion to Listowel road is in very poor condition especially one particular 1.5 mile stretch, and Glin to Ballylongford/Asdee and onto Ballyduff (road is in very poor condition). Cllr. Danny Healy-Rae noted that local tertiary roads and cul-de-sac roads are not

having any repairs done to them, and roads around Barraduff and Rathmore are unravelling. Cllr. Patrick Connor-Scarteen noted that the road surface in Killorglin town needs to be improved, and that the road at Gleanageallach is in poor condition.

- Members highlighted the need for a speed limit review. Cllr. Danny Healy-Rae stated that he has requested that the speed limit be reduced at Glenflesk Church on numerous occasions. Cllr. Johnny Healy-Rae stated that a speed limit reduction would be needed at Glanageallagh School. There are 5 roads leading into this area and speed limits need to be reduced to allow for this. Cllr. John Joe Culloty stated that a reduced speed limit would be preferable at the by-pass junction in Killarney and at Glenflesk.
- Members addressed the number of road fatalities in the County to date this year. Since the 1st January 2014 there have been 7 fatalities on the County's roads, which is the total number of fatalities for 2013. Cllr. Toireasa Ferris asked if the recent increased rain and strong winds were contributing factors to the high number of road fatalities. Cllr. Norma Foley expressed condolences to the families of those killed on the roads, and asked how this issue will be addressed. Cllr. Anne McEllistrim stated that accident blackspots should be addressed as 3 fatalities have occurred at the same location on the N22.
- Members expressed concern over the lack of funding for bridge inspections. Cllr. Michael Cahill stated that some bridges need to be inspected again, especially some footbridges in the County. Cllr. Michael Gleeson stated that funding for bridge inspections is very important as a lot of the bridges in the County are getting weak. Cllr. Johnny Healy-Rae asked if the Laune Bridge, Killorglin had been inspected recently as it seems to be sinking.
- Cllr. Michael Cahill stated that investment and jobs in the County are needed, and that we need roads in proper condition to attract such investment into the County.
- Cllr. Michael Gleeson wished to know who assessed the major schemes at the outset and why do these schemes go to arbitration.
- Cllr. Danny Healy-Rae raised the issue of the closure of limestone quarries in Kenmare, and stated that it will cost more to bring material from Ardfert to jobs in South Kerry.
- Cllr. Johnny Healy-Rae stated that the funding for footpaths was quite poor, and noted that a footpath is required for the Ardbhearna Estate in Kenmare, which is a Council Estate.
- Cllr. Patrick Connor-Scarteen enquired as to when the Kenmare Relief Road would be completed as progress seems rather slow.
- Cllr. Pat Leahy stated that there is a lot of damage done to coastal towns, and while funding is welcomed, due to limited staff numbers, people are being taken from other jobs to complete these works. Temporary staff are required to ensure all works are being carried out.

- Cllr. Johnny Healy-Rae felt that the funding received for Piers and Harbours is not enough for the County.

Mr. Charlie O'Sullivan, Director of Services, replied to the key issues raised and acknowledged the appreciation from the Mayor and Members.

Mr. O'Sullivan stated that all works have to be carried out within the budget constraints.

In relation to staff numbers, Mr. O'Sullivan noted that even if the staff embargo was lifted, the Local Authority would not have adequate funding to employ extra staff.

No details have yet been received in relation to funding for minor coastal works. It was noted that the Local Authority is required to provide 10% of the funding from own resources. The schemes that benefit public infrastructure will get priority under this scheme.

In relation to the €3 million received in funding – details of works to be carried out will be provided to the members.

The full cost of the emergency response up to the 27th January 2014 was €280,000. A further submission of €670,000 was made for the emergency response after the storm of 12th February 2014.

In relation to public lighting – a lot of the public lighting network is old and substantial capital costs would be required, hence the ESCO project is being rolled out, and Eamon Scanlan, S.E.E. has done substantial work on this project.

Kerry County Council are not in a position to assess roadside trees in the County, it is the responsibility of the landowner to assess trees on their property. The Roads Department will look at notifying landowners to examine all roadside trees.

Laune Bridge – this will be examined. Strengthening works had been carried out on the bridge 3 years ago.

Kenmare Relief Road – the funding for this road was spent last year. The balance of the works is to be completed this year.

In relation to potholes and drainage, it should be noted that there has been exceptional rainfall this year. Rainfall has been 57% higher than normal.

In relation to Cllr. Ferris's request to be emailed all circulars in relation to funding, Mr. O'Sullivan stated that the circular in question was only received on Friday last and had to be assessed before being circulated.

Cllr. Michael Cahill asked when funding would be divided amongst the areas. Mr. O'Sullivan informed him that this would be over the next couple of weeks. Tourist routes would get priority in order to have these completed before the tourist season begins.

Mr. Eamon Scanlan stated that in relation to the Minor Works required in Tullig, this is specifically an OPW issue. The whole drainage network is the responsibility of the OPW, and the issue needs to be addressed directly with the OPW.

Mr. Eamon Scanlan stated that he will meet with the people of Rathmore in relation to the public lighting issue. He stated that Kerry County Council is statutorily obliged to reduce energy consumption by 33%. The issue in Rathmore is that public lighting is required for safety reasons.

It was noted that any other specific issues raised could be taken up with specific area offices or members of staff.

The replies were noted.

On the PROPOSAL of Cllr. Brendan Cronin, and SECONDED by Cllr. Tim Buckley, it was agreed to adopt the 2014 Roads Programme as presented. All Members agreed.

Item 2. Any Other Business

No issues.

Meeting concluded at 1.20 p.m.

Gerard O'Brien
Meetings Administrator

Mayor of Kerry