

Minutes of the Ordinary Meeting of the Municipal District of Bray held in the Council Chamber, Town Hall, Bray on Tuesday 20th June 2017 following the Annual General Meeting.

Present:

**Councillor Joe Behan,
Councillor Christopher Fox
Councillor Steven Matthews
Councillor Oliver O'Brien
Councillor Michael O'Connor
Councillor Brendan Thornhill
Councillor John Ryan
Councillor Pat Vance**

Also present:

**Mr. Des O'Brien, Director of Services
Mr. David Forde, District Administrator
Ms. Triona Irving, Administrative Officer
Mr. Liam Bourke, District Engineer**

Absent

Apologies:

1. Confirmation of Minutes of the Ordinary Meeting dated 9th May 2017.

Councillor Matthews proposed confirmation of the minutes of the Ordinary Meeting of the Municipal District of Bray dated 9th May 2017 and Councillor Vance seconded the proposal.

2. To Receive an Update on the Vacant Sites Levy

Sorcha Walsh and Lisa Rothwell from the planning section in Wicklow County Council gave the members an update on the Vacant Sites Levy, which was previously circulated to the members.

This is implementing the Urban Regeneration and Housing Act 2015 and has been discussed at the S.P.C. It will be rolled out in phases starting with larger town and working our way down the list.

In response to the number of sites lying vacant, undeveloped and creating a visual impact on the surrounding area the Vacant Site Levy (VSL) has been introduced by Government to ensure that land, particularly in urban areas, is put to the most productive and appropriate use.

There may be sites within the County where site owners/developers have failed to bring forward plans or proposals for the development of sites in line with the relevant Local Area Plan and County Development Plan. It is the intention of the Government that the VSL will stimulate development and housing supply to address the housing shortage, while also creating activity in the construction sector and encourage economic recovery.

Implementation of the VSL will encourage the reuse and redevelopment of vacant sites therefore securing the objectives of the core strategy, housing strategy and retail strategy. The levy shall be applied annually by the Local Authority up to a rate of 3% of the market value of the vacant site. The VSL has been approved by government and incorporated into the Urban Regeneration and Housing Act 2015.

Vacant sites will be identified in areas designated for development. Sites which are capable of providing housing will be of particular focus. In this regard, sites identified for **regeneration and residential** development purposes which have the potential to provide housing to meet the local housing need and demand will be considered for the VSL.

These documents have been circulated as a matter of courtesy to advise and give you the opportunity to come back to us in the next few weeks. It is not a reserved function. We don't want to delay and hope to issue letters to the landowners in the next 2 weeks.

The members raised the following points;

- Thank you for your clear presentation it is encouraging that so much work has been done.
- One area, the old ESB shop at the junction of the Main Street and Herbert Road is a fantastic visible site and has been vacant for many years. This site would be worth considering.
- The 'Heitons' sites would this be an option for town centre housing/mixed housing. Is a change of zoning being considered for this site?
- The Vacant Site Levy is a good attempt to nudge property owners in the right direction. I am disappointed at the size restriction of 0.05ha.
- This would have been an opportunity to back to other properties.
- You have our support and I am delighted that the former Cash and Carry site is included.
- I would issue caution on penalising people, I prefer the carrot and stick approach. Some people don't have the finances to develop; it is easy to issue fines.
- The right approach is identifying sites in the town; short term some sort of tax incentive not huge but enough to get things up and running should be given and then only the penalty if nothing is done.
- How much is the levy and will it remain in the District?
- The old chemical site at the Maltings has been vacant for a long time, it is a substantial amount of ground and I think it would meet the criteria.
- This requires a lot of local knowledge to be fed into it.

Sorcha Walsh informed the members that the levy is 3% of the market value, there is a sliding scale. If the site is subject to a site loan (an agreement for the provision of credit to a person on the security of a mortgage of a freehold or leasehold estate or interest in the land for the purpose of enabling the person to purchase the land) and the outstanding amount of the loan is:

- a) Greater than the market value of the vacant site, vacant site levy in respect of that site is 0% of such market value
- b) Greater than 75% but less than 100% of the market value of the vacant site, vacant site levy is 0.75% of such market value
- c) Greater than 50% but less than 75% of the market value of the vacant site, vacant site levy is 1.5% of such market value

Any money received by the Planning Authority where the vacant site comprises regeneration land shall be spent by it on the development and renewal of regeneration land in the vicinity of the site.

The ESB shop did not meet the area criteria. We have had some difficulty in establishing the ownership of some sites and would appreciate if the members could assist. In relation to the Old Heiton's site only 10% would be eligible for social housing unless we developed the site ourselves. Town Centre sites are zoned for mixed use development but not all sites are suitable for housing. This levy is to encourage people to develop, to avoid the tax. We are happy to work with people on the register. Payment will not be due until 2019.

3. To Receive the Housing Report

The members raised the following points;

- Are there any Part 5 houses and can we have a list?
- How many houses are there in the Fassaroe development?
- There are pallets being stores on the Oldcourt green area bordering Oldcourt Grove. These are brand new pallets which could be set on fire and spread to the properties in Oldcourt Grove. This is causing a lot of distress to the residents. Can they be removed?

The Administrative Officer informed the members that there are approximately 700 houses in the Fassaroe development. Part 5 is dealt with centrally in Wicklow County Council and I don't have a figure. I am only aware of one unit and will request this information tomorrow.

4. To Receive a Report on Roads and Traffic

The members raised the following points;

- I welcome these detailed reports and acknowledge the huge tasks been undertaken by Dominic and Liam.

- Can we have an indication of when the work on the ramps will start?
- There is a proliferation of ramps in the town, these needs to be looked at. We need more policemen on the beat.
- The residents at Glenwood are happy to see work being carried out. There was one objection by a resident but I have been contacted and 90% of the residents would like to see the work completed.
- The parking on the seafront is totally inadequate all the way to the Vevay. Can consideration be given to constructing a new public car park between the Barracuda and the Northern Car Park? Tourists are spending money in the town.
- I have no problem with improving car parking but not the whole green area. I remember a number of years ago in my naivety wanting to put picnic tables in this area and there were strong objections by the residents.
- The playground is a great success but too much of the green area is being taken up. To extend the car park would turn this area into one big car park.
- Maybe Bray Wanderers would consider opening on a Sunday, it would be a way of generating revenue.
- We would never put in enough parking spaces to meet the demand. The Florentine car park has a huge number of spaces we need to direct people there.
- The more spaces we provide the more cars we will get, it is a never ending circle.
- There are plenty of spaces in the Florentine and Holy Redeemer car parks. It would be beneficial to direct them there and also the businesses in the Main Street.
- What does surface dressing mean?

The District Engineer informed the members that we agreed to not to use a particular type of surface dressing in housing estates at a recent meeting. It is national policy and we are instructed by the roads standards what to use. The surface dressing is not being used in housing estates but on open public roads.

The tenders for the ramps were opened yesterday. Unsuccessful tenderers were notified yesterday in accordance with procurement legislation there has to be a standstill period of 14 days in case of challenges by unsuccessful tenderers. Therefore the earliest date that the contract can be awarded is the 4th July.

We were asked to repair the road and wall and to widen the entrance at Glenwood. There is an issue we are trying to resolve and hope to resume work this week.

The Seafront Master plan would preclude development of more car parking spaces on the green area between the Barracuda and the northern car park; unless you wish to review the Master plan at some stage. VMS signs and a strategy of directing people to car parks may have some benefit but the sign would have to be manually updated.

To use chicane traffic calming in the long term would be less costly to maintain. Hopefully residents will adhere to the speed limit review but it needs to be monitored and reviewed.

The Cathaoirleach informed the members that the Speed Limit Review will go to the full Council in Wicklow County Council. There is a lot of information in this document and if you think something is not right then email the District Engineer.

The District Engineer stated that he would compile any submissions into groups and present them to Wicklow.

The members raised the following points;

- We could do this individually.
- I would prefer to do so directly myself.
- Does the 30kph apply to every housing estate in the County?
- Wolfe Tone area is vulnerable and this area as far as I know was rejected.
- The Gardai need to enforce the law, they need to be seen.

It was agreed that the members would send any submissions directly to Wicklow County Council.

NTA Interchange

The District Engineer informed the members that this proposal has been in progress for the last 3 years and will be paid for by the NTA. This is the final draft agreed by C.I.E, stakeholders and users. The comments have been generally positive and no objections were received. This will now go forward for detailed design. One detail that has not been agreed is the inclusion of a bus stop, the second option shows replacing the one on Albert Avenue.

5. To Receive an Update on the Florentine Centre

The District Manager informed the members that the tender process has begun with the first prequalification questionnaire. The closing date for this is 12 noon on 28th June 2017 and we hope to mark them the following day. The next step is competitive dialogue. One change could invalidate the process and leave this open to judicial review. We are nearly ready with the documentation for this.

We don't want to put this on the long finger. Part of the items taken into account will be the financial contribution, quality and the speed of delivery.

The process of the Vesting Order will commence shortly. There is one property where we have not agreed compensation and that is the bottle store to the rear of Quinsboro Road. We propose to build a new one beside the old one. We may have to do a Notice to Enter. We need a clean simple title for this site.

The members raised the following point;

- The success of this depends on the people of Bray buying into it, what timeframe do you envisage?
- Not a day goes by without someone talking about this project. We need to place a P.R. item in the papers.
- There is a huge need for this in the town; we need to give the public some information stating that it is on track.
- On line shopping is very popular it is imperative that there is the correct mix.

The District Manager stated that whoever is buying into this project will be investing €25 million plus and we figure that investors will be mindful having spent this money. Marketing is important. Our aim is to land this for Christmas 2019. Shopping is changing by the day; Amazon is now investing in bricks and mortar shops.

6. Notices of Motion

Notice of Motion In The Name of Councillor Michael O'Connor (04/04/2017)

That litter bins are provided on the Boghall Road and the Southern Cross Road

Response

There is one Big Bely bin on the Boghall Road and no bins on the Southern Cross Road. As there is a relatively low footfall and no potential generators of litter adjacent to the Southern Cross Road, the installation of bins on this road does not appear warranted. Littering on the Boghall Road will be monitored to determine if an additional bin along the road is warranted.

Notice of Motion In The Name of Councillor Brendan Thornhill (04/04/2017)

That this Municipal District maintains and services the toilets on the seafront.

Response

Both toilet blocks on Bray Seafront are opened and maintained daily.

Notice of Motion In The Name of Councillor Steven Matthews (21/04/2017)

It is requested that when an event permit application to use a public area is received by BMD (or WCC) that district members are notified at the next BMD meeting of a valid application being received.

Notification to members shall include:

The name of the applicant

The nature of the event or activity

The duration of the event or activity (days and hours of operation)

The name of signatory on application
Any fees being charged, if applicable, for use of public space

The decision to grant permission for an application remains an executive function and this request is made in order to provide information for members in advance of events being planned in public areas"

Response

As there are several applications to hold events/activities on public property and many at short notice, it would be too onerous on our available staff to provide the data sought in advance of events. It is proposed that a new database be developed to handle these applications that can provide a web viewer. This would require the assistance of the IT Department to develop and could take some time before a satisfactory system is in place.

Notice of Motion In The Name of Councillor Brendan Thornhill (09/05/2017)

That the Council pay attention to the new walkway on the Seapoint Road side from the Fran O'Toole Bridge to include the upkeep especially around the footsteps where rats have been seen.

Response

Discussions have taken place with Bray Tidy Towns on how we may share resources for the on-going maintenance of the River Walk east of Fran O'Toole Bridge.

Notice of Motion In The Name of Councillor Steven Matthews (25/05/2017)

That Bray Municipal District places a new notice board in the Peoples Park to provide posting of information on local events, general park rules and other community information.

Response

This can be looked at in the overall landscaping scheme

7. Correspondence

There was no correspondence at this time

8. Any Other Business

G.P. Service for North Wicklow

Councillor O'Connor stated that the G.P. service for North Wicklow was an area of great concern for residents of North Wicklow which needed to be addressed. He proposed that we write to the Minister and urge him to provide this service as soon as possible for North Wicklow in light of the downgrading of Loughlinstown Hospital.

The members agreed.

Vacant shops on Quinsboro Road

Councillor Thornhill stated that there were a number of vacant properties on the Quinsboro Road that were bring the area down. What can we do as a Council?

The members raised the following point;

- If they were vacant/derelict we could take action.

The District Manager stated that we could have a look at these properties.

To Establish a Joint Sub-Committee between Bray Municipal District and Dunlaoghaire Area Committee.

It was proposed by Councillor Matthews to establish a joint subcommittee between Bray Municipal District and Dunlaoghaire Area Committee to discuss/progress items of mutual interest and concerns, this proposal was seconded by Councillor Vance.

This proposal was unanimously agreed by the members.

* * * *

This concluded the meeting.

Signed:

CATHAOIRLEACH

Signed:

DISTRICT ADMINISTRATOR

Dated:
