

News

Council consider ceasing LIS and CIS road applications, as they have €5.199 million

By Cara McHugh

AT Sligo County council's meeting on Monday, January 12, Fine Gael's Dara Mulvey brought forward a motion which asked the County Council for an update on the amount of successful applications awaiting funding under the CIS and LIS roads upgrade scheme.

According to the official government website for information relating to departments, the Local Improvement Scheme (LIS) provides funding to help local authorities carry out improvement works on private and non-publicly maintained roads.

Moreover, the Community Involvement Scheme (CIS) is an opportunity for communities to have road repair work carried out on local roads and cul-de-sacs that would not normally be included on the Council's main roadworks programme. Communities apply for this via an application form.

The motion brought before council by Cllr Mulvey was seconded by FG Councillor Gerard Mullaney.

This scheme is funded by the Department of Transport. "The council received an allocation of €473,000 in 2025," said Cllr Mulvey.

This figure enabled the council to complete 13 public roads under the scheme.

"There are currently 103 schemes on the council's waiting list," said Cllr Mulvey. "With an estimated value of over 5 million euro."

He said that the council is still awaiting their allocation of funding for 2026.

"It's very sad and disappointing when we see that in 2025 we only received enough funding for 13 roads. We currently have 103 roads on our list."

"So, if we get the current level of funding from last year, we are looking at anything up to 10 years before we've received enough funding to complete these CIS schemes," he said.

He continued: "I suppose I speak for the councillors in south, west and east Sligo, where we have the largest number of local roads in the whole county. We're very much affected by this," he said.

"There's so many people living along these roads, who cannot get funding to re-surface them. And roads that apply for this generally are gone so bad that it's not a case of just about a few pot holes, they need a full re-surfacing."

He said that they have received more funding from the LIS scheme than the CIS scheme.

"It's very hard for any public representative to meet with people that live along these roads and tell them that you could be waiting for anything up to ten years," Cllr Mulvey said.

Councillor Mullaney seconded the motion.

He said that the CIS is in a critical condition. "The CIS was supposed to be the solution, but it's totally underfunded. We need extra money, there's a few thousand people affected by this from around the county."

He acknowledged that the LIS scheme is in a better situation, but said that it does need additional funding too.

"People are prepared to put their hand in their pocket to financially support their road," he said.

"The Government is totally failing in its responsibility to this scheme," he believes.

Independent councillor Joe Queenan said that the €473,000 in regards to the CIS scheme is "not adequate at all".

"The roads that have been put in under the CIS scheme have been left in limbo, there's no point in us giving out applications for funding for CIS if there's no sign of funding for five or six years," he said.

"This cannot keep going on, simple as. We were lucky at the beginning as Sligo embraced the CIS scheme. We got extra funding for the first couple of years on it. But then other councils started to realise how successful Sligo was with it, so now we're at the back of the queue," he said.

Fine Gael's Councillor Thomas Walsh also said he agreed with previous speakers.

"We are continuously taking new applications and that's something that we probably have to look at because it's giving people hope.

"We have €5.1 million in grants sitting on our books, should we be accepting new applications then we should wonder.

"We should be looking at busier class 3 roads coming into our programme," he believes.

Fianna Fáil's Paul Taylor also supported the motion.

He said: "What we're not taking into account here either is that the cost of materials has increased, we're going to get an 8% hike again in February.

"So on that €473,000, we're going to be doing one less road this time with that 8% increase.

"We do need to put pressure on the government as a council, to try to double it for this year and for next year, he said.

Sinn Féin's councillor Thomas Healy supported the motion, too.

"It's putting a lot of financial pressures on families. Families who mightn't have been able to come up with the money, but then they had to," he said.

"We're here to represent all the people."

Independent Michael Clarke came in at this point to the discussion, and as he started to speak there were some interruptions.

He said that the interruptions were very unfair, and that "they don't know what they're talking about but I'm going to educate them here".

"When the Green Party came into power with Fine Gael, they moved all the money from the rural county Sligo area into active travel - that's what happened"

"These government councillors are coming in today saying that we should appease the government in relation to more funding and attention to the scheme," he said.

"What are they talking to us about it for, let them talk to their ministers!" he exclaimed.

Councillor Mulvey retaliated to this comment saying: "We don't dictate what happens at national government level, we can only keep shouting."

He also asked to amend the motion to include sending it to the minister for roads - to highlight to him the figures that there are 103 schemes waiting on a list, "to show him how badly off we are down here".

The Cathaoirleach Dónal Gilroy suggested that each councillor get a list together for their respective municipal areas for the roads that need attention, and the motion was agreed.

Sligo County Council support renaming Dublin Airport to Seán Lemass airport

By Cara McHugh

AT the Sligo County Council monthly meeting on January 12, Independent Councillor Michael Clarke put forward a motion that Sligo County Council supports a bill to officially rename Dublin Airport after former Taoiseach Seán Lemass.

This has been put forward to a second stage by Malcom Byrne TD.

There were differing opinions on this subject in the council chamber with cross party conflicts arising.

Councillor Clarke began to speak about Lemass' life to start off the motion.

"Seán Francis Lemass was born on July 15, 1899. His first political activity was at the Easter Rising. He died in 1971 at the age of 71."

Cllr Clarke called him an "extraordinary, remarkable man".

"He brought his son-in-law Charlie Haughey into his cabinet also".

Cllr Clarke described to the council how Lemass succeeded de Valera after the presidential election in 1959, where Fianna Fáil got 53 percent of the vote and Fine Gael got 47 percent of the vote, and Labour got about 12 percent.

"They were a three party system at the time," he said. "Here in Sligo-Leitrim,

there were five Dáil seats at that time [1960s]. In Mayo, there were seven and in Donegal there were seven also.

The seats of power these days are all majority from Dublin, and I'm sure he [Lemass] wouldn't be too happy with that," said Cllr Clarke.

"I wonder what he would think of what has happened since with the Fianna Fáil party," he said.

"I know for sure that if Lemass was alive he would have been at the protest in Athlone against the Mercosur trade deal with the farmers."

The Cathaoirleach Fianna Fáil's Cllr Dónal Gilroy seconded the motion.

"Seán Lemass was a great man, without getting into the political angles on it. He brought about the industrialisation of our country, and we're still benefitting from the foundations that he laid," he said.

Labour Councillor Ann Higgins said she did not support the motion.

"I oppose calling this significant piece of infrastructure about any political person from any party, because really - outside political parties - it has zero traction for international travellers.

"Place naming is a key part of our international brand," she believes.

"Apart from Charles de Gaulle and JFK, there aren't many politicians that have airports named after them, and it's for a reason.

"If we were going to do a re-naming, which I don't believe is required for it anyways but if we were, I would favour a more cultural figure, such as writers, poets and musicians like Joyce, Yeats, O'Connor."

She acknowledged that "any re-naming of the airport includes a significant cost for re-branding, re-signage, new website, new marketing material and all international systems would have to be updated."

"I think we should be focusing on more pressing issues such as managing the passenger cap, improving existing infrastructure and addressing car park pricing rather than a vanity project like re-naming," she said.

Cllr Clarke further justified his motion as he believed that Lemass brought progression to Ireland.

"He was the first man to introduce foreign direct investment. It's a huge pity we don't have the likes of himself now to manage it today," he said.

Fianna Fáil Cllr Tom MacSharry also supported the motion as he said: "I'm glad to see that Independent

Ireland through Councillor Clarke are prepared to support hard-working Fianna Fáil TDs."

Fianna Fáil's councillor and Cathaoirleach Dónal Gilroy objected to Cllr Higgins' point that there are not many airports named after politicians, as he said there "are at least 20 airports around the world named after politicians", according to his Google search during the council meeting.

At this point, Leas Cathaoirleach Fine Gael councillor Fergal Nealon interrupted as he said: "I'm objecting to you".

"I believe that our former Taoiseach Garret Fitzgerald would make a great name, he was a fantastic leader during very difficult times in this country and indeed Garret's brother, Desmond Fitzgerald was the architect of the terminal at the airport," he said.

This was met with laughter in the council from some members, and Cathaoirleach Gilroy decided to put this motion to a vote to settle conflicting views.

Despite the close contest, the motion was carried as there were 7 votes for and 6 votes against with 4 abstentions.



Seán Lemass.