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# Comhairle Chondae Lugháí

LOUTH COUNTY COUNCIL  
COUNTY OFFICES, DUNDALK.

Telephone:  
Dundalk 5457

County Secretary

Our Ref. BG/MF

Your Ref. ....

- 28th January, 1976.

Mr. Patrick Howard,  
Chairman,  
Central Development Committee,  
Department of Finance,  
26, Harcourt Street,  
DUBLIN, 2.

*Mr. L. Humphrey*  
*Ritt*  
*29/1*

*Mr. R. Doyle*  
*17.2/2/76*

Re: Proposed new Bridge to link Omeath and Warrenpoint.

Dear Sir,

I wish to inform you that representatives from my Council have had meetings with representatives of Newry and Mourne District Council to discuss the feasibility of a new bridge to link Omeath and Warrenpoint. It is felt that such a development would have substantial benefits for both areas from a tourist and a road traffic point of view.

The site of the new bridge would be at Narrow Water, and would be constructed to link in to the roundabout about mid way on the Dual Carriageway between Newry and Warrenpoint.

It has been agreed that a joint feasibility study be undertaken by both Councils, and that a case be made for financial assistance from the E.E.C. Regional Fund towards the cost of the project. It is also hoped to get the Commission to agree to a 50% contribution to the cost of the study.

I enclose copy of map showing the possible location of the proposed bridge, and we will keep you informed of any further developments in the matter.

*(for an inside copy of file)*

Yours faithfully,

*[Signature]*  
(B. Gormley) County Secretary.

LOUTH COUNTY COUNCIL

REPORT on meeting between representatives and officials from Louth County Council and representatives and officials from Newry and Mourne District Council which was held in Ballymascanlon Hotel, Dundalk, on Friday, 23rd January, 1976 at 12.30 p.m.

The purpose of the meeting was to discuss further the proposed provision of a new bridge to link Omeath and Warrenpoint, with particular reference to the method of financing the project.

The following were present

Representing Louth County Council

Councillor P.J. O'Hare, Chairman.

Councillors J. Farrell, T.D., T. Elmore, E.  
Filgate, P. Savage, Senator B.  
Markey.

Messrs J.L. MacKell, County Manager,  
M.J. Earner, County Engineer,  
B. Johnston, Development Officer,  
B. Gormley, County Secretary.

Representing Newry & Mourne District Council

Councillor A. Lockhart, Chairman

Councillors J.P. McEvoy, J. Tinnelly, A.  
Roddy, B. Frizell, J. Murphy,  
Miss A.M. Cunningham, J.W. Cart,  
J. Bell.

Messrs K. O'Neill, Administrative Officer,  
W.H. Ellison, Engineer, R.F. Turley,  
Recreation Tourism Officer.

The following were also in attendance at the invitation of the Committee.

Messrs P. Jordan, Irish Business Offices,  
Brussels.  
D. Devenney, Dundalk Chamber  
of Commerce.  
B. Mackill, President Newry Chamber of Commerce  
P. Long, Manager, Eastern Regional Tourism  
Organisation.

Apologies for inability to attend were received from Mr. R. Wilson, President, Dundalk Chamber of Commerce.

The Committee assembled at 12.30 p.m. and following a reception and lunch the meeting commenced at 2.15 p.m.

The Chairman, Councillor O'Hare extended a welcome to all present, and introduced Mr. Jordan to the meeting.

Mr. Jordan explained the working of the various Common Market Committees, and the Administrative Procedures concerning the administration

of the various grants, e.g. the BEOGA fund for support of agriculture, Social Fund for training etc., and Regional Fund for carrying out development projects. The making of grants by the Commission was subject to applicants getting a National Grant in the first instance. Mr. Jordan stated that he represented the Association of Chambers of Commerce in Ireland, also Confederation of Irish Industry, and the Federated Union of Employers in Brussels. His role was to guide people in making applications for grants, and to ensure that Ireland's percentage of the grants keeps increasing each year. The financing of eligible schemes and projects usually worked out at one-third the cost from E.E.C. finances, one-third from National Government, and one-third supplied by the applicant. He instanced the case of Cork Harbour Project which had been put forward by Cork Chamber of Commerce and which had qualified for assistance from the European Investment Bank, and the Regional Fund. He pointed out that the Regional Fund was operating on a trial basis only until 1977. The fund was very small, and it would be necessary to prove the case to the Commission before assistance would be granted from the fund. He felt that Germany would not finance the fund after 1977, and it was therefore important that applications be submitted as early as possible.

Mr. Jordan stressed that in order that an application would be considered it would be necessary that the case be well made and that the project would be very clearly of assistance to industry, or have a very high tourist attraction. The application should comprise of five or six pages and should deal in detail with the proposed project.

He was of opinion that it would be necessary to establish the case with Brussels first for entitlement to the grant, and then to bring pressure to bear on National Government. The committee could bring the case to Brussels first, or send it to him, Mr. Jordan, and he would process it in Brussels. It might also be advisable to ask some of the officials in Brussels to come to Ireland, and discuss the matter with the Committee and visit the site.

He stated that Mr. George Thompson, the Commissioner for Regional Policy, was very keen on the idea of Cross-Border co-operation and he felt that the Committee's application would receive favourable consideration.

In reply to questions, Mr. Jordan stated that he favoured an approach to Brussels in the first instance through the Chamber of Commerce, and that both Governments could be told of the application, but they would not be asked about finance at this stage.

In reply to Councillor Elmore, Mr. Jordan stated that the cost of a Feasibility Study would rate for grant from E.E.C. This grant was normally 30%, but it could be as high as 50% of the cost of the Study. He thought there would be very little trouble in getting a grant for a Feasibility Study.

Mr. Ellison pointed out that a road study would be outside the function of the Newry and Mourne District Council, and this matter would have to be handled by the Government. He felt that the Roads Executive should be brought into the matter in the beginning.

Councillor Lockhart referred to proposed dual carriageway, which would by-pass Newry and felt that when this was provided there would not be any great need for the proposed bridge.

In reply to Mr. Ellison, Mr. Eamer stated that the Louth County Council would be prepared to improve the roads on their side.

In reply to Councillor Filgate, Mr. Jordan stated that if the Committee sent a deputation to Brussels through the Chamber of Commerce, at least 50% of the cost of the visit would be paid by the E.E.C., and there was a possibility that the E.E.C. would defray the full cost.

Mr. Devenney suggested that a small delegation be appointed to go to Brussels, and that the visit be organised through the Dundalk Chamber of Commerce.

Following further discussion, the Chairman thanked Mr. Jordan for coming to the meeting, and for all his assistance, and Mr. Jordan then left the meeting.

A general discussion then ensued as to the best strategy to adopt in the matter, and it was eventually agreed to adopt the following procedure:

1. That an approach be made to the E.E.C. through Mr. Jordan to ascertain if a grant would be forthcoming to have a Feasibility Study carried out.
2. That both Councils be asked to approve of the appointment of Consultants to be agreed between both Engineers to have a joint Feasibility Study carried out.
3. That both Councils notify their respective Governments of the steps that are being taken and keep Government Departments informed regarding progress.

The County Manager suggested that if a Working Party is to be formed that both Chairmen should be members of it. The Government Departments could be informed of our proposals and if they had any objection they would notify us.

It was agreed to have a further joint meeting when further progress has been made.

At the conclusion of the meeting, Councillor Lockhart returned thanks to the Louth County Council for their hospitality, and stated that he looked forward to more meetings between the two Bodies.

The Chairman, Councillor O'Harc stated that he was delighted to have the Chairman, Members and Officials of the Newry and Mourne District Council visit County Louth, and on behalf of the County Council he presented Councillor Lockhart with a statuette of Ouchullain, and a brooch for the Chairman's wife.

This terminated the business of the meeting.

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