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To: Each Member of Council

18th January 2016

Re: Road Damage resulting from recent Adverse Weather

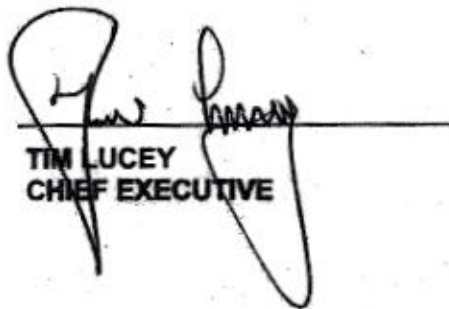
Dear Member,

Further to my report to the Council meeting on 11th January, I wish to advise of the following immediate measures that are being taken to advance urgent repair work of the road network. As advised, the road network has suffered considerable damage across the county and a significant level of funding by way of a special once off allocation is required to ensure that the Council is enabled to undertake the full extent of repair and restructuring works required. Such an allocation will need to be in addition to the normal annual road grant allocations from Government. We await hearing formally from the Department of Transport, Tourism and Sport (DTTAS) on this, however in the meantime the following will guide our immediate response over the next number of weeks.

1. Assessment of infrastructural damage to roads is ongoing but based on initial estimates to date the cost is likely to be at least €10.2m. for works at specific locations, plus further costs associated with extensive pothole repairs. There is potential for this figure to increase arising from the very cold conditions of the past week which is causing freezing and thawing of saturated road bases. Further funding for matters such as bridge rehabilitation and coastal management works may also be necessary, this being assessed at present.
2. Pending the making of a submission to the DTTAS requesting funding for the repairs and receipt of a response to same, all Area Engineers are being enabled to continue with immediate repair works on an emergency basis with the cost being carried by the Council. It will be necessary for this cost to be recovered from any special allocation received from the DTTAS or, through potential re-adjustment of the Council's roads restoration programme during the year if full cost recovery is not funded nationally.
3. In order to expedite the repairs, working of overtime, initially during daylight hours on Saturdays has commenced and will continue for a number of weeks.
4. Area Engineers have been given discretion to engage contractors where necessary firstly for specialist works and secondly to supplement the Council's labour resources so that works can be completed in a reasonable period. Area Engineers will determine and prioritise the programme of works at Municipal District level based on the particular circumstances that present.
5. There are currently a number of roads which remain submerged, principally from flooding arising from ground water drainage systems. It is not possible to advise as to when these will be passable until the flooding recedes and indeed to estimate the repair costs, if any, that will arise on them.

6. Significant progress has been made on reopening roads that have been structurally damaged, probably over 70% at this stage and it is envisaged that any roads that are not currently flooded will be made passable in the next two weeks, subject to no further adverse weather and in some cases with temporary surfaces.
7. Some of the roads are not repairable at present as artesian pressure still exists and there will be cases of more extensively damaged roads due to purging, where interim repairs once the road dries, followed by drainage works and an overlay might be a more cost effective approach than digging out a lot of saturated material. Again, the most appropriate approach to such works will be taken by Area Engineers.
8. There have been a number requests that locals be allowed to carry out repairs to roads but there are a number of constraints that prevent allowing this to happen on a wide scale, however the Council is prepared to make unbound crushed stone material available for pothole repairs/spreading on rural cul-de-sac roads, where traffic volumes are low. Where such situations arise, arrangements can be made through the Area Engineers at Municipal District level.

In relation to the normal Road Works Programme for 2016, there is a requirement on the Council to submit the 2016-2018 Restoration Improvement Programme by 26th February, to the Department of Transport, Tourism and Sport. This deadline presents a situation where each Area Engineer will need to bring a proposed programme of works to the Municipal District for consideration over the next number of weeks. This may not be the ideal situation considering the current uncertainty regarding the full extent of funding that might be made available to the Council. In the event that this deadline changes Members will be kept briefed through the MD meetings.



TIM LUCEY
CHIEF EXECUTIVE