

**MINUTES OF MONTHLY MEETING OF ROSCOMMON COUNTY COUNCIL  
HELD IN ÁRAS AN CHONTAE, ROSCOMMON  
ON MONDAY THE 19<sup>th</sup> DECEMBER, 2016 AT 2.15 P.M.**

**PRESENT** Councillor Tony Ward, Cathaoirleach      **PRESIDED**

**MEMBERS:** Cllr V. Byrne, Cllr I. Connaughton, Cllr M. Creaton, Cllr N. Dineen, Cllr R. Doherty, Cllr L. Fallon, Cllr P. Fitzmaurice, Cllr J. Cummins, Cllr O. Leyden, Cllr J. Murphy, Cllr J. Naughten, Cllr K. Shanagher, Cllr P. Kilduff, Cllr M. Mulligan, Cllr. L. Callaghan, Cllr J. Keogh.

**OFFICIALS:** Mr. Eugene Cummins, Chief Executive  
Ms. Majella Hunt, Director of Services  
Mr. Martin Lydon, A/Director of Services  
Mr. Derek Caldbeck, A/Director of Services  
Ms. Patricia Bohan, Meetings Administrator

**APOLOGIES:** Cllr. D. Connolly.

**139.16 ADOPTION OF MINUTES**

On the **PROPOSAL** of Councillor Cummins

**SECONDED** by Councillor Creaton

It was **AGREED** to adopt the minutes of the plenary meeting held 28.11.2016.

**140.16. CONSIDERATION OF MONTHLY MANAGEMENT REPORT SUBJECT TO SECTION 51, SUB-SECTIONS (3) & (4) OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT REFORM ACT, 2014**

Members noted the Monthly Management Report for the month of November 2016.

**141.16 AMENDMENT OF HOUSING ALLOCATIONS SCHEME DETERMINING THE ORDER OF PRIORITIES TO BE ACCORDED IN THE ALLOCATION OF DWELLINGS**

Mr. Derek Caldbeck, A/Director of Services outlined to the members details of the Draft Allocations Scheme and the proposed changes:

- Updated to reflect changes in legislation.
- Inclusion of Choice based letting that will be introduced in Roscommon – expressions of interest will be sought for houses in areas where there is no one on the list.
- Inclusion of provisions for people with disabilities.
- Inclusion of anti social behaviour and illegal occupation provisions.

The Scheme was previously presented to the Housing SPC. If approved by the members, the scheme will be forwarded to the Minister for Housing.

The following points were raised by the members:

- Welcome the introduction of choice based letting.
- Provisions dealing with anti social behaviour need to be implemented as soon as the policy is adopted.
- If a person refuses a choice based offer, will they be on hold from another offer for a year?
- Problem of scarcity of private rented accommodation in Roscommon is increasing and only option is to go on the housing list. Trends appear to indicate that landlords are selling houses.

- What progress is there on unoccupied council housing in poor repair? It should be a priority to get these houses up to standard for letting.

Mr. Caldbeck replied as follows:

- If a person refuses a choice based offer it is only another choice based offer they will be excluded from for a year.
- Those in private rented accommodation receiving rent supplement will move to the new Housing Assistance Payment scheme (HAP) which is based on the Differential Rent scheme.
- The Council have brought seventy voids into use in the past year and eight are currently under repair.
- It has been noted that there is a shortage of rental property in Roscommon town especially.

On the **PROPOSAL** of Councillor Cummins

**SECONDED** by Councillor Naughten

It was **AGREED** to adopt the Housing Allocations Scheme determining the order of priorities to be accorded in the allocation of dwellings as amended.

#### **142.16 DISPOSAL OF LANDS:**

On the **PROPOSAL** of Councillor Connaughton

**SECONDED** by Councillor Naughten

It was **AGREED** that the Council consent to the disposal of lands pursuant to the provision of Section 211 of the Planning and Development Act, 2000 and Section 183 of the Local Government Act, 2001. Particulars of the land which the County Council proposes to dispose of:-

**The land:** 0.492 ha. (Plot 36) and 0.188 ha. (Plot 37) at Liberty, Ballydangan, Co Roscommon

**The persons from whom the land was acquired:** John Flynn c/o James Flynn and Sean Grenham

**The person to whom the land is to be disposed:** Alex Naughten

**Consideration:** €16,500

On the **PROPOSAL** of Councillor Naughten

**SECONDED** by Councillor Ward

It was **AGREED** that the Council consent to the disposal of lands pursuant to the provision of Section 211 of the Planning and Development Act, 2000 and Section 183 of the Local Government Act, 2001. Particulars of the land which the County Council proposes to dispose of:-

**The land:** 0.188 ha (plot 56) at Ardkeen, Thomastown, Co. Roscommon

**The persons from whom the land was acquired:** Patrick Higgins, Patrick Murray, Thomas Duignan, the Legal Personal Representative of Joseph Lennon

**The person to whom the land is to be disposed:** Thomas and Sarah Duignan

**Consideration:** €2,000

On the **PROPOSAL** of Councillor Connaughton

**SECONDED** by Councillor Naughten

It was **AGREED** that the Council consent to the disposal of lands pursuant to the provision of Section 211 of the Planning and Development Act, 2000 and Section 183 of the Local Government Act, 2001. Particulars of the land which the County Council proposes to dispose of:-

**The land:** 1.2747 ha. (Plot 68) at Taduff, Thomastown, Ballinasloe, Co. Roscommon

**The persons from whom the land was acquired:** Francis McManus and Anne Igoe

**The person to whom the land is to be disposed:** Seamus McManus

**Consideration:** €1,500

**143.16. SPECIFIED DEVELOPMENT UNDER SECTION 179 OF PART XI OF THE PLANNING & DEVELOPMENT ACT, 2000 (AS AMENDED) AND PART 8 OF THE PLANNING & DEVELOPMENT REGULATIONS 2001 (AS AMENDED)**

- **Expansion of Fairymount Cemetery**

The Chief Executives Report had been circulated to the members.

Having considered the various reports in relation to the Specified Development as set out hereunder:-

Nature and Extent of Development	Location of Development
Expansion of cemetery including provision of new cemetery including new entrance with boundary wall, vehicular and pedestrian access.	Fairymount Cemetery

As referred to in Part XI of Section 179, Subsections 3(a) and 3(b) the Planning & Development Acts 2000 (as amended), the Council has complied with the requirements of the Regulations in respect of the proposed development and a necessary public notice was published in accordance with the requirement of the Regulations. It is proposed to proceed with the works as listed.

On the **PROPOSAL** of Councillor Creaton

**SECONDED** by Councillor Fitzmaurice

It was **AGREED** that Roscommon County Council proceed with the works in accordance with the approved plans.

**144.16 REPORT ON THE APPLICATION OF THE PROVISIONS OF THE VACANT SITE LEVY IN COUNTY ROSCOMMON**

Martin Lydon, A/Director of Services presented the report to the members. He advised that this report is for noting and it outlines the process that will come into effect.

- The Vacant Site Levy applies where there is a Local Area Plan and there is a distinction between the implementation of the levy and development management in the county in the future.
- The process involves:
  - A preliminary assessment and quantification of the number and location of potential sites.
  - Refers to land identified as 'residential' or 'regeneration land' that has been vacant for over 12 months.
  - Variations to Roscommon County Development Plan and Local Area Plans to incorporate provisions of the Vacant Site Levy
  - Establishment of Register of Vacant Sites from 1<sup>st</sup> January 2017
  - Administration of Vacant Site Levy starting with the issuing of notices to site owners before 1<sup>st</sup> June 2018 advising that levy is payable from 1<sup>st</sup> January 2019.
- Levy is 3% of market value
- Site must be situated in area where there is a housing need.
- Vacant Site Levy proceeds ring fenced for housing/infrastructure etc.

Members raised the following points:

- Is there an interest penalty if levy not paid?
- This levy may be viable in cities where there is pressure for release of sites for housing. It does not appear to suit rural counties like Roscommon where there is little pressure at the moment.
- Appeals to an Bord Pleanala could take up to one year.

- The levy may not apply in Roscommon but it could become a contentious issue as it could affect lands zoned for housing in the LAP where owners may want their lands de-zoned.
- The Levy should be phased in throughout the country starting in areas of most housing need.
- Is the 3% levy enough to incentivise owners to develop the lands?
- This is a big administrative workload in Roscommon for what could be a very small return.
- This is not a good scheme as it does not include incentives to build. Is there a consultation period?
- There should be more priority on getting unfinished housing estates completed in the county.
- Are there any figures on what income the levy may yield in Roscommon and who will adjudicate on disputes?
- Unfair tax on builders who have land – they will build when they get a fair price. What is the situation if there are loans outstanding on these lands?
- If lands are on Derelict sites register they are not included. Should they be taken off this register and included on the Vacant Site Levy Register?

Martin Lydon addressed the issues as follows:

- The 3% levy is an annual payment and there is no mention of penalties.
- There is no levy on strategic residential lands. At the moment this levy is only in relation to potential sites.
- There should be no need to de-zone lands.
- The private sector is primarily responsible for unfinished housing estates.
- If there are loans on identified lands, there is a remedy to reduce the levy payable towards 0%.

#### **145.16 SECTION 4(7) LOCAL GOVERNMENT (AUDIT COMMITTEE) REGULATIONS 2014 – FILLING OF VACANCY ON AUDIT COMMITTEE**

On the **PROPOSAL** of Councillor Cummins

**SECONDED** by Councillor Creaton

It was **AGREED** to appoint Mr. Willie Murphy to the Audit Committee of Roscommon County Council in accordance with Section 4(7) of the Local Government Regulations 2014.

#### **146.16 LOCAL GOVERNMENT STATUTORY AUDIT REPORT 2015 AND AUDITED ANNUAL FINANCIAL STATEMENT 2015**

Mr Derek Caldbeck, A/Head of Finance presented to the members the Audited Annual Financial Statement 2015 and associated Audit Report.

The members welcomed the report and highlighted the following:

- The success of Moylurg Rockingham Ltd with a profit of €200k in 2015.
- What is the situation with the €2m received in bond payments for unfinished estates?
- When will the final account in relation to Áras an Chontae be received?
- Have we adequate procedures in place in case of cyber attacks?
- Businesses in the town should encourage their staff to use the town car park.

Mr. Caldbeck welcomed the comments and informed the meeting that the full cost of Áras an Chontae should be included in the March accounts. Cyber attacks are a fact of life now and procedures are continuously being monitored. The bond of €2m is on hand and the Council have a framework in place to spend this money.

On the **PROPOSAL** of Councillor Cummins

**SECONDED** by Councillor Naughten

It was **AGREED** that the audited Annual Financial Statement for 2015 and Statutory Audit Report be adopted.

#### **147.16 DRAFT ANNUAL SERVICE DELIVERY PLAN 2017**

On the **PROPOSAL** of Councillor Creaton

**SECONDED** by Councillor Cummins

It was **AGREED** to adopt the Annual Service Delivery Plan 2017.

#### **148.16 APPOINTMENT OF AN ELECTED MEMBER TO THE FOLLOWING COMMITTEES:**

- **Housing and Corporate SPC**
- **Economic Development & Enterprise Support SPC**

On the **PROPOSAL** of Councillor Creaton

**SECONDED** by Councillor Callaghan

It was **AGREED** that Cllr. Laurence Fallon be elected to the Housing and Corporate SPC.

On the **PROPOSAL** of Councillor Fallon

**SECONDED** by Councillor Naughten

It was **AGREED** that Cllr. Dominic Connolly be elected to the Economic Development and Enterprise Support SPC.

#### **149.16 CORRESPONDENCE**

- Letter from Leitrim County Council RE: Resolution passed on Selling Broadcasting Rights of Gaelic Games
- Letter from Leitrim County Council RE: Resolution passed on Citizens Assembly
- Letter from Clare County Council RE: Resolution passed on operation of Data Protection Acts
- Letter from TII RE: Right turning lane at Ballymurray
- Letter from Carrickmacross/Castleblaney MD RE: Appointment of Minister for Brexit
- Letter from South Dublin County Council RE: Resolution passed on Local Property Tax

#### **150.16 COUNCILLORS CONFERENCES – PAYMENT FOR ATTENDANCE**

On the **PROPOSAL** of Councillor Shanagher

**SECONDED** by Councillor Cummins

It was **AGREED** to adopt the list of payments for attendance at conferences as circulated to the members.

#### **151.16 VOTES OF CONGRATULATIONS/SYMPATHY**

Votes of Congratulations were extended to:

- The Elphin-Ballinameen Football team on winning the U20 Div 2 Championship County Final.

Votes of Sympathy were extended to:

- The Mulligan family on the death of Sean Mulligan (Teagasc).
- The Henry family, Castlerea, on the death of Frank Henry.
- The O'Rourke family, Castlerea on the death of Teresa O'Rourke.
- The Ryan family, Ballinagar on the death of Katie Ryan.
- The Naughton family, Castlerea on the death of John Joe Naughton.
- The O'Gara family, Portahard, Frenchpark on the death of Mickey O'Gara.
- The Barron family, Cloonbunny, Loughglynn, on the death of Annie Barron.
- The Dyer family, Ballyglass, Loughglynn on the death of Lily Dyer.
- The Mitchell family, Loughglynn on the death of Darren Mitchell.
- The Condon family, Greatmeadow, Boyle on the death of Martin & Sheila Condon.

**152.16 AOB**

**Local Link Bus Service**

Cllr. Shanagher asked the members to highlight the Local Link Bus Service that serves Boyle to Roscommon and encourage the public to use it. She also thanked the staff for the organisation of recent events in Áras an Chontae and the Arts Centre including the Civic Reception.

**Emergency Christmas Cover**

Cllr. Fitzmaurice asked if plans were in place to deal with the anticipated storm Christmas weekend. The C.E. confirmed that the Council will be ready and available to meet the needs of the people.

**Athlone IT Event**

Cllr. Shanagher informed the members of the forthcoming world class International Athletics event taking place in the Athletics arena in Athlone I.T. in February 2017. She said that sponsorship of the event by the Council would be a positive step in building a relationship with the college and also commitment to the Boundary review recommendations.

The Chief Executive also stated that sponsorship would convey our intent to work closely with Athlone IT especially as it is the intention of the Council to develop and agree a Memorandum of Understanding next year to develop the training needs of industry through the college.

On the **PROPOSAL** of Councillor Shanagher  
**SECONDED** by Councillor Naughten

It was **AGREED** that Roscommon County Council contribute sponsorship in the sum of €5,000 to the International Athletics event in Athlone I.T.

Cathaoirleach Tony Ward and the Chief Executive wished everyone a very Happy Christmas.

***NEXT MEETING***

The next meeting will be on Monday 23<sup>rd</sup> January 2017

**This concluded the business of the meeting.**

The foregoing Minutes are  
Confirmed and Signed:

\_\_\_\_\_  
Meetings Administrator

\_\_\_\_\_  
Cathaoirleach

\_\_\_\_\_  
Countersigned