

**MINUTES OF MONTHLY MEETING OF ROSCOMMON COUNTY COUNCIL  
COUNCIL CHAMBER, ÁRAS AN CHONTAE, ROSCOMMON  
MONDAY, 23RD JANUARY, 2017 AT 2.15 PM.**

**PRESENT:** Councillor Tony Ward, Cathaoirleach Roscommon County Council  
**PRESIDED**

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

**OFFICIALS:** Eugene Cummins, Chief Executive  
Majella Hunt, Director of Services  
Derek Caldbeck, A/Director of Services  
Patricia Bohan, Meetings Administrator  
Cait Kenny, Assistant Staff Officer

**Apologies:** .

**1.17 ADOPTION OF MINUTES**

On the **PROPOSAL** of Councillor Creaton  
**SECONDED** by Councillor Cummins  
It was **AGREED** to adopt the minutes of the Plenary Meeting held 19.12.2016.

On the **PROPOSAL** of Councillor Kilduff  
**SECONDED** by Councillor Shanagher  
It was **AGREED** to adopt the minutes of the Special Meeting held 06.01.2017.

**2.17 MANAGEMENT REPORT**

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

Members noted the Management Report for Quarter 4 2016.

**3.17 SECTION 85 AGREEMENTS**

On the **PROPOSAL** of Councillor Leyden  
**SECONDED** by Councillor Keogh  
It was **AGREED** that Roscommon County Council enter into Section 85 agreements with Leitrim County Council and Longford County Council for the management of Invasive Alien Plant Species in accordance with the call-off contract.

#### **4.17 SECTION 85 AGREEMENTS**

On the **PROPOSAL** of Councillor Cummins

**SECONDED** by Councillor Beirne

It was **AGREED** that Roscommon County Council enter into a Section 85 agreement with Mayo County Council for the upgrading of public lighting on the N4 Curlews Bypass and the N5 Ballaghaderreen Bypass whereby Mayo County Council will be enabled to undertake appropriate works in County Roscommon.

#### **5.17 DISPOSAL OF LANDS**

The Cathaoirleach advised members that this item is deferred to the February meeting

#### **6.17 NATIONAL ROADS GRANTS 2017**

Members noted the National Roads Grants for 2017 that was previously circulated

#### **7.17 DRAFT ADVERTISED SIGNS POLICY**

Cllr. Fallon, Chair of Environment SPC gave a presentation on the Draft Policy on Advertising Signs. The purpose of the policy is to regulate all signs erected on private and public property that are visible from a public place and not already covered by the Planning Act. The Policy will not apply to election posters unless they have been in position for 7 days or longer after polling day as this is covered under National Legislation. A permit is required for temporary signs on public lands from Environment section and a bond of €150 is payable. The policy also sets out clearly the position of Roscommon County Council in respect of the unauthorised sale of vehicles from the public road.

The members welcomed the policy and highlighted the following:

- Will regulate and give clarity to the rules regarding temporary signage.
- Getting permanent directional signposting for clubs seems to be a difficulty.
- Concern in relation to directional signs e.g. funeral
- Positive news for Tidy Towns Committees as there will be reduction in number of signs left up after events.
- Rural businesses will be restricted if they cannot use signs outside their business e.g. sandwich boards.
- Auctioneering signs – if farm of land is for sale is it restricted to only one sign?
- Will there be public submissions or a consultation period with business people?
- Are there adequate resources of staff in Roscommon County Council to implement this policy?
- There should be a blanket ban on signs for any election.

Cllr. Fallon welcomed the comments and informed the meeting that this policy is about non-commercial activity, and is intended to strengthen the Council's position with regard to unauthorised signs on public property. This policy does not deal with permanent signs as they are subject to Planning.

Majella Hunt, Director of Services advised the meeting that this policy is in relation to non-commercial signage and this policy is particularly concerned with exemptions under Class 9, 16, 16a, 17 & 18 of the Planning & Development Regulations, 2001 (as amended) and the Planning and Development (No.2) Regulations, 2002 (As Amended). She noted that election signage is covered under national legislation and

is not something that the Council can change. Signs for a funeral are temporary and treated sympathetically. Auctioneering signs on public lands are covered under Section 254 of the Planning and Development Acts 2000 (As Amended) and are not the subject of this policy.

On the **PROPOSAL** of Councillor Fallon  
**SECONDED** by Councillor Creaton  
It was **AGREED** to adopt the Advertising Signs Policy.

#### **8.17 MEMBERSHIP OF ROSCOMMON LOCAL COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE (LCDC)**

On the **PROPOSAL** of Councillor Keogh  
**SECONDED** by Councillor Dineen  
It was **AGREED** to appoint Ms. Lynn Keery as the Galway Roscommon Educational and Training Board's (GRETB) representative on the Roscommon LCDC.

#### **9.17 ASSOCIATION OF IRISH LOCAL GOVERNMENT (AILG)**

On the **PROPOSAL** of Councillor Kilduff  
**SECONDED** by Councillor Keogh  
It was **AGREED** that Councillor Connaughton be the voting delegate at the annual conference and also be a permanent delegate to the Standing Policy Council of the Association of Irish Local Government (AILG) for the remainder of the five year term.

#### **10.17 CORRESPONDENCE**

- Acknowledgement Letter from Minister Coveney RE: Withdrawal of the four year timeframe in the Report of the Athlone Boundary Committee.
- Letter from Padraic Duffy, Ard Stiurthoir, GAA RE: Free to Air live TV Coverage of GAA Games.
- Acknowledgement Letter from Minister Naughten's Office RE: Gaelic Games Broadcasting.
- Letter from Waterford City and County Council RE: Resolution passed on Community Banking for Post Offices.
- Letter from Donegal County Council RE: Resolution passed by Letterkenny MD to revert the HSE to the old Health Board model.
- Letter from Monaghan County Council RE: Resolution passed on coroners Bill/Act.
- Letter from Monaghan County Council RE: Resolution passed supporting the campaign of 'Donegal Families for Justice'.
- Letter from Monaghan County Council RE: Resolution passed to address public hospital waiting lists.
- Letter from Monaghan County Council RE: Resolution passed on Post Office Network.
- Letter from Tipperary County Council RE: Resolution passed to address domestic housing mortgage arrears accounts.
- Letter from Tipperary County Council RE: Resolution passed on increased awareness and funding for services in the areas of Dyspraxia and Dyslexia.
- Letter from Tipperary County Council RE: Resolution passed requesting Councillors are represented on the All Island Civic Forum on Brexit.
- Letter from Sligo County Council RE: Resolution passed on coroner's Bill
- Letter from Sligo County Council RE: Resolution passed for the control of over grown trees in Housing Estates and Built up areas.

- On the **PROPOSAL** of Cllr. Kilduff
- **SECONDED** by Cllr. Beirne
- It was agreed that the members support the motion recently passed by Longford County Council to write to the Minister of Health requesting that the Orkambi Drug be made available to Cystic Fibrosis sufferers in Ireland.
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- Members were reminded by the Meetings Administrator to return LAMA Deduction forms and Political Donations Return.

#### **11.17 COUNCILLORS CONFERENCES PAYMENTS/ATTENDANCE**

On the **PROPOSAL** of Councillor Keogh

**SECONDED** by Councillor Murphy

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

#### **12.17 VOTES OF CONGRATULATIONS/SYMPATHY**

Votes of Sympathy were extended to:

- The Griffin family, St. Joseph's Avenue, Boyle on the death of Tim Griffin.
- The Costello family, Rathtermon, Boyle on the death of Denis Costello.
- The Duggan family, Willsbrough, Ballinlough, Castlerea on the death of Aisling Duggan.
- The Finnerty family, Tullintupeen, Ballinagare on the death of Phyllis Finnerty.
- The Reynolds family, Clooncullane, Strokestown on the death of Sadie Reynolds.
- The Jordon family, Convent Road, Elphin on the death of Brigid Jordan.
- The Gavin family, Curramore, Kiltoom, Athlone on the death of John Gavin.
- The O'Brien family, Milltown, Kiltoom, Athlone on the death of Kathleen O'Brien.

#### **13.17 ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

##### **Fr. Flanagan Commemorative Centre**

Cllr. Dineen outlined to members that it is 100 years this year since Fr. Flanagan founded Boys Town in Nebraska, USA where his work with underprivileged boys held no boundaries and is under consideration for canonisation in Rome. Fr. Flanagan was from Leabeg in Roscommon and Roscommon could benefit if Fr. Flanagan was canonised, through a future commemoration building/interpretive centre in the county especially given our close proximity to Knock where 1.2 million tourists visit each year. Cllr Dineen would like to establish a county wide campaign and proposed that Roscommon County Council setup a steering group committee to establish what the people of Roscommon want to do to celebrate this great Roscommon man.

On the **PROPOSAL** of Councillor Dineen

**SECONDED** by Councillor Ward

It was **AGREED** that Roscommon County Council setup a Steering Group Committee to honour the memory of Fr. Flanagan.

##### **Castlerea Fire Station**

Cllr. Fitzmaurice inquired about the temporary closure of Castlerea Fire Station since Friday 20<sup>th</sup> January. The Chief Executive advised members that this was due to no supervising Officer on duty as a result of unprecedented sick leave absences in the station and this is not an attempt to downgrade services at Castlerea Fire Station.

#### **Award for Roscommon Town in Irish Business Against Litter (IBAL) Anti-Litter League**

Cllr. Leyden congratulated Roscommon Town on achieving second place in the 2016 IBAL Litter League.

#### **National Rates Revaluation Programme**

Derek Caldbeck, A/Head of Finance made a presentation to the members on the up to date position regarding the ongoing National Revaluation of Commercial Premises.

He informed members that the purpose of revaluation is to redistribute the commercial rates liability more equitably between ratepayers. Commercial rates liability for individual rate payers may increase, decrease or remain unchanged following the revaluation and it is important to note that Roscommon County Council will not be gaining anything from this exercise except any increase due to inflation. The new valuations will become effective for rates purposes for 2018. A Valuation is an estimate of the *Net Annual Value (NAV)* of a property and is the basis on which local authorities calculate and levy rates on your property. Commercial rates liability for 2018 is the valuation multiplied by the relevant multiplier (i.e.) the Annual Rate on Valuation (ARV) which is estimated at 0.25 for County Roscommon.

On the 12th January 2017 the new Proposed Valuation Certificates were issued to ratepayers in County Roscommon. Mr Caldbeck felt that it was not clear enough as to what the potential rates liability would be from the certificates that were issued and so he asked the Valuation Office if the indicative ARV could be included in the correspondence prior to the certificates being circulated but the Valuation Office stated that the letters were already printed. This has led to some confusion with ratepayers as they were unaware that the valuation on the letters should be multiplied by .25 (without having to access Roscommon County Council's website). Owners of rateable properties with no tenants in occupation should also make sure that they query their valuations as if they rent in the future the opportunity to question the valuation may not be available without the payment of a fee. Members currently have the power to issue 100% refund on vacant premises but may not have this power in the future. There are queries with regard to individual certificates and the zones that they pertain to in addition to how some of the valuations were calculated so the valuations should be examined and questioned.

Mr. Caldbeck appealed to all rate payers to attend the walk-in clinics in County Council offices in the coming week if they have any concern about the valuations received. The final date for submissions or representations to the Valuation Office is 21<sup>st</sup> February 2017.

Members welcomed the efforts of Mr. Caldbeck and his staff to date regarding the Valuations. They welcomed the presentation at short notice and raised the following queries -

- The ability of the business to generate income per sq. metre is not taken into account.
- It is not clear what constitutes shop area, store area or yard area – the zoning is unclear.
- Have we any power to reduce the ARV which is currently 0.25, Westmeath ARV is 0.2?
- Members are receiving numerous calls from ratepayers in relation to huge increases in their rates liability, especially public houses, quarries.
- Loft space – is this exempt?
- Appears to be a reduction in rates liability in the North of the County with an increase in the South

and its clear more rates will be paid in the South.

- Unfortunate the way the letters were issued with majority of ratepayers not aware of the multiplier effect and assumed the valuation in the letter was the rates liability.
- Huge difference in rates liability between businesses located in the same town.
- The 21<sup>st</sup> February is a tight timeframe for ratepayers to deal with any queries and should be extended.
- Charge of €90 - €300 if not queried within the agreed timeframe.
- Discrepancy in overall valuation of properties in Roscommon - €46m vs. €51m there is clarification needed on this.
- This is a two way situation as the rates income remains the same for the council, some will have reduced bills and some increased.
- Important that councillors attend the forthcoming clinics with the Valuation Office
- Need to bear in mind that as a county we are encouraging businesses to create jobs and rates have a big impact.

Mr. Caldbeck responded as follows:

- Roscommon County Council has no input into the revaluation process but urges anyone dissatisfied to contact the Valuation Office.
- The annual rental valuation is €51.2m but with possible reductions of 10% because of the revaluation reduces the figure to €45.2m.
- No rates are payable on residential part of premises
- It will not be enough for ratepayers to attend the information sessions next week, any submissions must still be sent formally to the Valuation Office.
- All counties have different multipliers.
- The Rates office will ask the Valuation Office to facilitate other towns with clinics next week.
- There does appear to be some inconsistencies with rates on zones. Different formulae used for different industry types e.g. filling stations / pubs.

On the **PROPOSAL** of Councillor Naughten

**SECONDED** by Councillor Dineen

It was **AGREED** that Roscommon County Council issue a letter to Rates Valuation Office and the Department of Finance regarding the lack of information in the letters issued on 12<sup>th</sup> January to ratepayers, especially omitting information on the Annual Rate on Valuation which left many ratepayers unable to calculate their rates liability. Inclusion of this information will serve to minimise the impact on other counties.

On the **PROPOSAL** of Councillor Naughten

**SECONDED** by Councillor Cummins

It was **AGREED** that Roscommon County Council request the Rates Valuation Office to provide walk-in clinics in each Municipal District.

On the **PROPOSAL** of Councillor Cummins

**SECONDED** by Councillor Ward

It was **AGREED** that Roscommon County Council request the Rates Valuation Office to extend the date for receipt of representations in respect of Proposed Valuation Certificate to 21<sup>st</sup> March 2017.

### **Ballaghaderreen EROC**

Cllr. Callaghan stated that the officials from the Department of Justice that came to the previous plenary

meeting gave a fair and accurate account of the situation. The national media reported on the matter from Ballaghaderreen and he thanked the local people for their input in response to queries on the Reception Centre especially on the Primetime programme. The Chief Executive, Mr. Eugene Cummins advised the meeting that Ballaghaderreen Town Team, Officials from Department of Justice, other government departments and service providers will attend an information meeting on Wednesday 25<sup>th</sup> January next. He also advised that officials from the Department will be available to meet public representatives at any time in order to set out the objectives of the Government programme and to address any concerns that arise

### **Report of the Athlone Boundary Review**

A letter from the Local Government Division of the Department of Housing, Planning, Community & Local Government dated 30<sup>th</sup> December 2016 was circulated to all members. This letter was also issued by the Department to Westmeath County Council. The Chief Executive advised that this essentially requires both Local Authorities to undertake certain work to identify the requirements and implications arising from the committee report. A meeting with Westmeath County Council has been scheduled for 1<sup>st</sup> February to work together to undertake a scoping exercise for an implementation plan.

### **The Members raised the following queries:**

- As Chairperson of Save Roscommon Committee, the Cathaoirleach will be seeking a meeting Chief Executive regarding the requirements of the letter.
- The letter issued from Department before the report has been brought by the Minister to Dáil Eireann.
- No issue with co-operation with Westmeath, however there is a fear that in four years this will be looked at again.
- Concerns about the scoping exercise required – the services on the west side of the Shannon have been allowed to deteriorate.
- Concerns about existing boundary in light of Minister Coveney's announcement of a new City for the Midlands.
- More important than ever that there is close cooperation between the two counties on this matter but who is going to adjudicate on the level of Co Operation.
- The Report is required by the Department by 31<sup>st</sup> March – this is a very tight timeframe.
- Clarification is required as to why the report refers to the necessity to revise the Monksland Bealnamullia Local Area Plan, but there is requirement for amendment of the Development Plan in Westmeath.

On the **PROPOSAL** of Councillor Connaughton

**SECONDED** by Councillor Keogh

It was **AGREED** that Communications Minister, Denis Naughten be asked to confirm his promise that there would be no boundary changes on his watch.

The Chief Executive outlined that there were two possible outcomes. Firstly, the recommendation for amalgamation and secondly the recommendation for cooperation between the two counties on a structured basis. Although there has been cooperation with Westmeath in many areas, members should consider the letter as a significant development as Roscommon has been looking for greater cooperation. What has been asked is reasonable and at the moment it is not necessary to intervene.

The Save Roscommon Campaign need to be brought up to date with a meeting and this will be facilitated.

Valuation Office Walk-in Clinics

**Derek Caldbeck advised members that he received an email from Valuation Office confirming that they would hold clinics at two different locations in the County.**

On the **PROPOSAL** of Councillor Cummins  
**SECONDED** by Councillor Beirne

It was **AGREED** that a clinic would be held in North Roscommon at Boyle.

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

It was **AGREED** that a clinic would be held in South Roscommon at Monksland.

It was also agreed to request a clinic to be held at third location in Castlerea.

***NEXT MEETING***

**The next meeting will be on Monday, 27th February, 2017.**

This concluded the business of the meeting.

The foregoing Minutes are  
Confirmed and Signed:

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

\_\_\_\_\_  
Cathaoirleach

\_\_\_\_\_  
Countersigned