

**MINUTES OF MONTHLY MEETING OF ROSCOMMON COUNTY COUNCIL
IN COUNCIL CHAMBER, ÁRAS AN CHONTAE, ROSCOMMON
ON MONDAY, 24TH FEBRUARY, 2020 AT 2.15 PM.**

- PRESENT:** Councillor Paschal Fitzmaurice **PRESIDED**
- MEMBERS:** Cllr D. Kilduff, Cllr T. Crosby, Cllr A. Waldron, Cllr O. Leyden, Cllr T. Ward, Cllr N. Dineen, Cllr V. Byrne, Cllr I. Connaughton, Cllr J. Cummins, Cllr L. Fallon, 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
Martin Lydon, Director of Services
Shane Tieman, Chief Executive
Liam Bergin, Director of Services
Patricia Bohan, Meetings Administrator
Michelle Carney, Staff Officer
- Apologies:** Cllr M. McDermott and Cllr J. Keogh

13.20 ADOPTION OF MINUTES

On the **PROPOSAL** of Cllr. Cummins
SECONDED by Cllr. Ward

It was **AGREED** to adopt the minutes of the Plenary Meeting of 27.01.2020

14.20 MATTERS ARISING

There were no matters arising.

15.20 DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION - LAUNCH OF "MY ONLINE SERVICES"

Mr. Frank Guckian, Head of the Information Technology Unit gave a brief presentation on the new Online self-service facility being launched by Roscommon County Council today as the first major project in the Digital Transformation strategy of the Council.

- The service will allow customers to access services online via the website and a mobile app.
- Today Community Grants and the 'Report It' Portal are being launched

The Cathaoirleach welcomed the initiative as the way forward and will make it easier for the public to report issues, keep updated on developments and allow for council to be more efficient

The members all welcomed the initiative and congratulated the team involved in bringing the project to fruition and look forward to more services being added to the project. The tracking of queries would bring great advantages and allow for more efficient meetings particularly at municipal district level.

The Chief Executive stated that this new service is a further extension of our reach into the community whereby anyone can track a complaint. This will also be a tool for councillors who have a pre eminent role in our county as the number one contact for the citizen for issues. This will also be a tool for our executive to track data to be more efficient in the use of resources.

16.20 MANAGEMENT REPORT

- Management Report for January 2020 was noted.
- Mr. Liam Bergin, Director of Services informed the members that as the review of the County Development plan was about to commence, the timelines would be shortly confirmed. As a result a workshop for the elected members will take place on Monday 2nd March commencing at 10.00am where the management team and planners will attend and group discussions will be facilitated.

17.20 S85 LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 2001 (AS AMENDED) - AGREEMENT WITH MAYO COUNTY COUNCIL

On the **PROPOSAL** of Cllr. Naughten

SECONDED by Cllr. Ward

It was **AGREED** that Roscommon County Council agrees to the making of an Agreement for the carrying out of the Local Authority Public Lighting Energy Efficiency Project as presented to it under Section 85 of the Local Government Act 2001 (as amended) with Mayo County Council

18.20 DRAFT AMENDMENTS TO THE COUNTY ROSCOMMON DEVELOPMENT CONTRIBUTION SCHEME 2014

Mr. Liam Bergin outlined the process in relation to the proposed amendments to the adopted Development Contribution Scheme 2014. The proposed amendments provide clarification on certain matters with the overall scheme remaining unchanged and not requiring the making of a new scheme and were circulated to the members as part of the process. Two submissions were received from the Department of Housing Planning and Local Government and the Chief Executive's report recommends inclusion of some changes /additions be included as part of the suite of amendments to the adopted scheme

On the **PROPOSAL** of Cllr. Cummins

SECONDED by Cllr. Naughten

It was **AGREED** to adopt amendments to the County Roscommon Development Contribution Scheme 2014 as proposed.

19.20 DRAFT CORPORATE PLAN 2019-2024

Mr. Liam Bergin, Director of Services presented the Draft Corporate Plan 2019-2024 for adoption. He outlined the consultative process involved in preparing the plan. He confirmed that there are provisions in the plan to review it should it be necessary to do so.

On the **PROPOSAL** of Cllr. Naughten

SECONDED by Cllr. Murphy

It was **AGREED** to adopt the Draft Corporate Plan 2019 - 2024

20.20 SCHEDULE OF UNCOLLECTED RATES AT 31ST DECEMBER 2019

Mr. Martin Lydon, Director of Services and Head of Finance presented the Schedule to the members for noting:

He confirmed:

- The schedule for uncollected rates in 2019 is €1.358m, a decrease of €549,000 on 2018 figures
- The amount collected increased from €10.3m in 2018 to €11.6m in 2019 and our collection rate was 89% 2% greater than our target
- Unpaid rates cases are referred to the legal agent where there is no interaction from ratepayers

- The Sliabh Bawn Windfarm appeal has been finalised by the Valuation Tribunal with a reduction of €76k on the original demand.
- 75% of the ratepayers have signed up to the new Rates App which allows for improved visibility and convenience of accounts for customers.

The members welcomed the report and queried as follows:

- What is the up to date position with other ratepayers whose accounts are under appeal with the Valuation tribunal?
- The collection rate of 89% is very significant and the open door policy of the Finance department is welcome
- Propose that people starting new businesses receive rates receive for the first three years
- Income from rates from windfarms should be ring-fenced for local projects as central government funding for the county is falling
- Are uncollected rates registers for judgements?

Mr. Lydon replied that the thirty nine outstanding appeals vary in size and scope and the detail can be made available if required. The largest of these is the Sliabh Bawn valuation resulting in a shortfall in funding that was intended to be revenue neutral as a result of the revaluation. Any information in relation to the equalisation of the LPT will be made available when received. The last resort for unpaid bills is to seek judgements but every effort is made to engage with the debtor.

On the **PROPOSAL** of Cllr. Fitzmaurice

SECONDED by Cllr. Byrne

It was **AGREED** to write to the Valuation Office to express the dissatisfaction of Roscommon County Council that as a result of the revaluation process, the Council have an overall deficit in valuation.

On the **PROPOSAL** of Cllr. Naughten

SECONDED by Cllr. Murphy

It was **AGREED** to write to the Valuation Tribunal to urge that all decisions in relation to outstanding appeals be finalised as soon as possible.

Mr. Lydon clarified that the Valuation Tribunal is Quasi-Judicial and completely independent of the Valuation Office

21.20 CHIEF EXECUTIVE BUSINESS

Mr. Eugene Cummins referred to correspondence received from the Chief Executive of Enterprise Ireland, Ms. Julie Simmonds confirming her attendance at the April Plenary meeting.

22.20 CORRESPONDENCE

Replies to Resolutions from Roscommon County Council:

- Email dated 27th January, 2020 from Department of Housing, Planning and Local Government in reply to a recent resolution letter regarding A Joint Urban Area Plan for Athlone – Ref:200.19b (Dec19);
- Letter dated 17th February, 2020 from Ms. Mary Garvey, General Manager in reply to a recent resolution letter regarding Rapid Access Haematuria Service – Pilot Urology Programme – Ref: 12.20 (Jan 20);
- Email dated 18th February, 2020 from Ms. Julie Sinnamon, CEO Enterprise Ireland in reply to a recent resolution letter regarding an invitation to Roscommon County Council Plenary

Meeting – Ref: 7.20a (Jan20)

Resolutions from other Local Authorities:

- Letter dated 5th February, 2020 from Kerry County Council-
“That we write to the appropriate Minister regarding people objecting to planning who are not from the area. They should be 10km from the proposed development”;
- Letter dated 14th February, 2020 from Donegal County Council-
“That this Council write to the Irish Water Regulator requesting a review and reduction of costs involved for new water connections”.

23.20 COUNCILLORS CONFERENCES - PAYMENT/ATTENDANCE

On the **PROPOSAL** of Cllr. Shanagher

SECONDED by Cllr. Ward

It was **AGREED** to adopt the list of payments for training and conferences as circulated.

24.20 VOTES OF CONGRATULATIONS AND SYMPATHY

25.20 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

The members had a number of items they wanted to raise under Any Other Business and notified to the Cathaoirleach.

25.20a FLOODING AND LOUGH FUINSHINAGH

Cllr Ward outlined recent wet weather conditions that has given rise again to serious flooding issued for families with houses and land adjacent to Lough Funshinagh with 42 families and over 1,000 acres of land flooded. Despite representation to Government, no progress has been made to lower the levels of the Lough and a pipe must be installed from Lisphelim.

The elected members discussed the matter as follows:

- This is the third such instance of flooding since 2014 and can no longer be considered a one in a hundred-year occurrence as this will be the norm under climate change. A permanent solution must be found and it is important to get information as soon as possible to the relevant authorities.
- The matter should be considered a local emergency and the Council should carry out the works.
- It is clear that methodologies used is flawed as rainfall levels are increasing. The OPW report must be realistic and an application sent to government to divert water.
- ESB has primary control of flow of River Shannon following the construction of Ardnacrusha. Nonetheless a central body
- Funding will have to be provided from Central government to make the roads affected by flooding in Castleplunkett safe, similar to works carried out in Briarfield.
- Pinch points on the River Shannon must be cleaned out
- What is the position on three items of information sought from OPW in relation to the Turlough?

Mr. Shane Tiernan, Director of Services in addressing the matter stated that climate change is having a direct effect and why climate action plans are being developed. Roscommon County Council are doing what they can to help alleviate the situation within the resources that are available. Lough Funshinagh is impacted by rainfall. Further environmental analysis and site investigation works are ongoing and expected to be completed in the next 3-4 months. The Department of Social Protection operates a humanitarian scheme with the community welfare officers.

On the **PROPOSAL** of Cllr. Naughten

SECONDED by Cllr. Ward

It was **AGREED** to write to the Department of Social Protection to provide humanitarian funding for families who have to evacuate from their homes as a result of flooding and to provide assistance to restore houses.

On the **PROPOSAL** of Cllr Naughten

SECONDED by Cllr Ward

It was **AGREED** to write to the Department of Agriculture to provide aid to farmers who are severely affected and will need help with feeding livestock in the coming months as a result of the current flooding situation.

On the **PROPOSAL** of Cllr. Crosby

SECONDED by Cllr. Byrne

It was **AGREED** that before Bord na Mona exits, money should be ring-fenced to ensure that all of the silt is removed from the River Shannon and there is a responsibility on all authorities to ensure this happens.

Cllr. Callaghan raised the matter of funding for Castleplunkett to make the roads safe as certain roads flood at all times during a weather event. The Cathaoirleach stated that there was reassurance from Minister Moran at their meeting last year that funding would be available for works in Castleplunkett. There has been good works carried out in the Briarfield and Enfield areas and the new Minister, when appointed, should be contacted to follow through on funding.

25.20b CASTLEREA FIRE STATION

Cllr Dineen asked the Chief Executive if there was any update on the Castlerea Fire Station since the last meeting. In reply the Chief Executive confirmed that he has engaged a consultant to undertake a review of the fire services in the county as requested by the members at a previous meeting.

25.20c CLOSURE OF KNACKERIES

Cllr. Murphy expressed his concern at the proposed closure of Knackeries and therefore the non-collection of fallen animals which will lead to the spread of disease as a result of a dispute over the introduction of the Department of Agriculture's "Fallen Animal Schemes for Fallen Farm Stock"

Mr. Liam Bergin, Director of Services referenced the only role of the Council in this matter in advising that environmental pollution is not caused.

On the **PROPOSAL** of Cllr. Murphy

SECONDED by Cllr. Byrne

It was **AGREED** to write to the Department of Agriculture to hold urgent and immediate talks to resolve the current difficulties with the Fallen Animal Schemes for Fallen Farm Stock.

25.20d DIGITAL SERVICES DEMO AND LOCAL LINK TALK

Clr. Shanagher informed the meeting that a Digital Services Demonstration will take place in the Library to demonstrate the working of a 3 D Printer. The Local Enterprise Week takes Place from 2nd to 6th March and on 3rd March there is a lecture on remote working.

Clr. Callaghan informed the members that an information meeting on Local Link Bus Service is taking place tomorrow night (25th February) in Hannons Hotel, Roscommon

NEXT MEETING

The next meeting will be on Monday, 27th April, 2020.

This concluded the business of the meeting.

The foregoing Minutes are
Confirmed and Signed:

Petrizio Bohan
Meetings Administrator

Paschal Fitzmaurice
Cathaoirleach

Petrizio Bohan
Countersigned