

**MINUTES OF MONTHLY MEETING OF ROSCOMMON COUNTY COUNCIL  
IN COUNCIL CHAMBER, ÁRAS AN CHONTAE, ROSCOMMON  
ON MONDAY, 22ND JUNE, 2020 AT 2.15 PM.**

**PRESENT:** Councillor Laurence Fallon, Cathaoirleach **PRESIDED**

**MEMBERS:** Cllr P. Fitzmaurice, Cllr D. Kilduff, Cllr T. Crosby, Cllr M. McDermott, Cllr A. Waldron, Cllr O. Leyden, Cllr T. Ward, Cllr N. Dineen, Cllr V. Byrne, Cllr I. Connaughton, Cllr J. Cummins, Cllr J. Keogh, 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 Tiernan, Director of Services  
Liam Bergin, Director of Services  
Patricia Bohan, Meetings Administrator  
Michelle Carney, Staff Officer  
Patricia Bohan, Meetings Administrator

**Apologies:**

**62.20 ADOPTION OF MINUTES**

On the **PROPOSAL** of Cllr. Byrne  
**SECONDED** by Cllr. Callaghan

It was **AGREED** to adopt the minutes of the Plenary Meeting of 22<sup>nd</sup> May 2020

**63.20 MATTERS ARISING**

There were no matters arising.

**64.20 MANAGEMENT REPORT**

- Management Report for May 2020 noted.

**65.20 PRESENTATION ON JUST TRANSITION PROJECT**

Ms Majella Hunt, Director of Services, updated the meeting as follows:

- Background on EU Green Deal including the Midlands region accepted as member in 2019 - three pillars to EU Just Transition Fund.
- In Midlands region, the Bord na Mona ‘Brown to Green Strategy’ necessitated the formation of the Midlands Regional Transition Team in 2018 including the counties of Laois, Offaly, Longford, Westmeath, Roscommon & Kildare.
- Numerous stakeholders including Bord na Mona, ESB, IDA, Regional Skills forum, AIT, CARO, Chambers, etc.

- Working groups to further plans for alternative employment and skill sets.
- START programme
- Review of Funding Streams as the Budget allocation in 2020 is €36million - Just Transition Fund €11m, Retrofit €20m; Rehabilitation €5m (NPWS) to BNM.
- The challenges include economic and social impact on employees and the short timeframe for alternative employment opportunities, the impact on contractors and suppliers and the loss of disposable income and rates deficits for the affected counties
- The Progress Report recommends the reconstitution of the MRTT membership; retention of Just Transition Commissioner; the composition of the Just Transition Project Selection Committee for the fund; increase in the budget for 2021-2026 and a coordinated Midlands approach for applications.
- The target project areas include infrastructure, lands and facilities, tourism heritage and leisure, climate change story, green and allied enterprise incentives, renewable energy study for ESB stations, streamlining the planning and regulation process, the carbon tax budget to 2023, EV charging and rates income to 2026.
- The closing date for submissions was 12<sup>th</sup> June for stage 1 projects and a total of 150 received. Roscommon County Council made five submissions including two joint projects with Longford. A total of five community projects were submitted. The closing date for stage 2 projects is 17<sup>th</sup> July.

The Cathaoirleach welcomed the update.

The members discussed the report as follows:

- Loss of historical employment in the Rooskey, Tarmonbarry, Cloondra areas with several hundred jobs gone over the years.
- Can groups that made submissions be invited to meet with Community & Enterprise Unit to prevent duplication of proposals?
- A development worker to support these projects should be a consideration.
- Any funding received should be for the more affected areas.
- There is a very tight timeframe for submission of projects. Councils need to work together to bring forward robust proposals.
- Bord na Mona and the ESB must help groups with proposals.
- Retrofitting proposals and wetting of boglands are only short term jobs where there were previously full time jobs.
- It would be of great importance to find out what proposals were submitted so they can pool resources and work together.
- There are many volunteers working on these projects/proposals and would like to work with other groups
- Is there a guarantee of funding?
- The Council needs to prioritise walking and cycling routes and look for extra funding.
- There is a need for long term jobs from this project.

The Chief Executive stated that he was anxious that an update be provided to the elected members today on the Just Transition project but would like to hear more information from the IDA and Enterprise Ireland about the prospect of long-term jobs, industrial parks, and broadband that will sustain these jobs.

The Director of Services replied that it is hard to ascertain how many long term jobs would be created. The

feasibility study on returns on employment is quite low. Bord na Mona have the contract for the retrofitting.

## **66.20 DIRECTORS UPDATE - MS. MAJELLA HUNT, COMMUNITY & ENTERPRISE, ARTS, LIBRARY, HERITAGE, TOURISM, REGENERATION & SPECIAL PROJECTS**

Ms. Majella Hunt updated the members on recent developments in her Directorate:

- LCDC meetings continue to be held and projects are ongoing.
- The Boyle Age Friendly Strategy is complete and due for launch when restrictions ease.
- The Integration Strategy, in partnership with LEADER, is progressing.
- A number of projects in the Heritage Programme have been rescheduled to later in the year. There have been initiatives facilitated online including 'identify monuments in your area' and some biodiversity projects rolled out.
- The Gallery in the Arts Centre is opening next week and the auditorium not expected to open until the end of August.
- The tourism programme has also been affected by the pandemic restrictions but the tourism officer is busy preparing for the reopening of some of the facilities in the county including King House. The Hidden Heartlands taskforce met today and is working with providers to ensure the safe reopening of tourism facilities. The tourism market is expected to be very much a domestic market this year.
- There has been significant activity in the Local Enterprise Office with small businesses seeking to avail of the services offered including many initiatives from the Government such as online vouchers and business continuity vouchers. There have been extensive mentoring webcasts held.
- The Library opened on a limited basis on 8<sup>th</sup> June. "Call and Collect" is the primary means of getting library books is available since 16<sup>th</sup> June. There was a large uptake on the e-facilities offered by the library during lockdown. Unfortunately because of space restrictions, we can only provide public access in three of our libraries as Strokestown and Elphin remain closed to the public.
- Under the Creative Ireland Programme the Crinniu na nÓg festival was held online.
- Global Rossie Day was deferred to 5<sup>th</sup> July as a mark of respect to the later Det. Garda Colm Horkan.
- The Regeneration Programme involves URDF, RRDF, Town and Village, Outdoor Recreation and Historic Town Initiatives and an update on the progress of the major projects including Roscommon Town, Boyle, Castlerea and Monksland projects was detailed. There is an investment totalling €20million in all of these regeneration projects with Roscommon County Council contributing €5million in matched funding.

The members thanked the Director for the update and raised a number of questions:

- Is there funding for social distancing projects?
- Can the library in Elphin be facilitated in an alternative location?
- Can the Council send staff to some small villages to help develop applications for funding? Small towns and villages need an opportunity to compete.
- Can the library be opened before the schools are back in September?

The Director responded as follows:

- Funding has been announced for Covid-19 projects (10 projects over two tranches).

matching funding is 10% - closing date for EOI is tomorrow.

- The focus is on villages this year as agreed at the last budget with the fundamental requirement to have community structure that can identify the needs of the village in cooperation with RCC
- The initial service provided by the libraries was call and collect by appointment. Last week this was extended to browsing– the public admitted in Roscommon on restricted basis of two days per week and only for books, not for internet or other facilities. We will be examining all libraries as to what services can be provided depend on the restrictions
- The Council have looked at what funding is available for relocation of Elphin library but nothing is currently available.

#### **67.20 DIRECTORS UPDATE - MR. LIAM BERGIN, WATER SERVICES, ENVIRONMENT, ASSETS AND CLIMATE CHANGE, CORPORATE AND GOVERNANCE**

Mr. Liam Bergin, Director of Services updated the members on the following:

- Protocols in place for the safe working of water and wastewater staff who are providing an essential service under the service level agreement with Irish Water. Two new community Water Officers have been appointed in the region.
- National Spring Clean week was restarted by An Taisce on 8<sup>th</sup> June and Roscommon County Council have cooperated with communities that registered. A total of €92,906 was received for eleven anti-dumping initiatives in 2020 and arrangements now being made to carry out projects. Household waste remains up 21% on average and the civic amenity sites remain fully operations but experiencing increased volumes – with additional capacity provided where required. Waste collection is operating normally.
- Adaptation of our buildings and work practices to allow for the lifting of Covid19 restrictions following the return to work on 8<sup>th</sup> June. This includes minimisation of personal visits to the building, restricted use of facilities including meeting rooms and canteen facilities, introduction of contact tracing logs and recommendation that meetings last no longer than two hours.
- Planning for upgrade of the Castlerea Outdoor swimming pool to make the pool safer and more efficient a cost of €100,000 had commenced and works scheduled to be completed for the current season but this has now been delayed. Recruitment of life guards was not feasible because of lockdown, the capacity will also be compromised and there is a three week lead in to getting the pool ready in any normal year. Because of these reasons, the pool will not open in 2020 but we look forward to a refurbished and improved pool in 2021.
- It is proposed to open the Roscommon Leisure Centre pool on 20<sup>th</sup> July with reduced numbers attending in line with social distancing restrictions, a risk assessment carried out and staff training. The gym will not open until 10<sup>th</sup> August. The leisure centre has entered the NQSA Awards Scheme, previously known as the white flag.

The members welcomed the report and commented as follows:

- Contact members regarding any update on bookings for the leisure centre
- Difficulties with vacant buildings leading to litter and drinking – the director advised that the owner is responsible under the derelict sites legislation.

Mr. Martin Lydon, Head of Finance added that Roscommon Leisure Centre gym and pool will be open at the same time by appointment only and a social media campaign will advise the public. The facility will close from 2-5pm each day to end August. With the necessary new Covid-19 regulations in place, the extra cost

will be €100k and will have to be subsidised by the Council while there will also be a substantial reduction in income.

In response to a query on Irelands excellent record in recycling white goods and the effect of the pandemic on this, the Director confirmed that the civic amenity sites were kept open throughout the lockdown period.

## **68.20 DIRECTORS UPDATES**

Cllr. Cummins requested that the Directors updates be provided on a bi-monthly basis.

Cllr. Connaughton asked if Directors reports could be submitted to the elected members in advance of the meetings and requested that the CPG look at this matter.

The Chief Executive outlined the importance of an update to the members as all of our services are carried out under Covid-19 restrictions and there is a financial impact on progress output and it is vital that the budgets are protected.

Director of Services Mr. Shane Tiernan advised the members that all activities are carried out with Health and Safety a priority and otherwise it is businesses as usual.

In response to a query on the Government subsidy to Councils to replace lost rates, Head of Finance, Mr. Lydon stated that to date there has been no clarity on when this will be finalised.

He also confirmed that to date, 91 of 143 approved applications for Restart Grants have been paid by Roscommon County Council in the sum of €300k. 40 of those applications cannot be paid due to tax considerations and 81 have still to be approved. Only 319 applications in total have been received to date which is very small

## **69.20 DRAFT ANNUAL REPORT 2019**

Mr. Liam Bergin presented the Draft Annual Report 2019 for consideration. He noted that some Performance Indicators for 2019 had yet to be confirmed but are expected to be available before final publication the document.

On the **PROPOSAL** of Cllr. Connaughton

**SECONDED** by Cllr. Ward

It was **AGREED** to approve the Draft Annual Report 2019.

## **70.20 CHIEF EXECUTIVE BUSINESS**

There was no Chief Executives business for the meeting.

## **71.20 NOTICE OF MOTION**

### **08.20 Notice of Motion from Cllr. Naughten: Verge Trimming**

That Roscommon County Council ensure adequate funding is provided to carry out verge trimming on the

local road network throughout the Summer months, to improve safety for pedestrians, cyclists and motorists.

The Meetings Administrator read the following Reply:

Funding is in place for verge trimming in line with the agreed budget and this will be expended accordingly to cover verge trimming where most required. All roads in the Roads Programme are verge trimmed in parallel with the works progressing.

On the **PROPOSAL** of Cllr Naughten

**SECONDED** by Cllr. Fallon

It was **AGREED** that Roscommon County Council ensure adequate funding is provided to carry out verge trimming on the local road network throughout the Summer months, to improve safety for pedestrians, cyclists and motorists.

#### **72.20 VOTES OF CONGRATULATIONS AND SYMPATHY**

- Vote of Sympathy to the family of the later Kathleen Potter, Oldtown, Athlone, Co Roscommon

#### ***NEXT MEETING***

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

This concluded the business of the meeting.

The foregoing Minutes are  
Confirmed and Signed:

*Petrizis Bohan*

Meetings Administrator

*Liam Fallon*

Cathaoirleach

*Petrizis Bohan*

Countersigned