



**MINUTES OF MONTHLY MEETING OF ROSCOMMON COUNTY COUNCIL
IN COUNCIL CHAMBER, ÁRAS AN CHONTAE, ROSCOMMON
ON MONDAY, 18TH OCTOBER, 2021 AT 3.00 PM.**

PRESENT:	Councillor Joe Murphy, Cathaoirleach 2021/2022	PRESIDED
MEMBERS:	Cllr L. Fallon, Cllr E. Kelly, 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 J. Cummins, Cllr J. Keogh, Cllr M. Mulligan, Cllr J. Naughten, Cllr K. Shanagher and Cllr L. Callaghan.	
OFFICIALS:	Eugene Cummins, Chief Executive Majella Hunt, Director of Services Shane Tieman, Director of Services Caitlin Conneely, A/Director of Services Sean Mullarkey, Acting Head of Finance Patricia Bohan, Meetings Administrator Claudette Collins, Asst. Staff Officer	

Apologies:

106.21 DISCLOSURE OF CONFLICT OF INTEREST (SECTION 177 OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 2001 AS AMENDED)

There were no declarations of interest from the Members.

107.21 ADOPTION OF MINUTES

On the **PROPOSAL** of Cllr. Crosby
SECONDED by Cllr. Fallon

It was **AGREED** to adopt the minutes of the Plenary Meeting of 27.09.2021

108.21 MATTERS ARISING

Strategic Plan for the Development of Community Sports and Recreation Facilities in Roscommon Town:

Cllr. Leyden asked if there was any progress with regard to the review of the feasibility study to include an athletics track in the project. Many organisations have submitted letters of support on this matter to the Council.

Director of Services Majella Hunt stated that a number of observations were received after the last meeting including 49 letters on the running track. A meeting has been scheduled with the consultants next week.. In Feb 2019 an online survey was carried out with 34 respondents including the athletics club. There is a perimeter track included in the development. A number of meetings have also taken place during the period of the feasibility study and these are ongoing. She stated that this is a feasibility study that

incorporates two stages and will only progress on the basis that funding is received for Stage 1. She confirmed that this project in respect of Roscommon town only and a number of locations were looked at. The cost of a 6 lane running track is estimated to cost €2million.

The Chief Executive added that this project was carefully considered and a business case completed in relation to the proposed project.

Clr. Fitzmaurice welcomed the news that the running tract will be considered but it is a very expensive addition to the current proposal.

109.21 MANAGEMENT REPORT

- Management Report for Quarter 3 noted.

110.21 UPDATE ON NBI AND BROADBAND ROLLOUT IN COUNTY ROSCOMMON

Mr. John Freeman, Broadband Officer updated the members on the rollout of broadband across the county:

National Picture:

- National Broadband Ireland are responsible for the rollout of broadband to 544,000 homes across the country that do not have access to high speed broadband. This will involve the erection of 1.5m poles and 142,000km of cable.
- Guidelines have been issued for the rollout. The Local Authority broadband officer, roads staff and planning staff assess each pole application to confirm compliance with the guidelines and a S254 planning application must be submitted for each pole.
- Of the estimated 110,000 properties to be done in 2021 only 14,000 are passed which may be due to underestimation of the process of approval and many applications are not compliant with the guidelines.

County Roscommon;

- There are 19,185 premises in Roscommon without access to high-speed broadband.- 49% of the total premises
- Government will invest €76m in building NBP in Co. Roscommon.
- 9 Broadband Connection Points & 31 Primary Schools also in scope.
- There will be 5 Regional Exchanges connected directly the Data Centres predominantly based in Dublin which will be built first and these will be connected to a number of local exchanges.
- The county is divided into 17 deployment areas and these are at various stages of development of the project.
- In the Roscommon Town Deployment area, 2,992 premises are included with the estimated date range for connection Nov 21 to Jan 22; in the Ballinasloe DA 773 premises are included and currently available to pre order
- BCPs are public locations which have been selected by the Local Authority to receive high-speed connectivity in the early stages of the rollout. RCC are providing ongoing support to our 9 BCP sites through the Connected Hubs Fund to enhance and improve their facilities and make them more functional as a remote working Hub.
- Council have access to the ongoing usage of the 9 hubs and the Wifi here is supplied by Vodafone

- NBI have significantly updated their website and the public can check to see if their premises is included in the plan, the target dates and register their interest
- WiFi4EU is a European initiative that promotes free access to Wi-Fi connectivity for citizens in public spaces including parks, squares, libraries, town centres and museums in municipalities throughout Europe. The Wi-Fi service will be free of charge, free of advertising and free from commercial re-use of data. Roscommon County Council were successful in receiving this EU funding to create up to 60 areas of free Wi-Fi within the county. The funding was split into 4 vouchers and Roscommon County Council are delighted to announce that Vouchers 1 & 2 have been completed under Phase 1 of the rollout and 28 Access Points are now live in the northern half of the County. Phase 2 installations are currently underway in the southern half of the county.
- Roscommon County Council, received DRCD funding for a Digital Innovation Project called Emcall App and are encouraging people to download it. Groups register details of Defibrillators and trained CPR responders to enable emergency responders to summon help and access to nearest defibrillator.

The Cathaoirleach welcomed the update on the project and the members discussed as follows:

- Is the projected connection date for Rooskey 2025/2026?
- Thanks for the work done by the Council on the WiFi4EU project – the speed is very good. This facilitates people in rural areas with poor broadband and thanks to the businesses that have bought into the project – a good news story.
- The location and operation of the hubs is a positive initiative. Is there liaison apps from the Council to NBI?
- When will the service be available from Ballinasloe area following pre-order?
- The NBI website is very good with good information.
- Welcome the Defibrillator App another welcome addition.
- Welcome community halls included in the project. However there is a problem if some people are left behind and not connected – it's likely that broadband could be installed on one side of the road and not the other.
- Welcome the installation of broadband in 31 schools as detailed in the presentation.
- Can the Government speed up the rollout as some residents of rural areas will not have access to hubs until 2025.
- Is the service in the hubs monitored and who will carry out repairs on community facilities?
- Is there a time restriction as to when someone can connect to the broadband facility when available?
- There has been great progress with the community hubs in the past 18 months, and it is unlikely that all areas will get broadband in the future.
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In response to queries raised, Mr. Freeman responded as follows:

- The Council have no control over commercial operators
- The Ballinasloe area is expected to be operational in two months time and Roscommon Town next month.
- There is an agreed process for the implementation of the project but there is some delay currently in relation to issuing licences for infrastructure as
- Eir have been rolling out broadband in some locations.
- The hubs have access 24/7 with 29minutes access at a time.

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111.21 LANESBOROUGH-BALLYLEAGUE ECONOMIC AND ENTERPRISE STRATEGY

Mr. James Chilton, Associate Director with KPMG Analytics gave a presentation to the Members on the Strategy:

- The overall objective was to unlock the economic growth potential of Lanesborough-Ballyleague and provide sustainable employment opportunities in the context of Just Transition.
- The approach to the strategy included baseline analysis, vision definition and Project Proposals, consultation and engagement and preparation of an Action Plan and Validation.
- A SWOT Analysis was carried out - strengths included location, collaboration group, food reputation, strong local community; weaknesses included lack of local economic opportunity, competition between villages for funding and lack of overnight accommodation: opportunities include Bord na Mona peatlands restoration project, rise in demand for remote working and availability of capital funding and finally threats include lack of alternative employment opportunities and Brexit impact.
- A key issue that arose during consultation is the need for coordination of development, phasing and implementation, with a multi-faceted multi-agency collaborative approach to implementation considered to be essential.
- The vision is that by 2040 Lanesborough-Ballyleague will be a better place to live, visit, work and study; a place with a high quality of life and range of employment opportunities where people choose to locate and visit. A thriving, integrated, attractive town with sustainability at the heart of

the economy; a hub for the Mid Shannon area. The core focus is the identification of economically and environmentally sustainable projects that have the potential to transform the economic landscape of Lanesborough-Ballyleague.

- The Pillars and Themes –
 - A better place to work and learn – creating new opportunities
 - A better place to live – enhancing sense of place and vitality
 - A better place to visit – maximise tourism opportunities
 - Increase the visibility of Lanesborough –Ballyleague
- Regional Catalytic Projects include collaboration to
 - Establish the Lough Ree UNESCO Biosphere Nature Reserve
 - Encourage sustainable villages cluster
 - Establish the potential of Bord na Mona's brown to green synergy
 - Maximise funding opportunities under just transition and other schemes
- 13 projects under the four pillars have been identified:
 - Maximise food and drink opportunities
 - Support Lough Ree Technology Cluster development
 - Support anaerobic digester development
 - Support Lanesborough-Ballyleague Enterprise centre development
 - Enhance and link recreation infrastructure
 - Increase destination legibility
 - Maximise tourism opportunity – Surf n Turf Wave Centre
 - Maximise Tourism opportunity – Cloontuskert Ballyleague Visitor Centre and Organic Farm
 - Increase availability of visitor accommodation
 - Build local capacity
 - Market and promote Lanesborough-Ballyleague to maximise opportunities

The Cathaoirleach welcomed the strategy for an area with great volunteers who have had to come to terms with the closure of Bord na Mona and the ESB power station and to counteract this with more than tourism as an alternative economy.

The members welcomed the strategy and discussed as follows:

- The 13 projects proposed include a wide range of investments.
- The Cloondra, Rooskey, Tarmonbarry and Strokestown areas are not included and it is only fair that this should be spread to include these areas as they are affected by the circumstances. KPMG should be given the opportunity to look at these areas also.
- Where is the funding for this plan? There is no point in having a strategy if there is no funding in place to fulfil the strategy. Roscommon and Longford will have to work together and there has not been a meeting of the collaboration group in some time.
- The presentation should be made to the collaboration group – what is the next step?
- Has any response been received with regard to the proposed demolition of the power station?

The Chief Executive responded that the Council were asked to collaborate with Longford to formulate this Strategy for the Ballyleague-Lanesborough area. This is a first step and it does not set out to encapsulate everything.

Majella Hunt, Director of Services said that the strategy was first mooted with the closure of Bord na Mona and commissioned by Longford County Council. It does extend to other areas outside of

Lanesborough/Ballyleague i.e greenways and blueways. With regard to the Shannon Masterplan, contact has been made with Waterways Ireland to develop connections with other local towns. Roscommon is in partnership with Longford on the strategy and while the focus is on Ballyleague/Lanesborough other connections are being looked at. The funding for many of the projects identified is predominantly from the Just Transitions Fund.

112.21 SECTION 22 OF THE HOUSING (TRAVELLER ACCOMMODATION) ACT 1998

The making of appointments to the Local Traveller Accommodation Consultative Committee (LTACC) is a reserved function under Section 22 of the Housing (Traveller Accommodation) Act 1998

On the **PROPOSAL** of Cllr. Shanagher

SECONDED by Cllr. Crosby

It was **AGREED** to make the following appointments to the Local Traveller Accommodation Consultative Committee (LTACC) in accordance with Section 22 of the Housing (Traveller Accommodation) Act 1998

Officials of the Local Authority: Majella Hunt, Director of Services; Ann McHugh, Senior Executive Officer and Sandra Walsh, Housing Liaison Officer

Representatives of local travellers and traveller bodies: John McDonagh and John Ward

113.21 CHIEF EXECUTIVE BUSINESS

There was no Chief Executive business.

114.21 NOTICES OF MOTION

114.21a 21.21 RECONSIDERATION OF CLOSURE OF POWER STATIONS - CLLR. WALDRON

“That this Council propose to call on the Minister for the Environment, Climate and Communications, Deputy Eamon Ryan, in light of current uncertainty on electricity supply to reconsider the closure of the West Offaly Power Station, Shannonbridge, Co. Offaly and the Lough Ree Power Station, Lanesborough, Co. Longford.”

Cllr. Waldron stated that in light of the new information on possible power cuts across the country due to the crisis of energy production, the Minister will have to take a fresh look at closing the power stations. He further proposed that the Cathaoirliogh of Roscommon, Offaly and Longford County Councils should seek a matter with Minister Ryan on this matter.

The members supported the motion and added:

- The removal of the current system and the closure of these stations without an alternative source of electricity is not acceptable. Without access to generators, that are powered by diesel, rural areas could be without supply for a number of hours.
- It is incredible that peat at a cost of €6m was imported to Ireland in 2021 – it is costing more than climate damage to bring the peat in
- The timing of the closure of peat stations is badly thought out. Over €180m was spent on the

Lanesboro power station and it is now proposed to knock it down.

On the **PROPOSAL** of Cllr. Waldron

SECONDED by Cllr. Ward

It was **AGREED** to write to the Minister for the Environment, Climate and Communications, Deputy Eamon Ryan, in light of current uncertainty on electricity supply to reconsider the closure of the West Offaly Power Station, Shannonbridge, Co. Offaly and the Lough Ree Power Station, Lanesborough, Co. Longford.

115.21 CORRESPONDENCE

- **30th September, 2021 – Letter from Irish Water**

Correspondence from the Chief Executive from Mr. Sean Laffey, Head of Asset Management in Irish Water in relation to the Small Towns and Villages Growth Programme

Cllr. Fallon said that the correspondence indicated that Irish Water intend to carry out infrastructural upgrade to one village in Lecarrow in the period to 2024. This will be in conflict with our County Development Plan where we hope to grow our towns and villages and the lack of investment will restrict development. It is unacceptable that only one village will have investment in this respect in the next three years.

On the **PROPOSAL** of Cllr. Fallon

SECONDED by Cllr. Naughten

It was **AGREED** to write to Irish Water to reconsider their proposal with regard to upgrading of our sewerage infrastructure and the difficulty it poses to Roscommon County Council in growing its towns and villages.

116.21 COUNCILLORS CONFERENCES - PAYMENT/ATTENDANCE

On the **PROPOSAL** of Cllr. Cummins

SECONDED by Cllr. Keogh

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

On the **PROPOSAL** of Cllr. Dineen

SECONDED by Cllr. Kelly

It was **AGREED** to approve the following conference for attendance by the Elected Members:

Celtic Conferences	The Fair Deal Scheme	O'Donovan's Hotel, Clonakilty, Co. Cork	5 th – 7 th November 2021
Celtic Conferences	Mental Health and Wellbeing	The Four Seasons Hotel Carlingford, Co. Louth	3 rd – 5 th December 2021

117.21 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

118.21 UPDATE ON RATES WAIVER SCHEME

Mr. Sean Mullarkey, Acting Head of Finance advised the members that he received notification from the Department regarding Rates Waiver Scheme for Quarter 4 2021. The proposal is that the scheme will be

available for targeted sectors and businesses including hospitality, leisure, entertainment and certain tourism sectors. Full details of the scheme will be available in the coming days and circulated to the members.

119.21 NOTIFICATIONS FROM IRISH WATER

Clr. Fitzmaurice raised the matter of lack of public notifications regarding water outages as a result of bursts and repairs. While some of these outages may be planned, the only public notification is detailed on the Irish Water Portal. In response to queries to councillors as to why water is off, a search has to be made to confirm this. This is unacceptable and it should be possible for the Council to liaise with Irish Water and announce notice of water outages in advance via MapAlert. This is bad press for everyone and should be addressed. Cllr. Nigel Dineen supported Clr Fitzmaurice and it was agreed by the Director to bring this matter to the attention of Irish Water locally.

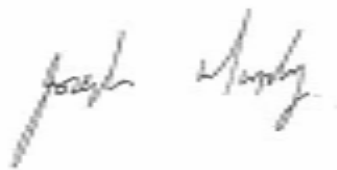
NEXT MEETING

The next meeting will be on Monday, 22nd November, 2021.

This concluded the business of the meeting.

The foregoing Minutes are
Confirmed and Signed:

Petrizis Bohan
Meetings Administrator



Cathaoirleach

Petrizis Bohan
Countersigned