

**MINUTES OF MONTHLY MEETING OF ROSCOMMON COUNTY COUNCIL  
IN COUNCIL CHAMBER, ÁRAS AN CHONTAE, ROSCOMMON  
ON MONDAY, 22ND MAY, 2023 AT 2.15 PM.**

**PRESENT:** Councillor Tom Crosby      **PRESIDED**

**MEMBERS:** Cllr L. Fallon, Cllr E. Kelly, Cllr P. Fitzmaurice, Cllr D. Kilduff, Cllr M. McDermott, Cllr A. Waldron, Cllr O. Leyden, Cllr N. Dineen, Cllr V. Byrne, Cllr J. Cummins, Cllr J. Keogh, Cllr M. Mulligan, Cllr J. Murphy, Cllr J. Naughten, Cllr K. Shanagher and Cllr L. Callaghan.

**OFFICIALS:** Shane Tiernan, Chief Executive  
Caitlín Conneely, Director of Services  
Sean Mullarkey, Acting Head of Finance  
Fiona Ni Chuinn, A/Director of Services  
Greg O'Donnell, A/Director of Services  
Patricia Bohan, Meetings Administrator  
Claudette Collins, Asst. Staff Officer  
Darragh Kelly, Communications Officer

**Apologies:** Cllr T. Ward

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

There were no Disclosures of Conflict of Interest declared by Members.

**62.23 ADOPTION OF MINUTES**

On the **PROPOSAL** of Cllr. Fallon

**SECONDED** by Cllr. Cummins

It was **AGREED** to adopt the minutes of the Plenary Meeting of 24.04.2023

**63.23 MATTERS ARISING**

There were no matters arising.

**64.23 MANAGEMENT REPORT**

Management Report for April 2023 noted.

**65.23 LEASE OF LANDS**

On the **PROPOSAL** of Councillor Waldron

**SECONDED** by Councillor Dineen

It was **AGREED** that the Council consent to the lease of property pursuant to the provisions of Article 206 of the Planning and Development Regulations 2001, Section 211 of the Planning and Development Act, 2000

(as amended) and Section 183 of the Local Government Act, 2001 of particulars of property which it is proposed to lease at the location in County Roscommon and to the persons set out in the schedule hereunder. Particulars of the property which the County Council proposes to dispose:

**The Property:** Site comprising 3.125 hA (7.722 acres) at The Lough, St Comans Park, Roscommon

**The person(s) to whom the property is to be leased to:** Roscommon Town Cricket Club, Company Limited by Guarantee, 17 The Courtyard, Oldwood, Roscommon

**The consideration proposed in respect of the lease:** €10.00 per annum

**Term of the Lease:** 3 Years

**This lease will supersede the Decision of the County Council:**

**125.22 Lease of Lands – Assets dated 24<sup>th</sup> October 2022**

## **66.23 PRESENTATION - COUNTY ROSCOMMON CHILDCARE COMMITTEE**

The Roscommon County Childcare Committee (CCC) Co-Ordinator, Irene Cafferky outlined the range of supports offered to childcare groups in the county from their office in Castlerea and detailed some pertinent statistics for the Members as follows -

- The CCC identifies gaps in service provision, supporting start-ups, implementing national policy at local level.
- The development of quality, accessible Early Learning and Care (ELC) and School Aged Childcare (SAC) services
- The CCC provides advice and support to parents, Parent and Toddler groups, the local Tusla office, early intervention, local schools, local agencies and Roscommon County Council.
- Other supports include mentoring voluntary management committees, supporting best practice in Governance and HR, the provision of business support, financial projections and the review and development of service policies and procedures.
- Services are in urgent need of funding. Under new reforms the service will shortly be brought under one new agency.
- Training support such as Children First Training, Equality, Diversity and Inclusion, Tulsa compliance, National Siolta and Aistear Initiative NSAI Training are also provided.
- New families and ethnic minorities are supported through the Emergency Reception and Orientation Centre in Ballaghaderreen.
- Through its communications strategy, Roscommon CCC provides onsite support, office clinics and support meetings, information packs as well as through their website and social media platforms.
- The sector is regulated by a number of Agencies. A total of 85 services are provided by Roscommon CCC of which 57 are Early Learning and Care Services; 13 Parent and Toddler Groups, 8 School Care Childhood Provision, 6 Voluntary/Notified Childminders with 1 Túsla registered childminder.
- The contract value in respect of programmes since 2014/15 up to 2021/22 was €33m with €25m spent on Early Childhood Care and Education programmes.
- A total of 9,121 children are registered under each of the aforementioned programmes for the same period under review, of which 7,094 children participated in the ECCE, 1,618 children engaged in the CCSP initiative while the remaining 409 took part in the TEC framework.
- Roscommon became the first county in the country to sign up for 100% of services under the Core Funding programme.
- Under the Access and Inclusion Model (AIM) / Capital programmes, a total of €886k was delivered

through AIM with other capital projects amounting to €1.6m

- Challenges facing the sector include an increasing population versus increasing demand and lack of childcare spaces, increased rents and lease agreements, transport, planning costs, meeting regulatory requirements and the urgent need for capital investment by central Government.

Members acknowledged the growth of local childcare services, providing local employment and economic benefit to the communities served -

- Calls were made for improved provisions for students to work in the sector for summer work while off from college.  
In reply Ms. Cafferky said personnel could be sourced for certain work experience, stating the sector was seeking an Apprenticeship programme.
- Concerns were also raised over the rising costs of providing local childcare services as well as the high level of regulation in the sector.
- Issues were also raised over capacity issues and costs associated with relocation of providers.
- A shortfall of services in the wider Athlone area was also noted. Responding, Ms. Cafferky said a meeting with parents could be held to determine how best to move forward in the delivery of services in this area.
- Concerns were also raised over working parents being disadvantaged in sourcing childcare, paying heavy subsidies.
- Low pay scales in the sector was also discussed, compared to school SNA's (Special Needs Assistants).
- Enquiries over the further development of childcare services at the Ballaghaderreen EROC facility were raised as well as the provision of new local childcare services.
- Calls for recognition of the sector similar to the delivery of primary and secondary education while claims were also made by members.
- Questions over the extent of support for private childcare providers by the Roscommon CCC were also raised.

Chief Executive Shane Tiernan said the provision of local childcare services are vital in achieving social integration for children doing invaluable work and with the arrival of refugees in the county as part of the international protection programme, there was an even greater need for more service provision.

Responding to some of the issues raised, Ms. Cafferky said the Government had initiated new pay scales, which would be incremental on an annual basis.

- Ms. Cafferky said the childcare service at the EROC facility in Ballaghaderreen was supporting 22 children.
- The Early Learning and Care facility on the Convent Road in Ballaghaderreen has been reopened providing care for a similar number of children. A facility in The Shambles area is also being refurbished at present.
- Following a tabled proposal, Ms. Cafferky suggested members write to Minister Roderic O'Gorman appealing for the retention of services in the county.

On the **PROPOSAL** of Cllr. Byrne

**SECONDED** by Cllr. Murphy

It was **AGREED** to write to Mr. Roderic O'Gorman, Minister for Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and

Youth of Ireland seeking the retention of local county childcare committee office in Castlerea

**67.23 APPOINTMENT OF ELECTED MEMBER TO THE BOARD OF LOCAL LINK (LONGFORD WESTMEATH ROSCOMMON)**

On the **PROPOSAL** of Cllr. Naughten  
**SECONDED** by Cllr. Leyden

It was **AGREED** to appoint Cllr. Liam Callaghan to the Board of Local Link (Longford Westmeath Roscommon)

**68.23 APPOINTMENT OF ELECTED MEMBER TO THE ROADS, TRANSPORTATION AND EMERGENCY SERVICES SPC FOLLOWING RESIGNATION OF CLLR. WARD**

On the **PROPOSAL** of Cllr. Dineen  
**SECONDED** by Cllr. Kilduff

It was **AGREED** to appoint Cllr. Anthony Waldron to the Roads Transportation and Emergency Services SPC following resignation of Cllr. Ward

**69.23 APPOINTMENT OF ELECTED MEMBER TO THE PLANNING, ENVIRONMENT, CLIMATE CHANGE AND CORPORATE GOVERNANCE SPC FOLLOWING THE RESIGNATION OF CLLR. WALDRON**

On the **PROPOSAL** of Cllr. Dineen  
**SECONDED** by Cllr. Kilduff

It was **AGREED** to appoint Cllr. Tony Ward to the Planning, Environment, Climate Change and Corporate Governance SPC following the resignation of Cllr. Waldron

**70.23 APPOINTMENT OF CHAIRPERSON OF ROADS TRANSPORTATION AND EMERGENCY SERVICES SPC**

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

It was **AGREED** to appoint Cllr. Anthony Waldron as Chairperson of the Roads Transportation and Emergency Services SPC following resignation of Cllr. Ward

**71.23 CHIEF EXECUTIVE BUSINESS**

The Chief Executive highlighted the recent successful launch of the Council's Climate Action Call, which he described as a fantastic production. A one hour docu-film highlighted the climate action initiatives of thirteen community groups/organisations around the county. The individual projects will be highlighted in a communications campaign on social media via the Council's YouTube channel. The Chief Executive highlighted the work of the climate sub-committee of the Strategic Policy Committee in developing the proposal and the staff in bringing it to fruition.

The Elected Members complimented the work of the individual groups and stated small projects can make

a difference. Councillors claimed the initiative was an effective response to the Climate Emergency previously declared by Roscommon County Council in 2019. Members said the SPC needed to evaluate the initiative.

Reference was made to one project, namely Judy's Harbour in Lecarrow where a Biodiversity Park is being planned with a Feasibility Study expected to be completed by next month (July), serving as a habitat for native trees and a nesting site for birds.

Reference was made to sustainability and biodiversity projects also being undertaken by Town Teams.

## **72.23 NOTICE OF MOTION - 07.23 EIR TO REPAIR AND MAKE SAFE ALL DANGEROUS MANHOLE COVERS - CLLR. FITZMAURICE**

"Notice of motion calling on Roscommon County Council to use the full powers of the Local Government act 1964 (Sanitary Services) dangerous structures and places to compel Eircom Limited trading as Eir to repair and make safe all dangerous manhole covers and surrounds in a timely manner and specify a timeframe (as set out in the new policy) for such works to take place."

The Meetings Administrator read the following reply:

The Sanitary Services Act 1964 applies to sanitation but also references dangerous places/structures, presumably dangerous places/structures linked to sanitation infrastructure. In any case, it is unlikely that the referenced Act would apply to EIR as its infrastructure does not involve sanitation infrastructure.

In all cases of defective manhole covers, the first course of action is to report it to the Municipal District Office via the Report IT System. The Report IT system allows Roscommon County Council to collect data in a way that allows us to address the matter with the relevant authority. The Municipal District shall then investigate the matter and alert the statutory authority to the defect, if appropriate. If there are legacy manholes that are not repaired, Roscommon County Council will collate a list for correspondence with EIR and shall serve the appropriate notice under the Road's Act 1993 (as amended) if immediate action is not taken.

Roscommon County Council also engage with EIR in relation to Road Opening Licences and we shall also seek to use this collaborative process to obtain a satisfactory conclusion.

Proposing the motion, Cllr Fitzmaurice outlined the reporting process through Eir, but said months may elapse before a report is acted upon, noting complaints could not be relogged.

Many manholes were in a state of disrepair that were extremely dangerous and could take up to a year to repair. He is proposing that the Council use the 1964 Act to ensure that Eir make the necessary repairs in a timely manner.

The motion was supported by fellow members citing:

- The Council should write to Eir if repairs of defective manhole covers are not carried out within a reasonable timeframe.
- Delays in repairs are unacceptable.

Acting Director of Services Greg O'Donnell responded that in principle the Council agrees with the proposal but a targeted approach may be more successful.

On the **PROPOSAL** of Cllr. Fitzmaurice

**SECONDED** by Cllr. Keogh

It was **AGREED** to write to Eir advising them that dangerous chamber covers reported on their reporting system be addressed in a timely manner.

### **73.23 CORRESPONDENCE**

#### **Acknowledgments to Resolutions from Roscommon County Council:**

- **21<sup>st</sup> April, 2023** – Acknowledgement of correspondence dated 23/03/2023 from Taoiseach, Leo Varadkar, T.D., regarding Notice of Motion Roscommon County Council.
- **24<sup>th</sup> April, 2023** – Acknowledgement of correspondence from, Minister for Finance, Mr. Michael McGrath T.D., regarding Notice of Motion Roscommon County Council.
- **24<sup>th</sup> April, 2023** – Acknowledgement of correspondence from Minister for Agriculture, Food, and the Marine, Mr. Charlie McConalogue, T.D., regarding Notice of Motion Roscommon County Council.

#### **Resolutions from other Local Authorities:**

- **25<sup>th</sup> April, 2023 – Motion, Wexford County Council**  
“That **Wexford County Council** endorses and remains committed to the roll out of the Able Disabled campaign as a means of inclusion and prioritising the needs of those with a disability by companies and utilities. As part of the evolving nationwide expansion of the AD call sign, this council calls on all Chambers of Commerce members, County Councils and all utilities to engage, promote and sign up to the AD Aware Programme as part of their corporate social responsibilities.”
- **27<sup>th</sup> April, 2023 – Motion, Westmeath County Council**  
“That **Westmeath County Council** would write to the Minister of housing and request that he support and encourage the immediate construction of affordable housing units by temporarily removing the need for local authority contributions and facilitating the designation of affordable units in developments that are in the planning system or that have a grant for planning.”
- **8<sup>th</sup> May, 2023 – Resolution, Mayo County Council**  
“That **Mayo County Council** would like to petition the Minister for Housing, Local Government and Heritage to double the maximum grants for the Croi Conaithe Scheme from €30,000 for a vacant property and €50,000 for a vacant property confirmed derelict to €60,000 and €100,000 respectively, given the recent unprecedented increases in the price of construction materials and the fact that these increases have not yet stabilised. In addition, ask for the support to petition the Minister to expand the Croi Conaithe Scheme to owners who wish to renovate vacant or vacant homes confirmed derelict, subject to conditions that the property is subsequently used for long term occupancy either through a sale or through a long-term lease. Furthermore, that those approved under the existing scheme be included when the changes have been implemented, if they have not yet drawn down their funding.”
- **12<sup>th</sup> May, 2023 – Resolution, Clare County Council**  
“That **Clare County Council** supports the recent Macra Na Feirme campaign, entitled “The Rural Revival, steps for our Future”. This campaign was a march that departed Athy, Co. Kildare at 7pm on Tuesday, April 25<sup>th</sup>, marching through the night, physically carrying their message, before arriving at Government Buildings circa 1pm on Wednesday, April 27<sup>th</sup>. The message is simple, Macra Na Feirme members want to be able to remain at home, and working and living in their own communities and the key components of their message are as follows: Accessing affordable housing and cumbersome housing planning guidelines.

Disjointed and scarce healthcare services for rural communities. The Governments definition of a family farm as 'average' and 'typical'. No recognition or engagement by Government on a farming succession scheme.

Lack of planning for the future of our rural communities informed by rural people. Imposition of quotas on young farmers availing of grant aid support. Lack of public transport for rural Ireland. Proposals to rewet large areas of rural Ireland".

- **16<sup>th</sup> May, 2023 – Resolution, Kerry County Council**

"That Kerry County Council would lead by example and change our correspondence with elected members to a paperless, electronic system for those who wish to avail of it, as it would greatly reduce our paper trail, and would also make it easier from a GDPR prescriptive as we would not have to worry about the disposal of said correspondence when it is no longer required."

- **16<sup>th</sup> May, 2023 – Resolution, Kerry County Council**

"That Kerry County Council calls on the Government to immediately initiate a National Pension Scheme for the State. "

#### **74.23 COUNCILLORS CONFERENCES - PAYMENT/ATTENDANCE**

On the **PROPOSAL** of Cllr. Shanagher

**SECONDED** by Cllr. Cummins

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

#### **75.23 ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

There were five items for discussion under Any Other Business.

##### **75.23a MANAGEMENT REPORT - CLLR. LEYDEN**

Cllr. Leyden requested the number of invalidated planning applications be included in the Monthly Report from the Chief Executive.

In 2021 26.2% of planning applications were invalidated and this is concerning to the members and better procedures need to be put in place.

On the **PROPOSAL** of Cllr. Leyden

**SECONDED** by Cllr. Kilduff

It was **AGREED** that the number of invalidated planning applications be included in the Monthly Report from the Chief Executive.

##### **75.23b SWIMMING POOL CASTLEREA - CLLR. FITZMAURICE**

Cllr. Fitzmaurice requested that in light of the proposed closure of the Roscommon Leisure Pool for the summer to effect repairs, consideration be given to opening the Castlerea Pool seven days a week in 2023 only as currently it is scheduled to open five days per week.

He claimed a large number of visitors used the pool facility last year and urged the matter to be considered

favourably.

Responding, the Chief Executive confirmed the closure of the Roscommon Leisure Centre Pool in Roscommon town for essential retiling. He confirmed that Castlerea Pool will continue to open for five days a week during the summer, as per the resources available.

#### **75.23c RATHCROGHAN FARMING PROJECT - CLLR. CALLAGHAN**

Cllr. Callaghan advised the funding of €984k for the Farming Rathcroghan Project (a European Innovation Project) from the Dept. of Agriculture via is coming to an end. The group are proposing to continue the project and will be seeking new funding and would like to address the Council at a forthcoming meeting for their support.

On the **PROPOSAL** of Cllr. Callaghan

**SECONDED** by Cllr. Murphy

It was **AGREED** to invite representatives from the Farming Rathcroghan EIP project to address the July meeting of the Council.

#### **75.23d LAUNCH OF "GROWING UP IN THE WEST" - CLLR. SHANAGHER**

Cllr. Shanagher updated the Members on the latest Planet Youth report, entitled 'Growing Up in the West' which was launched this morning. The 2020 report contains the responses of 568 15 and 16-year-old pupils who completed their Junior Cycle in Roscommon schools in June 2020. The survey was conducted in December 2020 after their return to school and during the COVID19 pandemic. The reports give a comprehensive insight into the lives of our young people and what it's like growing up in Roscommon at the moment. They also show cross-tabulations that examine some of the risk and protective factors in their social environment.

Cllr. Leyden commented some of the findings of the report are stark, citing the behaviour of adults around people consuming alcohol was particularly disturbing, enabling, rather than influencing young people.

#### **75.23e COMMUNITY RECOGNITION FUND - FIONA NI CHUINN - A/DIRECTOR OF SERVICES**

Acting Director of Services Fiona Ní Chuinn informed members of the opening of the Community Recognition Fund of which €95,000 will be available for community groups under the community call aspect of the grant. Applications will open tomorrow and a webinar explaining the main features of the grant will take place on Wednesday 24<sup>th</sup> May.

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

**The next meeting will be on Monday, 26th June, 2023.**

This concluded the business of the meeting.

The foregoing Minutes are



Confirmed and Signed:

PATRIZIO BOHON

Meetings Administrator

TOM BOHON

Cathaoirleach

PATRIZIO BOHON

Countersigned