

**MINUTES OF MONTHLY MEETING OF ROSCOMMON COUNTY COUNCIL  
IN COUNCIL CHAMBER, ÁRAS AN CHONTAE, ROSCOMMON  
ON Monday, 22nd January, 2024 AT 2.15 pm.**

**PRESENT:** Councillor John Keogh      **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 M. Mulligan, Cllr J. Naughten, Cllr K. Shanagher and Cllr L. Callaghan.

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

**Apologies:** Cllr J. Murphy

**1.24 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.

**2.24 ADOPTION OF MINUTES**

On the **PROPOSAL** of Cllr. Crosby

**SECONDED** by Cllr. Kelly

It was **AGREED** to adopt the minutes of the Plenary Meeting of 18.12.2023

**3.24 MATTERS ARISING**

There were no matters arising.

**4.24 MANAGEMENT REPORT**

- Management Report for December 2023 (Q4) noted.

**5.24 LEASE OF LANDS - ASSETS**

On the **PROPOSAL** of Cllr. Cummins

**SECONDED** by Cllr. Callaghan

It was **AGREED** that the Council consent to the lease 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 lease:

**The Property:** Lands comprising 0.26 hA (0.62 acres) at Alderford, Ballyfarnon, Co. Roscommon.

**The person(s) from whom the land was acquired:** The Irish Land Commission

**The person(s) to whom the land is to be disposed to:** Ballyfarnon Tidy Towns, Kilmacroy, Ballyfarnon, Co. Roscommon.

**The consideration proposed in respect of the disposal:** €100 per annum.

**The term of lease:** 5 years

## **6.24 CLIMATE ACTION AND LOW CARBON DEVELOPMENT (AMENDMENT ACT) ACT 2021 - DRAFT CLIMATE ACTION PLAN 2024-2029**

A report on the Draft Climate Action Plan was presented to the Members by Cllr. Naughten, Chairperson of the Environment and Climate SPC:

- Each local authority is required to prepare and approve a Climate Action Plan for their own functional area in consideration of wider national climate and energy targets, addressing both mitigation and adaptation measures.
- The Climate Action Team and Climate Action Unit was established in Roscommon County Council in 2023. The Climate Action team comprises representatives from each department within the organization, meeting on a regular basis to discharge the processes required for the preparation of the Local Authority Climate Action Plan. On adoption of the plan, this focus will shift toward implementation of the Actions contained within.
- The initiation of the plan-making process commenced with pre-draft consultation, and completed in the summer of 2023. This process was widely publicised in mainstream and social media, inviting input from all sectors of society and supplemented with a series of events internally and externally to the Council, including engagement with community stakeholders, local and national agencies and organisations and in-house workshops. Preparation of actions commenced and were refined through engagement with the SPCs, LCDC, PPN and consultation with the CARO.
- A Draft Climate Action Plan was prepared and subjected to further stakeholder engagement, including ongoing contact with the CARO and adjoining Local Authorities. This plan was agreed by the Planning, Environment Climate Change and Corporate Governance SPC at its meeting on 3<sup>rd</sup> of October 2023 and approved at the October Plenary meeting to proceed to formal public consultation. The public consultation phase took place from 27<sup>th</sup> October – 13<sup>th</sup> December 2023.
- Submissions received within this period were analysed and incorporated into the Chief Executive Report on Submissions, following engagement with the Planning, Environment, Climate Action and Corporate Governance SPC at a meeting on 15<sup>th</sup> January 2024.
- This report was subjected to strategic environmental and appropriate assessment screening and it has been determined that the modifications proposed are minor in nature and will not have significant environmental effects. On this basis, the documentation now submitted for the consideration of the Elected Members represents the culmination of the plan-making process.

This includes:

- Chief Executive report on Submissions, incorporating detailed consideration of submissions and recommendations arising
- The Draft Roscommon Climate Action Plan, 2024-2029 with modifications on foot of recommendations contained in the Chief Executive Report
- Screening of recommended modifications for Strategic Environmental and Appropriate Assessment
- Chief Executive determination on Strategic Environmental and Appropriate Assessment screening outcomes

The report recommends the adoption of the plan by resolution subject to the proposed minor modifications. The County Roscommon Climate Action Plan, once adopted, will come into force from the time of adoption and will be published within 30 days, accompanied by the supporting Strategic

Environmental and Appropriate Assessments.

Climate Action Co-Ordinator Aoife Moore gave a presentation to the Elected Members on the Draft Plan:

- She outlined the six documents including the Chief Executive's Report, screening determinations, strategic environmental and appropriate assessment screenings as well as amendments to the draft document.
- Adaptation and mitigation features are a key part of the plan, focusing on full accountability, influence, advocacy, co-ordination and facilitation.
- The plan contains five key actions – governance and leadership, the built environment, transport, communities' resilience as well as transition and sustainable resource management.
- During the consultation period, eighteen submissions were received with proposed amendments screened for impacts.
- Amendments to particular actions were noted in the draft report which referenced the role of sporting organisations, prioritising projects that can demonstrate Climate Action involvement.
- Also referenced was the support of the Circular Economy as well as the importance of geothermal potential in future studies.
- Amendments to the document included references to include adjoining local authorities as partners on relevant actions
- An amendment to NEGI 10 in respect of the Chief Executive's report with reference to Glyphosate was also adopted.
- The plan remains aligned to higher order Climate Action Plans.
- The final version of the report will be published within 30 days of its adoption.

Director of Services Caitlín Conneely acknowledged the input of members of the Strategic Policy Committee. She said the submissions received made the document a richer document and recommended its adoption by members.

On the **PROPOSAL** of Cllr. Naughten

**SECONDED** by Cllr. Leyden

It was **AGREED** Pursuant to the provisions of the Climate Action and Low Carbon Development (Amendment) Act 2021 as it amends the principal Act of 2015, Roscommon County Council resolves to adopt the County Roscommon Climate Action Plan 2024-2029, having considered the draft plan, the contents of the Chief Executives report on submissions received during the period of consultation and the SEA and AA Reports and determinations, carried out in accordance with the requirements and regulatory provisions of the SEA Directive (DIR 2001/42/EC) and Article 6(3) of the EU Habitats Directive (Directive 92/43/EEC)

## **7.24 AUDITED ANNUAL FINANCIAL STATEMENT 2022**

The following reports were circulated to the Members for noting:

- Audited Annual Financial Statement 2022
- Local Government Audit Service - Statutory Audit Report to the Members of Roscommon County Council for year ended 31<sup>st</sup> December 2022
- Roscommon County Council Audit Committee Report on the Audited Annual Financial Statement 2022 and the Local Government Auditors Report (S121 of Local Government Act)

## **8.24 AUDIT COMMITTEE REPORTS**

The Roscommon County Council Audit Committee Annual Report 2022 was noted.

On the **PROPOSAL** of Cllr. Cummins

**SECONDED** by Cllr. Kelly

It was **AGREED** to adopt the Roscommon County Council Audit Committee Work Programme 2024.

On the **PROPOSAL** of Cllr. Cummins

**SECONDED** by Cllr. Shanagher

It was **AGREED** to adopt the Local Government Audit Committee Charter 2024.

#### **9.24 LOCAL ELECTIONS (DISCLOSURE OF DONATIONS & EXPENDITURE) ACT 1999 AS AMENDED**

The Meetings Administrator informed members that the Donations Statement for year ended 31<sup>st</sup> December 2023 is due for completion by 31<sup>st</sup> January 2024.

#### **10.24 ETHICS FRAMEWORK - PART 15 OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 2001**

The Meetings Administrator advised members of the requirements to complete and return an Ethics Declaration on or before 29<sup>th</sup> February 2024. The return will be online via My Online Services and details will be issued next week.

#### **11.24 CHIEF EXECUTIVE BUSINESS**

There was no Chief Executive business.

#### **12.24 NOTICE OF MOTION**

#### **13.24 01.24 - CLLR. LEYDEN - FLUORIDATION OF PUBLIC WATER SUPPLIES**

‘That Roscommon County Council calls on the Department of Health to cease advocating for and funding the fluoridation of public water. Most European countries do not add fluoride to the public water supply.’

Proposing the motion, Cllr. Leyden said that €3m is spent each year by the Department of Health on the fluoridation of public water in Ireland, yet only 3% of the population of Western Europe consumes fluoridated water. She stated 50% of the population had expressed concerns over fluoridated water and it is uneconomical and un-ecological to continue the fluoridation of water. She accepted that while fluoride is naturally found in water, it should not be removed in such cases. She also cited a campaign in Scotland entitled ‘Child Smile’ a dental health awareness campaign that could be replicated across the country.

Members supported the motion and discussed as follows:

- It is unnecessary for water to be fluoridated as the substance features in most oral hygiene products.
- If fluoride is removed from water supply, it will have a positive impact on the delivery of dental services if the savings are invested in supporting extra dental services.
- Concerns were expressed over access to dental care, particularly those with a medical card, who are seeking treatment.
- Fluoride is also a natural occurring mineral that seeps into water supplies and has health benefits.

On the **PROPOSAL** of Cllr. Leyden

**SECONDED** by Cllr. McDermott

It was **AGREED** to write to the Minister of Health to cease advocating for and funding the fluoridation of public water as most European countries do not add fluoride to the public water supply. It is further recommended that the €3m saved from ceasing fluoridation should be used to provide extra funding for the delivery of dental services.

It was further **AGREED** that the motion be circulated to all Local Authorities.

#### **14.24 02.24 - CLLR. FITZMAURICE - WINTER GRITTING IN THE VICINITY OF SCHOOLS**

'I am calling on Roscommon County Council to include specific routes leading to all schools in the winter maintenance program and salt the public roads within the vicinity of the schools.'

**The Meetings Administrator read the following reply:**

"As part of our commitment to ensuring safe road conditions during winter, Roscommon County Council conducts a thorough review of the Winter Service Plan each year, well in advance of the winter months. The plan is a strategic document designed by Engineers, detailing the optimised deployment of resources to address disruptive winter weather conditions.

Within the plan, two levels of priority routes have been identified:

Priority 1 Routes: These are treated during all-weather events and include national primary roads, national secondary roads, regional and local roads of national strategic importance, and those providing access to essential services.

Priority 2 Routes: These routes are part of normal Winter Service but may experience interruptions in treatment during severe weather events.

It is important to note that any changes to the existing plan, including the addition of school routes, would impact the council's ability to effectively treat Priority routes. The Winter Service Plan represents an optimised allocation of resources and raw materials.

Additionally, the plan is financed through a combination of TII funding and Department of Transport Discretionary Grants. These funds are limited, and any adjustments to the plan would require careful consideration, as expanding winter maintenance coverage could affect funding for other crucial areas such as local roads, verge trimming, drainage, etc."

Speaking on his motion, Cllr. Fitzmaurice conceded the amount of severe weather affecting the county in recent months had been minimal and acknowledged that many schools are on routes that are gritted. His concern is in relation to the schools that are not including Cloonbonniffe, Lissaniskey, Runnamote and Fairymount which are marginally off the location of winter maintenance routes and have large amounts of traffic on these roads. He stated that Longford County Council all have a salted route to each school and why can Roscommon not be able to do the same. He also stated that Galway Co. Co. provide salt bins near schools and recreational areas.

Cllr. Byrne seconded the motion.

Other members supported the motion and discussed as follows:

- It was proposed smaller lorries could be used for salting of minor roads where schools are located.
- Local schools favour the provision of salt bins that could be sourced from the County Council and used by the schools affected.
- Some discretion should be given to Area Engineers in the salting of roads in local areas which would put less strain on Council resources and vehicles.
- Costings should be drawn up for salting of local roads to enable members to make an informed decision when considering to salt local roads.
- If there are excessive stocks of salt, national schools should be attended to for gritting.
- It was claimed there was 4,000 miles of roads in the county which meant not all routes could be salted and unrealistic to expect gritting vehicles to salt all schools.
- It was felt priority needed to be given to major routes and that resources should not be taken away from these routes.

- Cllr. Fitzmaurice said he understood each engineering area has an electric salt gritter and claimed drivers were available, separate to vehicles and manpower used for regional and national roads.

Responding, Acting Director of Services Greg O'Donnell said the focus of the Winter Service Plan was on national primary and secondary routes.

- Smaller pick-up trucks used for gritting had a one cubic metre capacity to spread salt and would not be suitable for salting outside schools.
- Eight larger trucks cover all routes for a total road network of 3,500 kms.
- The provision of salt bins was considered for communities' last year and if adopted, could be extended for provision to local schools, subject to the availability of resources.
- Communities were provided with salt on request, subject to availability.
- He said if expanding the provision of salt to local schools, then the provision of such a service would be a business model.
- Smaller vehicles were used on a discretionary basis by the Municipal District Co-Ordinators, particularly in public areas in urban areas.
- He said there weren't the response times to conceivably salt local schools with a small vehicle capacity.

Responding to the motion raised, the Chief Executive stated that with 4,000 kms of roads in the county it is not feasible to grit all roads. The gritting process is a highly technical one and there are historic reasons why routes are prioritised and cannot be changed. There are also logistical considerations such as the Working Time Directive that impact on hours that worked by lorry drivers. Salt bins are a good option and a resource that could be used outside housing estates and not just outside schools. This is a matter that should be brought to an SPC for a Policy to be agreed.

Concluding the debate, Cllr. Fitzmaurice agreed that the motion be referred to the Roads SPC for a Policy to be formulated and agreed

## 15.24 CORRESPONDENCE

### Resolutions from other Local Authorities:

- **10<sup>th</sup> January, 2024 – Resolution from Offaly County Council**  
 “**Offaly County Council** states that 12% of the land in Co. Offaly is under the ownership of semi state companies such as Bord na Móna they call on the government to ensure that State lands where renewable energy projects have been developed cannot be sold. They further requested that state lands to be considered for sale must receive the approval of the Government.”
- **16<sup>th</sup> January 2024 – Resolution from Mayo County Council**  
 “That all cooperation ceases immediately, between the staff of Mayo County Council and the Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth, until such time as an agreed strategy is put in place to properly co-ordinate the provision of additional services for the communities’ hosting refugees and international protection applicants.....”

### Other Correspondence:

- **16<sup>th</sup> May, 2024 – Letter from Waterways Ireland**  
 Acknowledgement of submission from Roscommon County Council re Public Consultation process in respect to the Shannon Navigation Bye-laws and Canal Bye-laws.

## 16.24 COUNCILLORS CONFERENCES - PAYMENT/ATTENDANCE

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

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

On the **PROPOSAL** of Cllr. Kelly

**SECONDED** by Cllr. McDermott

It was **AGREED** to approve the list of training and conferences for attendance as circulated.

#### **17.24 ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

##### **17.24a AOB - UPDATE NOM 16.23 - CLLR CROSBY - RECOGNITION OF DR. BRIDGET LYONS**

Cllr. Crosby enquired if there was any update in relation his Notice of Motion in November 2023 (16.23) regarding official recognition of Dr. Bridget Lyons

He was informed the matter is being progressed by the Heritage Officer.

##### **17.24b AOB - DEPOSIT RETURN SCHEME (RE-TURN)**

The Cathaoirleach raised the matter of the Deposit Return Scheme that will come into effect on 1<sup>st</sup> February 2024 whereby plastic bottles and aluminium/steel cans must be returned to a participating shop or supermarket for refund of a deposit already paid. He felt the scheme is anti-competitive and suit the large retailers who have the ability to facilitate the recycling equipment.

The Members discussed the scheme as follows:

- The scheme favours larger supermarkets at the expense of smaller shops who do not have the capacity to install recycling machines designed to return bottles and cans.
- If the vouchers issued for the return of bottles are only to be used in the retail outlet where the items are being returned, it will cause loss of business to smaller shops.
- Smaller shops may not have the resources to install machines required, despite being grant funded up to 50% of the cost.
- The availability of recycling facilities in public amenities like in Australia is a model that could be considered.
- There is a manual take back of items service available for smaller retailers but they could still have storage issues.
- It is imperative that a cash option is available rather than voucher only.
- Return bins should be in public areas and local villages where community groups can run them.
- Can the Deposit Return facility be available in Civic amenity sites?
- The matter was raised of costs to small shops in relation to so many people using debit cards for payment for small items in particular was raised as each transaction results in a charge to the shop each time.

Responding, Director of Services Caitlín Conneely said all retailers were obliged to participate in the scheme. Retailers are included in Phase 1 of the scheme and community groups will be included in Phase 2. The Local Authorities will be involved in enforcement and a presentation may be facilitated at the next SPC.

On the **PROPOSAL** of Cllr. Fallon

**SECONDED** by Cllr. Dineen

It was **AGREED** to write to the Minister for Environment to request that all options are available to consumers to get a refund or cash back when returning bottles or cans under the Return scheme.

On the **PROPOSAL** of Cllr. Kilduff

**SECONDED** by Cllr. Kelly

It was also **AGREED** that the recycling machines should also be made available in public areas.

**NEXT MEETING**

The next meeting will be on Monday, 26th February, 2024.

This concluded the business of the meeting.

The foregoing Minutes are  
Confirmed and Signed:

Petrizio Bohon

Meetings Administrator

John D Keogh

Cathaoirleach

Petrizio Bohon

Countersigned