

MINUTES OF MONTHLY MEETING OF ROSCOMMON COUNTY COUNCIL HELD IN THE COUNCIL CHAMBER, COURTHOUSE, ROSCOMMON, ON MONDAY THE 20th OCTOBER, 2014 AT 2.15 P.M.

PRESENT **Councillor John Cummins, Cathaoirleach** **PRESIDED**

MEMBERS: I. Connaughton M. Creaton D. Connolly
 N. Dineen R. Doherty L. Fallon P. Fitzmaurice
 M. Hopkins P. Kilduff J. Keogh O. Leyden
 M. Mulligan E. Murphy J. Naughten K. Shanagher
 T. Ward.

OFFICIALS: Tommy Ryan, Chief Executive.
 Majella Hunt, Director of Services.
 Martin Lydon, Head of Finance & Planning
 John O'Rourke, A/ Director of Services.
 Pat Murtagh, A/Director of Services.
 Fiona ní Chuinn, Meetings Administrator.

APOLOGIES: Apologies were received from Councillor Byrne.

135.14. ADOPTION OF MINUTES:

On the **PROPOSAL** of Councillor Kilduff
 SECONDED by Councillor Creaton
It was **AGREED** to adopt the Minutes of the Monthly Meeting held on 22.9.2014.

136.14. DISPOSAL OF LAND:

On the **PROPOSAL** of Councillor Keogh
 SECONDED by Councillor Dineen
It was **AGREED** that the Council consent to the disposal of lands pursuant to the provision of Section 211 of the Planning and Development Act, 2000 and Section 183 of the Local Government Act, 2001. Particulars of the land which the County Council proposes to dispose of:-
The land: 0.23ha at Bellanamullia, Scramogue, Co. Roscommon.
The persons from whom the land was acquired: Unknown.
The person to whom the land is to be disposed: Patrick Courtney .
Consideration: €10.
Any covenants, conditions or agreements to have effect in connection with the disposal: None.

137.14. CONSIDERATION OF MONTHLY MANAGEMENT REPORT SUBJECT TO SECTION 51, SUB-SECTIONS (3) & (4) OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT REFORM ACT, 2014:

- **September, 2014.**

Tommy Ryan, Chief Executive, informed the members that subject to Section 51, sub-sections (3) and (4) of the Local Government Reform Act, 2014, the Chief Executive shall prepare a report to be known as the Management Report in relation to the performance of his executive functions during the preceding calendar month. The monthly Management Reports are intended to assist the elected members in discharging their governance responsibilities and to oversee the executive in the delivery of the policies that the elected members have decided upon.

Members queried the collection rate for housing loans at 37%.

Martin Lydon confirmed that the rate of 37% took account of ongoing historical cases. He continued that Roscommon County Council have become more aggressive in the collection of loans but many factors had to be taken into account such as 'lender of last resort' and health issues.

Members noted the September, 2014 Management Report of Roscommon County Council in accordance with Section 51 of the Local Government Reform Act, 2014.

138.14. RATIFICATION OF MEMBERS TO STRATEGIC POLICY COMMITTEES.

On the **PROPOSAL** of Councillor Keogh
SECONDED by Councillor Ward

It was **AGREED** to nominate members to the Strategic Policy Committees as outlined below:-

Economic Development SPC

Councillors Ward (**Chair**), Byrne, Creaton, Hopkins,, Leyden, Shanagher, Fallon, Keogh and Kilduff.

Housing & Corporate SPC:

Councillors Keogh (**Chair**), Connaughton, Dineen, Hopkins, Doherty, Ward, Connolly, Cummins and Murphy.

Planning SPC:

Councillors Fitzmaurice (**Chair**), Cummins, Kilduff, Naughten, Doherty, Byrne, Connaughton, Dineen and Mulligan.

Environment & Emergency Services SPC:

Councillors Fallon (**Chair**), Murphy, Connolly Mulligan, Fitzmaurice, Creaton, Leyden, Shanagher and Naughton.

139.14. SECTION 85 AGREEMENT BETWEEN ROSCOMMON COUNTY COUNCIL -AND- WESTMEATH COUNTY COUNCIL – PROVISION OF FIRE SERVICE COVER IN SOUTH ROSCOMMON.

Majella Hunt, Director of Services informed the members that following the merger of Athlone UDC with Westmeath County Council, Westmeath County Council will now be the service providers of the fire services for a designated area of South Roscommon. The change in the structure as a result of the merger calls for the review of the Section 85 Agreement for a period of three years.

Members complimented Athlone UDC on the service provided to date and raised the following issues:

- Clarification requested on the call out fee.
- Queried why this matter has not been brought up at a Municipal Districts Meeting?
- Will this agreement have any impact on staff.
- Does this agreement have any impact on the proposal for shared services.
- What area does it serve?

Majella Hunt responded that the Section 85 is merely a regularisation with Westmeath County Council of a previous agreement with Athlone UDC. The new agreement will not impact on staff or the Roscommon fire service. The call-out charges will be the county rate and consumers will pay Roscommon County Council. The matter is being dealt with at the plenary meeting in accordance with Section 10 of the Local Government Reform Act.

On the **PROPOSAL** of Councillor Kilduff
SECONDED by Councillor Keogh

It was **AGREED** that Roscommon County Council approve a proposal to enter into a Section 85 Agreement with Westmeath County Council for the provision of Fire Service cover in a designated area of South Roscommon for the next three years.

140.14. IRISH WATER – TRANSFORMATION PLAN 2014 – 2017:

Majella Hunt, Director of Services briefed the members on the Irish Water Transformation Plan 2014 – 2017. She highlighted the fact that Irish Water and the CCMA have agreed a “Transformation Plan” for the Water Industry. There are 27 initiatives to be delivered during a three year period under five broad work themes namely –

- The Way we Work.
- Assets.
- Customer.
- Supply Chain.
- Data & Intelligence.

The following Transformation Initiatives were also highlighted:

- Leakage Reduction and Water Conservation.
- Sludge Management System.

- Energy Efficiency.
- Treatment Optimisation and Asset Standards.
- Fats, Oils & Greases (FOG) Regulations & Trade Discharge.
- Planned Maintenance Programme.
- Capital Project Delivery.

Members raised the following issues:

- Members of the public will suffer from the creation of Irish Water.
- Irish Water is an absolute disgrace and the public do not believe that this utility will work.
- Requested Elizabeth Arnett to attend a meeting of Roscommon County Council to answer questions on the ongoing water problems in the county.
- Impossible to make contact with Irish Water or get any response to local queries.
- Water Charges should be postponed until all leaks and repairs were carried out on the water network.
- Water leaks account for 45% of water usage and should be addressed as a matter of priority.
- Lack of clarity for landlords and tenants on the issue of water charges.
- Condemned the huge Irish Water call- out charge of €200.
- Final tariffs are still not known.
- Concern by people as deadline of 31st October is looming.
- Explanation required from Roscommon County Council or the Department on funding allocated but not drawn down in 2009?
- Centralisation never benefits the county.
- Overall objective of Irish Water is to have a better service, however, there have been significant teething problems.

Majella Hunt responded to the queries raised and informed the members

- That mixed use water customers will continue to be billed by Veolia until mid 2015 and will also receive a bill from Irish Water for their domestic water usage.
- Circa €5.4m. has been approved for a programme of works to repair leaks on 60 kilometres of mains pipe across the county.
- Connection fees to semi-private water scheme has yet to be clarified.
- The Transformation Programme is being rolled out under the 12 year Service Level Agreement with Irish Water.
- The three year Transformation Plan for 2014 – 2017 has been drawn up and will bring a lot of change to systems and processes.
- Schemes were drawn up in 2009/2010, they were designed, costed and tendered out. The approval was received in November, 2013 for four Regional Water Schemes.
- Leaks are categorised as - leaks on the mains up to the meter which are the responsibility of Irish Water and leaks from the meter into the property which are the owner's responsibility. However, the first fix will be free to the householder but nothing has been received in writing from Irish Water on the First Fix Scheme
- Discussions are ongoing regarding the budget allocation and a final figure is expected in November . The Corporate Policy Group will be kept updated.

Majella Hunt referred to Information Seminars and urged the members to attend the information seminars by Irish Water in the McWilliam Park Hotel in Claremorris or in the Landmark Hotel in Carrick-on-Shannon, where they will get an opportunity to discuss issues and raise concerns.

It was **PROPOSED** by Councillor Fitzmaurice

SECONDED by Councillor Doherty

That Roscommon County Council pass a Motion of 'no confidence' in Irish Water.

The Meetings Administrator was requested to call a Vote on Councillor Fitzmaurice's proposal which resulted as follows:

VOTING FOR COUNCILLOR FITZMAURICE'S PROPOSAL:

Councillors Connaughton, Connolly, Cummins, Dineen, Doherty, Fallon, Fitzmaurice, Keogh, Kilduff, Leyden, Mulligan, Murphy, Shanagher and Ward (14)

VOTING AGAINST COUNCILLOR FITZMAURICE'S PROPOSAL:

Councillors Creaton, Hopkins and Naughten. (3)

ABSENT WHEN THE VOTE WAS CALLED:

Councillor Byrne (1)

The Cathaoirleach declared the Motion carried.

141.14. TOWN REVITALISATION TEAMS:

Tommy Ryan, Chief Executive, informed the members of Plans to set up Town Revitalisation Teams which will be established as part of Roscommon County Council's new economic development remit and will ultimately seek to promote and revitalise the towns and villages across the county. Five town teams are to be established in the coming months to promote and revitalise the towns of Roscommon, Boyle, Ballaghaderreen, Castlerea and Monksland. The new initiative is intended to bring together stakeholders from business, community and voluntary sectors in each town with a view to drawing up an agreed plan of priorities to develop and promote each town or village. Roscommon County Council is starting with the five most populated towns and will hold public meetings in Roscommon, Boyle, Ballaghaderreen, Castlerea and Monksland in the coming weeks to get the initiative off the ground.

Members welcomed the initiative and raised the following issues:

- Queried if there will be an overlap between the town teams and the work of many groups and committees already on the ground.
- What funding will be available to progress town revitalisation plans.
- Such an initiative is long overdue and the Town Teams will have to do the work of the IDA to attract small factories/businesses into towns.
- The initiative should have a broad remit so as to promote the county on the wider stage.
- Every town should have an investment prospectus.

- The initiative will only work if business and community groups buy into it and if funding is made available.
- Funding is vital to deliver on any plans.
- Urban towns badly need revitalisation.
- Need to be conscious that we are not creating another layer of bureaucracy.
- Role of the local authority is very aspirational under the Local Government Reform Act.
- Initiatives for use of vacant properties required.
- Plan needs to address ‘pop up’ business initiatives.

It was **PROPOSED** by Councillor Murphy
SECONDED by Councillor Doherty

That the town of Strokestown be included in the first tranche of towns to be included in the new initiative.

Tommy Ryan, Chief Executive, responded to the queries raised and stated that the initiative represented a new more focussed concept and new partnership model for economic development. This initiative is about Roscommon County Council taking the lead and bringing all of the people together in a town and getting them to work together and agreeing a set of priorities. Funding and resources will be the key to the initiative’s success and this will have to be considered as part of the budgetary process. He continued that the inclusion of the town of Strokestown in the first tranche will be considered.

142.14. DUBLIN DECLARATION ON AGE FRIENDLY CITIES & COMMUNITIES:

Pat Murtagh, Acting Director of Services informed the meeting that correspondence had been received from Age Friendly Ireland seeking the passing of a motion by the members at today meeting that Roscommon County Council agrees to become a signatory to the Dublin Declaration on Age Friendly. The aim of the Dublin Declaration is to solicit support for a range of actions such as:-

- Recognition that the built environment and neighbourhood networks impact on the quality of life for those growing older.
- Promotion of equal opportunities, well-being and participation of all citizens, including older citizens.
- Promote participation of all in the social & cultural life of their community.
- Promote and support development of employment and volunteering opportunities for all including older persons.

On the **PROPOSAL** of Councillor Kilduff
SECONDED by Councillor Keogh

It was **AGREED** that Roscommon County Council become a signatory to the Dublin Declaration on Age Friendly Cities and Communities.

143.14. REQUEST FOR MATERIAL ALTERATION OF ROSCOMMON COUNTY DEVELOPMENT PLAN – 2014 – 2020:

Councillor Leyden proposed a Material alteration of Roscommon County Development Plan 2014 – 2020 Core Strategy to reflect the changed economic climate, forecast growth and to ensure that County Roscommon does not stagnate over the coming five years while other areas in the region such as Galway and Mayo are given the opportunity to grow and develop.

Regional Planning guidelines which form the basis of the RCDP 2014 – 2020 are not ambitious for County Roscommon or Roscommon Town and need to be challenged and the RCDP 2014 – 2020 Core Strategy varied.

The Regional Planning Guidelines for the West Region 2010 - 2022 were made by the Members of the West Regional Authority on the 19th of October 2010. at a very different time of economic crisis and the guidelines were not guidelines of recovery and revitalisation.

The Core Strategy was devised at a time of extreme caution and almost paralysis in terms of economic development, based on regional guidelines that are leaving Roscommon behind. As a county we need a Core Strategy that is fit for purpose and supports the development of the county.

In Roscommon town the Regional Planning Guideline's population projection, indicates estimates of 5,500 (2010), 6,215 (2016) and 6,836 (2022) . This allows for a population increase of 10.9% (compared with 13% population increase – inter census period 2006 – 2011). This equates to 845 additional persons living in the Roscommon town environs during the next five years.

Meanwhile there is a huge risk with the present Core Strategy that lands that were invested in by way of services are threatened to be de-zoned. It makes no economic sense to have individuals, Council and Department of Environment investing in servicing infrastructure only to have the lands de-zoned.

The County Development Plans Core Strategy determined by the Regional Planning Guidelines is a road block to the delivery of sufficient housing in Roscommon to meet private and social housing needs.

Members raised the following issues:-

- The whole Core Strategy needs to be revisited.
- New Councillors should have a right to vote on a County Development Plan.
- Roscommon has one of the lowest densities in the country.
- Huge error getting rid of tax incentives.
- Proposal is constructive but there will be regional and national restrictions.
- New members have had no input into the County Development Plan and this needs to be addressed.
- The decision on the Roscommon Local Area Plan should be made at the plenary meeting.

Martin Lydon, Head of Finance & Planning informed the members that a material alteration of the County Development Plan was not possible at this stage. Regional Planning Guidelines would have to be reviewed before any changes could be made and a review is not due until 2016. Any changes made could be overturned by a Ministerial Direction. He reminded the members that a letter issued to the Council from the Department recently stating *“that a pattern of disregard for local regional and national planning policies was becoming established in Roscommon County Council and may merit the use of the powers available to the Minister under the Planning & Development Acts”* He continued that he is satisfied that the Roscommon Local Area Plan should be dealt with at the Municipal District meeting.

Tommy Ryan, Chief Executive informed the members that any proposed changes to the Roscommon County Development Plan would have to be evidence based and consistent with Regional Planning Guidelines. He could not recommend reviewing the Core Strategy of the County Development Plan as it would prove expensive and involve a lot of work and would ultimately be overturned by a ministerial direction. He continued that he is satisfied that the Local Area Plan is a matter for the Municipal District and this decision was taken following legal clarification on the matter.

On the **PROPOSAL** of Councillor Leyden
SECONDED by Councillor Keogh

It was **AGREED** that Roscommon County Council would issue a letter to the Border, Midland & Western Regional Assembly seeking the immediate commencement of a review of the Regional Planning Guidelines in light of the positive changes to the economic climate.

144.14. SUSPENSION OF STANDING ORDERS:

On the **PROPOSAL** of Councillor Keogh
SECONDED by Councillor Kilduff

It was **AGREED** to extend Standing Orders to the close of business.

145.14. CORRESPONDENCE:

1. Letter of acknowledgement from the Office of the Minister for Education & Skills to letter re the provision of funding to build a new sixteen teacher National School at Cloonakilla, Bealnamullia, Athlone, Co. Roscommon.
2. Letter of acknowledgement dated 11.4.2014 from the Department of Environment, Community & Local Government re NCCWN funding.
3. Letter of acknowledgement from the Department of Agriculture, Food & The Marine, re restrictions on the sale of Irish cattle to Northern Ireland and to agree all labelling system with the Northern Minister.
4. Letter dated 14.10.2014 from the NRA re resolution proposed in relation to the Ballaghaderreen Bypass.

5. E-mail dated 15.10.2014 from Catherine Cunningham re Teach de hide.
6. Letter dated 6.10.2014 from South Dublin County Council seeking support for a Motion to repeal or amend the current legislation setting up the Local Property Tax.
7. Letter dated 1.10.2014 from Monaghan County Council seeking support for a Motion re the possibility of the introduction of an adequate high level grant aid scheme for buildings that are listed both commercial and residential.

146.14. COUNCILLORS CONFERENCES:

On the **PROPOSAL** of Councillor Doherty

SECONDED by Councillor Kilduff

It was **AGREED** to adopt the list of Conferences as circulated to the members.

Cllr. Rachel Doherty

AILG Training , Sligo Park Hotel, Sligo

147.14. VOTES OF CONGRATULATIONS were extended to:

St. Brigid's Senior football team on winning the senior football title for the 5th year in a row.

Clan na Gael Minor Team on winning the minor football championship title.

148.14. ANY OTHER BUSINESS:

Cumann na mBan:

Councillor Keogh requested that Roscommon County Council in conjunction with Westmeath County Council in this the 100th anniversary of the founding of Cumann na mBan give recognition to those women who served and played a vital role in securing the independence of this state.

On the **PROPOSAL** of Councillor Keogh

SECONDED by Councillor Leyden

It was **AGREED** that Roscommon County Council in conjunction with Westmeath County Council, investigate the possibility of naming the Bridge over the River Shannon on the Athlone Relief Road (By-Pass) '*Cumann na mBan*' Bridge.

Tommy Ryan, Chief Executive, responded that the NRA may need to be involved in such a decision as the bridge concerned was on a national route. He also stated that the Council would need to develop a policy and agree criteria in relation to the naming of bridges.

Hauliers:

On the **PROPOSAL** of Councillor Murphy

SECONDED by Councillor Fitzmaurice

It was **AGREED** that Roscommon County Council request the Government to consider the implementation of a road user tax charge for hauliers entering into Ireland bearing in mind that hauliers entering into Europe pay a €10 road user tax charge.

Control of Vehicle Speed in Housing Estates:

Councillor Shanagher referred to recent articles by Maurice Treacy referring to the control of vehicle speed in housing estates.

It was **PROPOSED** by Councillor Shanagher
SECONDED by Councillor Ward

That Roscommon County Council re-examine and implement new Bye Laws which would reduce speed limits and provide speed ramps in housing estates.

It was **PROPOSED** by Councillor Leyden
SECONDED by Councillor Ward

That in light of Minister Alan Kelly's statements in the papers that Roscommon County Council would re-examine speed limits and reduce them to 30 kph in residential housing estates.

Mental Health Budget:

Councillor Doherty raised the issue that a considerable amount of funding had been cut out of the 2014 Mental Health Budget.

On the **PROPOSAL** of Councillor Doherty
SECONDED by Councillor Connaughton

It was **AGREED** that Roscommon County Council write to Kathleen Lynch requesting her to provide €15m. in the 2015 Budget for Mental Health Services.

Derrycahill Bridge:

On the **PROPOSAL** of Councillor Ward
SECONDED by Councillor Fallon

It was **AGREED** to call on Roscommon County Council to provide €75,000 to carry out repairs on Derrycahill Bridge.

Overdraft Facility:

On the **PROPOSAL** of Councillor Murphy
SECONDED by Councillor Ward

It was **AGREED** to approve overdraft accommodation in the sum of €10m. for the year ending 31.12.2015.

Reception for Councillor Mary Shields:

On the **PROPOSAL** of Councillor Murphy
SECONDED by Councillor Leyden

It was **AGREED** that Roscommon County Council would hold a small reception to honour Councillor Mary Shields the Lord Mayor of Cork and a Roscommon native following one of our Council meetings in the near future.

This concluded the business of the meeting.

The foregoing Minutes are
Confirmed and Signed:

Meetings Administrator

Mayor

Countersigned

