

**MINUTES OF MONTHLY MEETING OF ROSCOMMON COUNTY COUNCIL
COUNCIL CHAMBER, ÁRAS AN CHONTAE, ROSCOMMON
MONDAY, 26TH JUNE, 2017 AT 3.30 PM.**

PRESENT: Councillor Orla Leyden, Cathaoirleach **PRESIDED**

MEMBERS: Cllr T. Ward, Cllr N. Dineen, Cllr V. Byrne, Cllr I. Connaughton, Cllr D. Connolly, Cllr M. Creaton, Cllr J. Cummins, Cllr L. Fallon, Cllr P. Fitzmaurice, Cllr J. Keogh, Cllr P. Kilduff, Cllr M. Mulligan, Cllr J. Murphy, Cllr J. Naughten, Cllr K. Shanagher and Cllr L. Callaghan.

OFFICIALS: Eugene Cummins, Chief Executive
Derek Caldbeck, A/Director of Services
Majella Hunt, Director of Services
Martin Lydon, Director of Services
Patricia Bohan, Meetings Administrator
Cait Kenny, Assistant Staff Officer

Apologies: .

82.17 ADOPTION OF MINUTES

On the **PROPOSAL** of Councillor Cummins
SECONDED by Councillor Kilduff
It was **AGREED** to adopt the minutes of the Plenary Meeting held 22.05.2017

83.17 MATTERS ARISING

Cllr. Shanagher enquired if there was any progress on reconstituting the advisory board of Roscommon Leisure Centre. Majella Hunt, Director of Services advised that the AGM is on 27th June next for Leisure Centre where it is proposed to formulate a new directorship and constitute a new board, and this will be part of it.

84.17 MANAGEMENT REPORT

Members noted the Management Report for May 2017.

85.17 ADOPTION OF DRAFT ANNUAL REPORT 2016

On the **PROPOSAL** of Councillor Cummins
SECONDED by Councillor Murphy
It was **AGREED** that Roscommon County Council adopt the Annual Report 2016.

86.17 PRESENTATION ON MINOR FLOOD MITIGATION WORKS AND COASTAL PROTECTION SCHEME

Eugene Dwyer, Senior Engineer outlined the details of the Departmental review of the OPW Minor Flood

Mitigation Works and Coastal Protection Funding Scheme which provided for a number of improvements to the scheme. The scheme was introduced in 2009 as a response to the severe flooding and Roscommon County Council has completed a number of schemes under the scheme. In Roscommon where we have a low density population it was difficult to achieve the cost benefit analysis involved. Following the flooding in 2015 the scheme was reviewed and changes were made to the rates used to reach the cost benefit.

The changes to the schemes were outlined as follows:

- Funding for a home at risk of flooding increased up to €12,500 while homes that has been flooded increased to €39,000
- Commercial premises at risk of flooding are now included allowing €10,000 for farmyard/buildings while commercial premises flooded with a value of €30,000 now includes farmyards/ buildings
- Rates for agricultural land flooded for at least a month are to be revised and will be available shortly.
- Funding for road diversions, if over 12 hours.
- Funding for homes cut off from flooding increased to €170 per day.
- Cost benefit ratio has been reduced from a minimum of 1.5 to a minimum of 1.35 for works up to €250,000.

The members made the following comments:

- While welcoming the inclusion of farmyards and buildings in the scheme, the value of the loss of production of farmland continues to be a major concern.
- Is a schedule of works required or is there an existing schedule with outstanding works?
- Correal cross needs priority funding as residents very concerned about the impact of another bad winter.
- Is it the responsibility of the farmer or the Local Authority to make the application to the OPW?
- Works remain outstanding at Castleplunkett after the flooding. Can these works be progressed?
- Loughfunshinagh –There are still 400 acres flooded and there is an obvious blockage for the past number of years – can the CE and staff please see if works can be advanced to solve this issue notwithstanding that there is a report being carried out.
- More allocations required from central government.

Eugene Dwyer responded to members queries as follows:

- There is an existing schedule of works by area but some of the outstanding works are based in areas where there are turloughs and works cannot progress at these locations until studies are completed. Two schemes in the Athlone area have been submitted and other schemes are being prepared. In the more seriously flooded areas such as Loughfunshinagh, Correal Cross and Lisserdrea, Boyle there are environmental issues with the turloughs and there is a study ongoing to determine how the turloughs behave over a period of time.
- The Local Authority makes the application to the OPW.
- Aware of issues at Castleplunkett and currently trying to progress this.
- Turloughs are unique features to west of Ireland resulting in little scientific information available. In the absence of any study it would be very difficult to get any approval to carry out drainage works. This is a groundbreaking study and needs to be done and awaiting the outcome of the study would be the wisest course of action.

87.17 DRAFT ANTI SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR STRATEGY 2017

Cllr Keogh, Chairperson of the Housing and Corporate Affairs SPC, presented a report on the Draft Anti Social Behaviour Strategy 2017. Submissions were sought, received and considered in the Strategy.

The primary objectives of the strategy included the prevention and reduction of anti-social behaviour, coordination of services within the Housing Authority, promotion for co operation with other statutory bodies including An Garda Siochana and the promotion of good estate management.

The inclusion of a Deferral matrix to provide clarity and justification for refusals/deferrals is now included in the strategy, and is considered an important feature as it requires the Local Authority to take all available information from any relevant bodies into consideration including An Garda Siochaná checks.

The members made the following comments:

- Tenants are responsible for cleaning of silt, leaves or other deposits from gutters and downpipes. This is not being enforced by the council resulting in unsightly premises throughout Roscommon Town.
- There needs to be greater enforcement action on anti social behaviour.
- Enforcement of the strategy should become an integral part of the Housing department Multi-agency approach is required as housing staff need support to implement this strategy and action taken where necessary.
- Stronger powers and greater security for tenants is positive.
- Upkeep and maintenance of local authority houses is costly and there should be a scheme setup to make provisions where people can pay in instalments for materials to encourage tenants to maintain their houses to a good standard. Can this be referred back to Housing SPC?
- Most often it is not the registered occupier engaging in anti social behaviour but the visitors that come to the house.
- Is any of our Housing Stock using external cladding similar to that in Grenfell Tower? What is our policy in relation to attic and wall insulation?

Derek Caldbeck, director of Services responded as follows:

- Anti social behaviour is a complex area as no two cases the same and it can be difficult to engage but every case is fully investigated.
- Repair and maintenance of housing stock is not directly linked to anti-social behaviour and the proposal to refer this to Housing & Corporate SPC should be considered in light of budgetary constraints that apply for 2018, but the Housing budget is continually overspent on emergency repairs.
- Attic and wall insulation – progressing with this for all of our housing stock as part of capital budget.
- Aware of cladding issue but one multi-storey block in Boyle is undergoing fire safety works, independent of situation in Grenfell. Not aware of any property in Roscommon that is subject to that type of cladding, but will bring further information at next meeting.
- Tenant's handbook is under review and will be addressed at SPC and anti-social behaviour will feature in this document.
- Evidence required to serve warning letters.

On the **PROPOSAL** of Councillor Naughton

SECONDED by Councillor Shanagher

It was **AGREED** to ask the Housing and Corporate Affairs SPC to look into setting up a Tenant Maintenance Scheme to encourage tenants to maintain their houses to a good standard.

On the **PROPOSAL** of Councillor Cummins

SECONDED by Councillor Keogh

It was **AGREED** to adopt the Anti Social Behaviour Strategy 2017.

88.17 SUSPENSION OF STANDING ORDERS

On the **PROPOSAL** of Councillor Cummins

SECONDED by Councillor Keogh

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

89.17 ELECTION OF CHAIRPERSON OF ENVIRONMENT AND EMERGENCY SERVICES STRATEGIC POLICY COMMITTEE FOLLOWING THE RESIGNATION OF COUNCILLOR LAURENCE FALLON

On the **PROPOSAL** of Councillor Creaton

SECONDED by Councillor Callaghan

It was **AGREED** that that Councillor Naughten be elected Chairperson of Environment and Emergency Services Strategic Policy Committee.

90.17 ELECTION OF CHAIRPERSON OF HOUSING AND CORPORATE SERVICES STRATEGIC POLICY COMMITTEE FOLLOWING THE RESIGNATION OF CLLR. KEOGH

On the **PROPOSAL** of Councillor Keogh

SECONDED by Councillor Connaughton

It was **AGREED** that Councillor Cummins be elected Chairperson of Housing and Corporate Strategic Policy Committee.

91.17 MEMBERSHIP OF ROSCOMMON LOCAL COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

On the **PROPOSAL** of Councillor Keogh

SECONDED by Councillor Fallon

It was **AGREED** to appoint Mr. Tom Kellegher as the Teagasc representative on the Roscommon Local Community Development Committee (LCDC) to replace Mr. Michael Clogher.

As a member of Roscommon LCDC Committee, Cllr. Fallon thanked Mr. Michael Clogher for his valued contribution during his term on the LCDC.

92.17 CORRESPONDENCE

- Letter from Tipperary County Council dated 13th June 2017 – To make regional Health Forum Committees relevant.
- Letter from Tipperary county Council dated 13th June 2017 – To extend children's allowance for parents with children in Third Level Education.

- Letter from Sligo County Council dated 16th June – Requesting AILG to provide briefing to members on role of LGMA as part of its annual Training Programme.
- Circular Letter PL 2/2017 from Dept of Housing, Planning Community and Local Govt – Sustainable Rural Housing Guidelines for Planning Authorities 2005 – Local Needs Criteria in Development Plans.
- Circular Letter 1/2017 from Dept of Housing, Planning, Community and Local Government – Removal of Re-Registration Provision for Septic Tanks.
- Letter from Dept of Arts, Heritage, Regional, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs – Town & Village Renewal Scheme 2017.
- Letter of Acknowledgement dated 25th May 2017 from Minister Naughten, TD - Wind Energy Development Guidelines.
- Letter of Acknowledgement from Minister Heather Humphreys, Dept of Arts, Heritage, Regional, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs dated 25 May – Town & Village renewal scheme.
- Letter from acknowledgement from Dept of Transport, Tourism & Sport, Shane Ross, T.D., - Upgrading of Galway Harbour.

Letter of acknowledgement from Minister Simon Coveney, T.D. Dept of Housing, Planning, Community and Local Government dated 30 May – Increasing the maximum loan for improvements works

93.17 NOTICE OF MOTION

TELEPHONE ALLOWANCE

Notice of Motion from Councillor Ward - 07/17

"I am calling on the Government and the Minister for Employment and Social Protection Ms. Regina Doherty T.D., to restore the Telephone Allowance to Senior Citizens."

The Meetings Administrator read the following reply:-

This requires a resolution of the Council.

Cllr. Ward outlined to members that the removal of the telephone allowance for landline customers has huge consequences for people living alone. Older people and especially people living alone in isolated areas who rely on the phone for security are vulnerable and should be entitled to telephone allowance.

On the **PROPOSAL** of Councillor Ward

SECONDED by Councillor Keogh

It was **AGREED** to write to Minister for Finance, Paschal Donohoe TD, and the Minister for Employment and Social Protection Regina Doherty, TD to restore the Telephone Allowance to Senior Citizens.

TRANSPORT INFRASTRUCTURE IRELAND

Notice of Motion from Councillors Fallon, Ward, Kilduff, Keogh, Connaughton, Naughten - 08/17

"In light of the enhanced role of the Municipal Districts, Roscommon County Council asks that the Transport Infrastructure Ireland (TII) would amend its stated policy of only meeting County Councils, to meet representatives of Municipal areas on issues that pertain to their area."

The Meetings Administrator read the following reply:-

This requires a resolution of the Council.

Cllr. Keogh informed members that following concerns in relation to the M6 motorway, Athlone MD wrote to TII requesting a meeting. In response the TII issued a letter stating that "they are not in a position to

facilitate requests for meetings from individual Municipal Districts.” In light of the enhanced role of the Municipal Districts, they should change their policy. Members spoke in support of the motion and made the following observations:

- Affects all National Primary Roads where there are local issues
- Minister for Transport could change the policy
- Enhanced role of Municipal Districts should be highlighted in letter
- TII are not engaging with local representatives and specific problems with folding etc. not being addressed.
- Overruling local engineers e.g. speed limits

On the **PROPOSAL** of Councillor Keogh

SECONDED by Councillor Connaughton

It was **AGREED** to write to the TII and the Department of Transport requesting that the TII amend its stated policy of only meeting County Councils and to meet representatives of Municipal areas on issues that pertain to their area.

IRISH WATER – AGRICULTURAL WATER CONNECTIONS

Notice of Motion from Councillor Fallon - 09/17

“That Roscommon County Council requests Irish Water to amend its website to allow for an application to be made for an agricultural water connection.”

The Meetings Administrator read the following reply:-

This requires a resolution of the Council.

Cllr Fallon advised that he is frustrated with the quality of customer service given by Irish Water. An applicant looking to apply for an agricultural connection to a field where there is no planning permission required cannot do so. He was directed to the agricultural section on Irish Water website but this could not be located. Following numerous emails and calls to Irish Water this matter has not been resolved.

On the **PROPOSAL** of Councillor Fallon

SECONDED by Councillor Ward

It was **AGREED** to write to Irish Water to immediately amend their website to allow an application for a farmland connection be made available on their website.

SUPPORT FOR SMART REGION APPROACH

Notice of Motion from Councillor Murphy and Councillor Dineen - 10/17

“That Roscommon County Council supports the Northern & Western Regional Assembly, the Western Development Commission and the Insight Centre for Data Analytics in establishing a Smart Region approach to encourage new industries, sectors and opportunities.”

The Meetings Administrator read the following reply:-

This requires a resolution of the Council.

Cllr. Dineen and Cllr. Murphy asked that the council fully supports this motion and stated that it would be a benefit to everyone as it would encourage new industries to our region, create new opportunities and that it could underpin employment in rural Ireland.

On the **PROPOSAL** of Councillor Dineen

SECONDED by Councillor Murphy

It was **AGREED** that Roscommon County Council supports the Northern & Western Regional Assembly, the Western Development Commission and the Insight Centre for Data Analytics in establishing a Smart Region approach to encourage new industries, sectors and opportunities.

REPLACEMENT OF STORAGE HEATERS

Notice of Motion from Councillor Fitzmaurice - 11/17

“That Roscommon County Council introduces a scheme to replace storage heaters in Local Authority houses with a more affordable system, where tenants have found storage heating systems too expensive and totally unsuitable for their needs.”

The Meetings Administrator read the following reply:-

“There is no national funding scheme to replace electric storage heaters in local authority houses. Costs associated with retro-fitting heating systems are significant and Roscommon County Council’s maintenance budget does not have the capacity to include the replacement of functioning heating systems as it continues to be overspent year on year with routine maintenance works.

Tenants who find electric storage heaters expensive may petition for traditional oil fired or solid fuel central heating systems, however, in the event that electric storage heaters could be replaced, replacement options are likely to be limited to electricity-based, low carbon emission options such as air-to-water which can prove to also be expensive depending on the level of insulation and size of house etc.

Members may wish give consideration to provide for funds to be allocated as part of the 2018 budget process for such a scheme but it should be noted that such funds would have to be diverted from other services and it would also require administrative and technical resources to assess, administer and oversee”

Cllr. Fitzmaurice stated that a number of local authority houses in his region have electric storage heating. This was particularly relevant for systems installed in older people’s dwellings who were receiving an electricity allowance. However current housing occupants are finding that this system doesn’t meet their needs and is not affordable. Cllr. Fitzmaurice is appealing to council to upgrade some of these heating systems on a yearly basis, and believes that following discussions with Eco Smart, there are some grants available nationally to Local Authorities, up to 50%, to assist with funding. Some of the houses affected should be dealt with on an annual basis and money put aside in the budget.

Members noted the following:

- People on a fuel allowance can apply for up to 80% grant.
- When were the heaters last serviced?
- Seek a special allocation from Government to upgrade the heating systems – concept of storage heating is outdated
- Write to SEAI to extend their scheme to houses owned by County Councils where tenant is in receipt of social welfare. Same concept should apply to council houses as private houses
- There is a grant of 35% from SEAI to cover a range of measures for local authority houses
- Interested to know how many of our houses have storage heaters for next meeting

On the **PROPOSAL** of Councillor Fitzmaurice

SECONDED by Councillor Dineen

It was **AGREED** to write to the Minister for Housing for funding to apply for the deep retrofit pilot programme to replace storage heating and grant aid from the SEAI as a top up.

Mr Caldbeck clarified that the reply given should have stated that there was no 100% funding available. Roscommon County Council will look at any funding scheme available however any shortfall in grant funding would have to be funded by the council. There are no extensive records on the type of heating systems in our 1,400 houses and the housing unit will endeavour to clarify this information to enable an informed decision to be made at budget time.

It was suggested by the Cathaoirleach that this matter be referred to the Housing SPC as the matter needed to be further explored. Cllr. Cummins, Chairperson of the Housing and Corporate SPC stated that an audit be carried out of the houses in the possession of the Council to define what type of heating systems are required. It will take some time to do this but the information is needed going forward before any decision is made.

94.17 COUNCILLORS CONFERENCES - PAYMENT/ATTENDANCE

On the **PROPOSAL** of Councillor Ward

SECONDED by Councillor Keogh

It was **AGREED** to adopt the list of payments for attendance at conferences as circulated to the members.

95.17 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

TRAFFIC AND AA ROADWATCH

Cllr. Shanagher highlighted that there were long traffic delays at Knockcroghery during the recent road works in the village. She asked if the Council could inform AA Road Watch or local Gardai of any future road works planned in County.

ATHLONE BOUNDARY

Cllr. Fallon referred to recent comments made by Minister Simon Coveney in relation to county boundaries. The Minister was proposing to introduce legislation that would enshrine county boundaries in law, but his view was that this would not negate the possibility that administrative control could pass from one county to another. Effectively this could mean that Roscommon maintains its county boundary but municipal functions could still be carried out by another county resulting in loss of control over rates, planning policy, raising funds etc. Cllr. Fallon requested that a letter be written to Minister John Murphy demanding that Roscommon County Council want legislation enacted not only to enshrine county boundaries in law but also to include municipal functions i.e. economic and statutory control to be retained by the county.

On the **PROPOSAL** of Councillor Fallon

SECONDED by Councillor Keogh

It was **AGREED** to write to Minister Murphy stipulating that all county boundaries be enshrined in law including all municipal control, the ability to raise funds, disperse funds and absolute control over the development of the county in its entirety.

On the **PROPOSAL** of Councillor Ward

SECONDED by Councillor Dineen

It was **AGREED** to write to Minister outlining the problems and issues this matter would cause to County Roscommon and that no part of South Roscommon be annexed.

On the **PROPOSAL** of Councillor Naughten

SECONDED by Councillor Keogh

It was **AGREED** to write to Minister John Paul Phelan and the Taoiseach making them aware of the impact this matter this would have on counties like Roscommon.

Cllr. Keogh queried if there was any response in relation to the letter issued to Minister Naughten requesting a meeting with the Plenary Council regarding the boundary issue.

Mr. Eugene Cummins, Chief Executive, outlined to members that when the then Cathaoirleach, Cllr. Ward, responded to Department it was made very clear that we wanted both the county and administrative boundaries protected. We should remind the new Ministers that this was specifically stated in our submission to the Department. The Chief Executive also noted that our case was somewhat different in terms of the physicality of Monksland versus Athlone. Our case is unique in that there are clear county and municipal boundaries. Westmeath and Roscommon are working very effectively together while at the same time protecting our administrative boundaries. Our priority should be protecting ourselves, saying we clearly want this for Roscommon rather than making it a national issue as not all situations are the same with other county boundaries. The Chief Executive advised that he is pursuing the meeting with Minister Naughten. The Cathaoirleach asked that a reminder be sent to Minister Naughten.

Cllr. Keogh clarified that Roscommon also has boundaries with Leitrim, Mayo, Galway and Offaly, and they are issues of concern. It is important that when submitting a letter that it is on a national basis.

VERGE TRIMMING / GRASS CUTTING

Cllr. Connaughton is requesting that verge trimming on regional and local roads across the county be prioritised in the interest of road safety.

On the **PROPOSAL** of Councillor Connaughton

SECONDED by Councillor Dineen

It was **AGREED** that emergency funding be prioritised for each Municipal District areas for verge trimming.

Mr. Eugene Cummins, Chief Executive, advised he could not give a commitment for extra funding but would discuss the matter with Head of Roads.

The newly elected Cathaoirleach invited all present to the Abbey Hotel for light refreshments.

NEXT MEETING

The next meeting will be on Monday, 24th July, 2017.

This concluded the business of the meeting.

The foregoing Minutes are

Confirmed and Signed:

Meetings Administrator

Cathaoirleach

Countersigned