

MINUTES OF MONTHLY Meeting OF ROSCOMMON COUNTY COUNCIL
COUNCIL Chamber - Áras an Chontae
MONDAY, 24th July, 2017 AT 2.15 pm.

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

MEMBERS: Cllr T. Ward, Cllr N. Dineen, Cllr V. Byrne, Cllr I. Connaughton, 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
Majella Hunt, Director of Services
Martin Lydon, Director of Services
Patricia Bohan, Meetings Administrator
Cait Kenny, Assistant Staff Officer

Apologies: Cllr D. Connolly.

96. ADOPTION OF MINUTES

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On the **PROPOSAL** of Councillor Cummins

SECONDED by Councillor Creaton

It was **AGREED** to adopt the minutes of the Monthly Plenary Meeting held 26.06.2017

On the **PROPOSAL** of Councillor Shanagher

SECONDED by Councillor Connaughton

It was **AGREED** to adopt the minutes of the Annual Plenary Meeting held 26.06.2017

97. MATTERS ARISING

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Lough Funshinagh

Cllr. Ward raised local concerns regarding outstanding works at Lough Funshinagh. He asked if there are any plans or applications for funding with the Office of Public Works regarding works that are required at this location. Cllrs. Fallon, Naughten and Kilduff also highlighted their concerns in relation to the flooding at this location that has not as yet been resolved.

The Chief Executive stated a considerable amount of work is required to be done in terms of analysing the situation at Lough Funshinagh. As historical analysis in relation to turloughs is limited, and until the ongoing research is complete, Roscommon County Council will not be in a position to make a determination on possible solutions. There are many different factors affecting the situation including planning, environmental, landowner issues, stakeholder consultation etc. When the report is complete, it will be brought to the members for consideration.

Verge trimming

Cllr. Connaughton noted the contents of the report circulated in advance of the meeting in relation to verge trimming. As ten verge trimmers will be in operation next week, he is requesting in the interests of safety on roads, to have at least three in operation in the Athlone Municipal District. Cllrs. Naughten and Creaton also requested adequate funding to ensure roads are left in a safe condition.

The C.E. said the memorandum sets out the number of verge trimmers in operation at moment and there is no additional funding available. He advised members they have some discretion over municipal district funds where they can divert money to verge trimming, and this should be discussed with Municipal District Co-ordinator.

Storage Heaters

Cllr. Fitzmaurice referred to Item No. 93.17 on minutes of June meeting. Following a discussion on his notice of motion, he understood that there was a commitment given by Cllr. Cummins, Chairperson of Housing S.P.C., that an audit would be carried out on social houses to identify those with storage heating. He noted that this was not reflected in the minutes. Cllr. Cummins confirmed that the S.P.C. would clarify how many houses are involved.

98. MANAGEMENT REPORT

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Members noted the Management Report for Quarter 2, 2017.

99. DISPOSAL OF LANDS

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On the **PROPOSAL** of Councillor Naughten

SECONDED by Councillor Kilduff

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: 0.5654 Ha (in the Townland of Belrea, Thomastown, Co. Roscommon and 0.7691 Ha in the Townland of Belrea, Co. Roscommon.

The persons from whom the land was acquired: Galway County Council, Prospect Hill, Galway.

The person to whom the land is to be disposed: Owen McManus, Belrea, Drum, Athlone, Co. Roscommon

Consideration: €3,000

Conditions: Burdens registered on page 4 of Folio RN41765F

100 DRAFT VARIATION NO.1 OF THE ROSCOMMON COUNTY DEVELOPMENT PLAN 2014 - 2020:

.17

Mr. Martin Lydon, A/Director of Services presented the Chief Executives Report to the members on Draft Variation No.1 of the Roscommon County Development Plan (RCDP) 2014-2020 which gives expression to changes required as part of the Urban Regeneration and Housing Act, 2015. This legislation requires the inclusion of a development objective in the County Development Plan and by extension Local Area Plans as follows:

“the development and renewal of areas, identified having regard to the core strategy, that are in need of

regeneration, in order to prevent –

- i) Adverse effects on existing amenities in such areas, in particular as a result of the ruinous or neglected condition of any land,
- ii) Urban blight and decay,
- iii) Anti-social behaviour, or
- iv) A shortage of habitable houses or of land suitable for residential use or a mixture of residential and other uses”

This variation gives effect to that objective and takes account of other policies and objectives to address vacancy and the introduction of the Vacant Site Levy.

Eight submissions received in relation to this variation, one of which was late. Submission No’s 1-4 and 6 were general acknowledgements and no change is recommended to the draft variation of the plan.

On the **PROPOSAL** of Councillor Cummins

SECONDED by Councillor Naughten

It was **AGREED** to adopt submissions numbered 1, 2, 3, 4 and 6 on the Variation No 1 of the Roscommon County Development Plan 2014 – 2012.

Martin Lydon brought submissions No. 5 and No. 7 to the attention of the members. The Environment Protection Agency advises that the variation should be linked to the ability to provide appropriate critical service infrastructure to support further development, to take account of the relevant CFRAMS and the requirements as the Planning System and Flood Risk Guidelines. This will guide the Planning Authority in making their decisions.

On the **PROPOSAL** of Councillor Cummins

SECONDED by Councillor Creaton

It was **AGREED** to adopt submissions 5 and 7 of the Roscommon County Development Plan 2014 – 2012.

The following points were raised:

- Requirement for houses to connect to the public service infrastructure.
- Concern in relation to being unable to connect to own private well.
- The price of housing has not yet reached the cost of building while there is a reliance on the public sector to build houses.
- There are a large number of vacant properties in the county. There is a need to address dereliction and the vacant site levy will help with this. Landowners should expect notifications by Q4 2017 and the final date for notification is 30th June 2018.
- Consideration of vacant site levy on phased basis.

On the **PROPOSAL** of Councillor Cummins

SECONDED by Councillor Dineen

It was **AGREED** that Town Teams and other such bodies within the county would be formally notified of public consultations requesting them to make submissions on Local Area Plans and County Development Plans.

**101 PROGRESS REPORT ON IRELAND WEST INTERNATIONAL TRADE CENTRE, PROVIDENCE, RHODE
.17 ISLAND**

Ms. Louise Ward, Head of the Local Enterprise Office gave the members a presentation on the Ireland West International Trade Centre in Providence, Rhode Island, USA.

This is a landing spot for Irish micro businesses from Roscommon, Mayo, Sligo, Leitrim, Galway and Clare to get an introduction to the U.S. market. It was officially opened in May this year and to date thirty companies have successfully used its services including a number from Roscommon. This is a high value, low cost strategy to enter North American market and potential for both sides of Atlantic is significant.

Louise thanked the following for their support to date including The State Capitol, the Mayor of Providence and the members of Roscommon County Council who are supporting the venture.

The members welcomed the update on the centre and thanked the L.E.O for the work they continue to do on behalf of the county. The following observations were made:

- The current lease runs until 18th May 2018 at a cost of \$30,000 pa that is shared by the six counties
- It would be desirable to have a similar office in UK due to Brexit implications – this could facilitate 33% completion of goods that would satisfy ‘country of origin’ status for EU goods.
- There is a huge market in USA for Irish products and use this as an opportunity to encourage US micro industries to come to Roscommon to create jobs in the county.
- Delegation from Roscommon County Council to U.S. next spring
- Network with U.S. visitors to Roscommon

Ms. Ward thanked the members for their input and the support of Roscommon County Council and confirmed that there is a food programme in the UK that six Roscommon businesses are involved. There is a ‘Go North Initiative’ to be launched later in the year. It is hoped to link in with the Tourism Officers in Rhode Island and to organise a delegation to visit Ireland later this year and vice versa.

The Cathaoirleach congratulated Louise and the Local Enterprise Office, together with her colleagues in NWRA counties, in achieving the honour of European Entrepreneurial Region 2018. The award was recently presented in Brussels.

102 PRESENTATION ON "KEEPING THE CONVERSATION GOING: THE PROBLEMS FACING EARLY YEARS .17 EDUCATORS"

Ms. Amy Dowd from the Cuan Bhríde Childcare Facility in Roscommon made a presentation to the members entitled “Keeping the Conversation Going – The Problems facing the Early Years Educators”.

The presentation highlighted the following issues:

- Low Wages in the sector – many workers in the sector are on the minimum wage despite having mandatory FETAC qualifications
- Little Consultation – this lack of consultation impacts the viability, staffing, premises capacity and requirement for extra resources
- Lack of Direct Investment – the services are only breaking even and cannot provide new equipment, unexpected maintenance and reinvestment in the services.
- Possible increase in fees to mitigate requirement to hire new staff to deal with increased paperwork due to new guidelines

Ms. Dowd asked the members to call on the Government to increase its investment in the Early Years Sector.

The members thanked Ms. Dowd for the presentation on a very important issue and commented as follows:

- Level of frustration of workers in the sector who have had to upskill and this is not reflected in the pay.
- Minding peoples children safely so they can go to work
- Lack of consultation is demeaning to the profession while the parents are confused about the new schemes proposed from September.

On the PROPOSAL of Cllr. Ward

SECONDED by Cllr.Dineen

It was AGREED that Roscommon County Council call on Minister Zapone and the Government to ensure that the Early Years Sector is consulted in relation to policy formulation and scheme changes, that appropriate direct investment into the sector is provided for in regard to buildings and infrastructure and furthermore that pay equality be applied to the sector so that the remuneration of staff be commensurate to those similarly qualified such as in the teaching profession and proper pay scales be applied. It was further agreed that this letter be sent to all party leaders and independent T.Ds.

103 CORRESPONDENCE

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- Letter from Office of the Minister for Social Protection regarding the Department engaging with mobile phone companies to put a proposal in place for older people.
- Letter from Sligo County Council regarding resolution passed ratifying the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.
- Letter from Minister Denis Naughten, T.D. regarding Wind Energy Development Guidelines.
- Letter from South Dublin County Council regarding resolution passed on Cyberbullying and children.
- Letter from South Dublin County Council regarding resolution passed on Early Childhood Care and Education.
- Letter of acknowledgement from Minister for Housing, Planning, Community and Local Government, Mr. Eoghan Murphy, T.D., in relation to resolution passed on the existing boundary of County Roscommon.
- Letter of acknowledgement from Minister for Local Government and Electoral Reform, Mr. John Paul Phelan, T.D., in relation to resolution passed on the existing boundary of County Roscommon.

104 NOTICES OF MOTION

.17

12.17 River Hind

Notice of Motion from Councillor Connaughton - 12/17

"That Roscommon County Council seek funding to conduct a feasibility study to make the River Hind navigable from Roscommon Town to Portrunny Bay where it meets Lough Ree/The River Shannon in the interest of increasing tourism and recreation in the County."

The Meetings Administrator read the following reply:-

The Tourism Statement of Strategy and Work Programme 2017 – 2022 identifies Lough Ree and the River Shannon as the main priority for Tourism development in the county. A feasibility study in relation to the potential tourism development of Lough Ree and the River Shannon in partnership with Waterways Ireland, Longford, Offaly and Westmeath County Councils, the National Parks and Wildlife Service has been tendered. The contract has been awarded and it is hoped to have a report ready for Quarter 4 of 2017. This study will allow the County Council, with its partners, to bid for funding for development of Lough Ree/Mid Shannon, which would include the River Hind.

Cllr. Connaughton welcomed the response and circulated an extract from a 'Statistical Survey of County Roscommon' by Isaac Weld in 1832 that references the opening of a water communication between Roscommon and the Shannon via the River Hind and cited the potential benefits for tourism in the county.

Cllrs. Dineen, Kilduff, Keogh, Fallon and Ward spoke in favour of the motion.

Cllr. Shanagher added that the boats used in the filming of "Creedons Shannon" series on RTE were provided locally and the producers of the series have agreed that any filming done locally can be used by Roscommon County Council for tourism promotion in the county.

On the **PROPOSAL** of Cllr. Connaughton

SECONDED by Cllr. Dineen

It was **AGREED** that the notice of motion be forwarded to the contractor in charge of the feasibility study for inclusion for consideration in the study.

13.17 Admissions Policy for Catholic Schools

Notice of Motion from Councillor Kilduff - 13/17

"That Roscommon County Council calls on the Minister for Education, Richard Bruton TD to abandon his proposed admission rule change for Catholic run Schools and instead compels the Department of Education to use the readily available demographic information and local school knowledge to ensure that adequate school places are provided in a responsive rather than reactive manner throughout the country. This approach will ensure that no faith run school is forced to choose between pupils as no faith run school refuses admission to any pupil when adequate provisions are available in the school to meet demand."

The Meetings Administrator read the following reply:-

This requires a resolution of the Council.

Cllr. Kilduff and stated that Catholic Schools do not refuse admission to students where places are available, and he cannot understand the need for the proposed rule change. Cllrs. Fitzmaurice, Dineen, Ward, Mulligan, Naughten and Fallon spoke on the motion and all agreed that lack of funding to provide enough space in schools is the main problem and this is predominantly an urban matter where there is a deficit of capital investment in school building.

On the **PROPOSAL** of Cllr. Kilduff

SECONDED by Cllr. Ward

It was **AGREED** that a letter be sent to Minister for Education , Mr. Richard Bruton TD calling on him to

abandon his proposed admission rule change for Catholic run Schools and instead compels the Department of Education to use the readily available demographic information and local school knowledge to ensure that adequate school places are provided in a responsive rather than reactive manner throughout the country. This approach will ensure that no faith run school is forced to choose between pupils as no faith run school refuses admission to any pupil when adequate provisions are available in the school to meet demand.”

105 COUNCILLORS CONFERENCES - PAYMENT/ATTENDANCE

.17

On the **PROPOSAL** of Councillor Keogh

SECONDED by Councillor Kilduff

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

106 VOTES OF CONGRATULATIONS AND SYMPATHY

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Votes of Congratulations were extended to:

- Roscommon Senior Team on winning the Connacht GAA Football Final.

107 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

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Castlerea Fire Station

Cllr. Fitzmaurice asked how many fire fighters will be appointed in Castlerea following the recent recruitment advertisement. The CE confirmed that there are two vacancies to be filled.

Cllr. Fitzmaurice then asked the Chief Executive to explain why the station has not reopened as there are seven fire fighters currently retained in the Castlerea fire station? The Chief Executive stated heretofore there were no vacancies in that fire station but he is now in a situation where two vacancies have to be filled. He stated he is still not in a position to open the fire station until such time as the vacancies are filled and until as he is satisfied that the fire fighters can work safely and amicably together so as to ensure their own safety.

Cllr. Fitzmaurice enquired about a recent high court case between Roscommon County Council and a fire fighter, whereby the fire fighter was reinstated to his position, and asked the C.E. to confirm what the legal costs were to the local authority in relation to this case?

The C.E. confirmed the fire fighter was reinstated, but the costs in relation to the case have not yet been finalised, so he is currently not a position to advise members of the full cost.

Cllr. Dineen also queried the reopening of fire station, and the legal fees in relation to the recent high court case.

Castlerea Rose Festival 2017

Cllr. Fitzmaurice informed the meeting that official opening of the Castlerea Rose Festival will take place on Wednesday 2nd August at 8.30pm in Castlerea and extended an invitation to all.

Along by the River, Discover the River Suck

The Cathaoirleach, Cllr. Leyden informed all members that the film documentary ‘Along by the River –

Discover the River Suck' which features the river's journey from Lake O' Flynn to Shannonbridge has now been launched on Youtube and asked all to promote it by subscribing to the channel for free and sharing it on Social Media.

Garda Remembrance Monument

Cllr. Creaton informed members that the unveiling of a monument in honour of Detective Garda John Morley and Garda Henry Byrne, who lost their lives in service of the State will take place on Friday 28th July at 3.00 pm at Shannons Cross, Loughgynn.

Department of Social Welfare

Cllr. Ward highlighted his concern in relation to the Department of Social Protection omitting their telephone contact details on correspondence, leaving older people in difficulty if they have to Department via their website only, about correspondence they have received and also taking into account issues with broadband.

On the **PROPOSAL** of Councillor Ward

SECONDED by Councillor Shanagher

It was **AGREED** that Roscommon County Council write to Department of Social Protection and Minister Regina Doherty requesting that they reinstate the contact telephone details on all future correspondence issued from their Department.

108.17 NOTIFICATION OF PUBLIC CONSULTATIONS - PLANNING

NEXT MEETING

The next meeting will be on Monday, 25th September, 2017.

This concluded the business of the meeting.

The foregoing Minutes are
Confirmed and Signed:



Meetings Administrator

Cathaoirleach

Countersigned