

**MINUTES OF MONTHLY MEETING OF ROSCOMMON COUNTY COUNCIL
IN COUNCIL CHAMBER, ÁRAS AN CHONTAE, ROSCOMMON
ON MONDAY, 26th February, 2018 AT 2.15 pm.**

- PRESENT:** Councillor Orla Leyden, Cathaoirleach **PRESIDED**
- MEMBERS:** Cllr R. Doherty, Cllr T. Ward, Cllr N. Dineen, Cllr I. Connaughton, Cllr D. Connolly, Cllr J. Cummins, Cllr M. Creaton, 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
Cait Kenny, Assistant Staff Officer
John Keane, Chief Fire Officer
Patricia Bohan, Meetings Administrator
- Apologies:** Cllr V. Byrne

20.18 ADOPTION OF MINUTES

On the **PROPOSAL** of Councillor Ward
SECONDED by Councillor Fallon
It was **AGREED** to adopt the minutes of Plenary Meeting held 22.01.2018.

21.18 MATTERS ARISING

Cllr. Shanagher asked if there was a response received from Roscommon Leader Partnership in relation to her proposal seeking a Liaison Officer to work with community groups. The meetings administrator advised that no response has been received to date.

Cllr. Ward welcomed his colleague Councillor Kilduff to the Independent benches.

22.18 MANAGEMENT REPORT

Members noted the Management Report for January 2018.

23.18 DISPOSAL OF LAND - RESCINDING OF RESOLUTION 162.17 DATED 22ND DEC 2017 (COMMUNITY & ENTERPRISE)

Martin Lydon, Head of Finance and A/Director of Services for Planning and Enterprise informed the meeting that Resolution dated 22nd December 2017 approved the disposal of Lands to Roschem Products Ltd for consideration of €30,000 plus VAT. Revenue Commissioners have confirmed that this transaction is not subject to VAT and the resolution is therefore to be rescinded.

On the **PROPOSAL** of Councillor Cummins

SECONDED by Councillor Callaghan

It was **AGREED** that the County Council of the County of Roscommon does hereby rescind in its entirety its Resolution dated 22nd December 2017, which approved the disposal of land 0.4963 hectares in the Townland of Elphin, Elphin, Co. Roscommon to Roschem Products Ltd.

24.18 DISPOSAL OF LANDS - COMMUNITY & ENTERPRISE

On the **PROPOSAL** of Councillor Murphy

SECONDED by Councillor Cummins

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: 0.4963 at Elphin townland, Elphin, Co Roscommon.

The persons from whom the land was acquired: Irish Land Commission

The person to whom the land is to be disposed: Roschem Products Ltd., Windmill Road, Elphin, Co. Roscommon

Consideration: €30,000

25.18 BRIEF PRESENTATION ON PROJECT IRELAND 2040 - "BUILDING IRELAND'S FUTURE"

Mr. Martin Lydon, Head of Finance and A/Director of Services gave an overview to the Members on Project Ireland 2040 - "Building Irelands Future", launched by the Government on 16th February 2018.

- Project Ireland 2040 is the overarching policy and planning framework for the social, economic and cultural development of Ireland. It includes a detailed capital investment plan for the period 2018 to 2027, the National Development Plan 2018-2027, and the 20-year National Planning Framework.
- Aims to provide balanced regional development and improve State infrastructure and has replaced the National Spatial Strategy (NSS) and now represents national planning policy
- For the first time the National Planning Framework will have a statutory footing.
- Plan proposed total expenditure of €116bn with a Rural Regeneration and Development Fund of €1bn that will fund Village and Rural Infrastructure deficits, Rural Brownfield Development Facilitation, Rural Enterprise Space and Digital Hub Development, Community and Public Realm and Local Tourism and Heritage Initiatives.
- The Regional Development Strategy provides for Regional Centres of Athlone, Sligo, Letterkenny, Drogheda and Dundalk in addition to the five existing cities with an expected increase in population of 1m people and 600,000 jobs by 2040.
- The North West Region will have additional 160,000 -180,000 people and 115,000 jobs with up to 45,000 additional population for Galway City so approx. 145,000 growth will be spread over 9 other counties in NWRA.
- Roles of Athlone and Sligo to be included in Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy (RSES). This strategy to be prepared by early 2019 and this is the next stage of the process.
- There is potential growth of large towns and designated employment centres i.e settlements greater than 10,000 pop of 2,500 jobs, and at least 30% growth from 2016
- Number of infrastructure investment projects highlighted including upgrade of N5 Ballaghaderreen to Scramoge

- Impacts for County Roscommon include:
 - Athlone as Regional centre which allows it to grow sustainably and secure investment
 - Focus on accessibility between cities and larger regional centres (no specific mention of N61)
 - Roscommon identified as an Employment Centre
 - Boyle Enhancement Plan identified for potential benefit from Rural Regeneration and Development fund.
- Impact on Infrastructure includes upgrade of the N5, Roscommon Rehabilitation Unit, New Roscommon Sterile Services Department, New Ward Block at Portiuncula hospital, upgrade of all schools built pre 2008 and refurbishment of Roscommon Courthouse.
- Core Strategy and Housing Strategy will be related to Housing Needs Demand Assessment and this assessment will have consequences in relation to land use zoning.
- Future housing will be located in larger towns/employment centres and smaller towns and villages and rural areas at appropriate scale. There is an emphasis on brownfield sites in existing urban areas and economic and social need will have to be demonstrated in rural areas under urban influence.
- Land Use Zoning will be regulated
- The Office of the Planning Regulator will have an independent monitoring role

Mr. Lydon explained that this is a framework and the real work will be undertaken at Regional Authority level. With Athlone as a regional centre, hinterlands should develop. The plan will also allow the tackling of dereliction issues in towns and villages and bringing them back to life.

The members thanked Mr. Lydon for the presentation and debated as follows:

- Welcome the plan and hope it's not a PR exercise and that it is brought to fruition.
- Welcome changes from draft plan and thanks to staff of Roscommon County Council for their work in relation to the submission on behalf of the Council. It would have been a disaster for Roscommon if Athlone and Sligo not given Regional Status.
- Welcome the investment/expansion of services in Roscommon County Hospital with new Sterilisation Unit.
- Apart from Athlone, there are no jobs envisaged for County Roscommon.
- The success of such a plan depends on critical mass, and there is no critical mass in Connacht so the necessary investment will not be forthcoming.
- Many of the items in Plan are old news but it is still welcome. Unbelievable that N61 upgrade not included – this must be done.
- Concerned for the middle of county as outside the commutable area for both Sligo and Athlone.
- Last minute scrambling to include regional centres and plan has no timelines of dates - this is a publicity stunt. It was not appropriate for the Chief Executive to give credit for the plan to one public representative.
- What does the definition of regional centre mean for Athlone – there is no detail in the plan?
- Focusing on third-level institutions at the expense of second-level education.
- Use of taxpayers money to advertise this Plan is wasteful.
- Positive news for county Roscommon with Athlone as Regional Centre and Roscommon town as employment centre.
- Is there a concern about restricting the amount of land that will become available for housing and do we have to comply straight away with new planning guidelines?
- There needs to be investment in local roads urgently as this winter has caused huge damage.

- Friday 19th February was a good day for the county with the publication of this plan – but it is only a plan and now needs to be implemented in full.
- Where is the IDA in relation to creation of jobs in Roscommon? One in four jobs are currently created in Dublin. A number of factories closed down in the county town and there has been no replacement of jobs.
- It will be impossible to get planning permission for houses in countryside now – what about elderly people who need sons/daughters living beside them?
- Schools need funding to be upgraded
- The timeframe is very long and the bigger projects at the end of the plan – it would be desirable to frontload some projects to show the intent of the plan
- Good news for Boyle, N5 upgrade and regeneration of rural areas through CLAR and RAPID funding. Need balanced job creation throughout the country, need funding for housing and dereliction in town centres.
- Who is the Planning Regulator?
- Welcome the plan and the work put into the submission from Roscommon County Council
- Hope there will be spinoffs for towns in Roscommon from the development of Sligo and Athlone but disappointed no mention of agriculture in the plan
- Need to get parking issue sorted at Roscommon Hospital and refurbish the Courthouse
- Would like to see funding for Innovation centre and we need to fill our IDA Enterprise centre.
- There is no detail on what a Regional centre is and what this actually means for Athlone

Martin Lydon responded to queries and comments as follows:

- There is no definition of Regional Centre as yet and at a meeting arranged for 5th March there should be more indepth insight into the plan.
- The development of housing demand will be subject to modelling programme but elected members will have tough decisions to make on rezoning.
- There is legislation in a new Planning Act and subsequent regulations regarding the County Development Plan and timelines.
- Regeneration and Development funds will be part of bidding process through such schemes as CLAR and Towns and Villages works. As more information becomes available, it will be circulated to all members.

The Chief Executive said that as a Council we have to have policy context for all that we do. We are now included in a framework and that is what this policy document is. Accepting that the timeframe to 2040 is a long way off, we now have a plan to work off. This is a very positive document and we got what we set out to achieve in our submission which was to have Athlone as a City or a Regional centre that would feed all neighbouring towns – the detail will come when we bid. He also said that it would be remiss of him not to have acknowledged all those who helped him with regard to the submission on behalf of Roscommon County Council.

In response to concerns raised about the future building of houses in the county, currently no developer incentives to build, demand and possible restriction of one off housing and the possibility of revisiting the county development plan, Mr. Lydon advised that it would be wrong to pre-empt the Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy (RSES) due early next year. We will be working with the Department to ensure a joint partnership approach.

On the **PROPOSAL** of Cllr. Ward
SECONDED by Cllr. Keogh

It was **AGREED** to write to the Minister for Transportation to propose that the N61 from Athlone to Boyle be upgraded to dual carriage status.

26.18 PRESENTATION FROM CHIEF FIRE OFFICER

Mr. John Keane, Chief Fire Officer gave a presentation to the Members on the Roscommon Fire Service.

- Staff Organisation including six fire stations and employment of fifty-six retained fire fighters. Each fire station is responsible for an area called a fireground.
- Core Functions of the Fire Service include Community Fire Safety, Fire Services Response, Health and Safety Management Systems and Major Emergency Management.
- As Roscommon is a landlocked county with six other counties bordering it, there are cross county arrangements in place with regard to provision of fire services.
- A total of 12 fire stations outside the county from Drumshanbo in Co. Leitrim to Ferbane in Co. Offaly provide first response to parts of County Roscommon, while Boyle and Roscommon provide cover outside Co. Roscommon.
- Fire Service Operational Response and Service Delivery is categorised based on an Area Risk Designation that determines the appliances required in each station. This Risk categorisation is based on Urban and Rural population densities.
- Roscommon town is designated medium Risk (C2) and all other stations Low to very low. The response capability of each station is measured in minutes also based on risk category.
- All calls to fire services are dealt with by CAMP in Castlebar (Regional Control Centre)
- NOAC Performance Indicators in 2016 – Roscommon had longest average mobilisation time. This is as result of many variables including not least that we are a rural county.
- The maps for firegrounds were done over 16 years ago and based on groups of townlands.
- An analysis has been ongoing on firegrounds to determine best and fastest routes to fires from the adjacent fire stations. A number of anomalies were discovered -
 - Weight restriction a bridge on what is perceived as on the shortest route.
 - Average speed of 45kph could result in having to change boundaries to meet time restrictions
 - A town land bundled with an adjacent townland but would have been nearer another fire station.
- As a result of the closure of Castlerea Fire Station last January, the area it covered has been covered by other adjacent fire stations.
- Recent developments include:
 - Looking at the fire services resources vis a vis the incidents they respond to
 - There are an increasing number of water related incidents to deal with
 - Personnel in the Boyle Fire Station have been traded up as first responders
 - Roscommon Fire Services are the lead Authority in the purchase of 5 new fire tenders for Roscommon and Galway at a cost of €350,000 each. Boyle will get one of the new fire tenders and there is approval for a second new appliance in 2019.
 - Roscommon Fire Services is the only Department in the Council to have been awarded the

Occupational Health and Safety Management System OHSAS 18001:2007 by the NSAI
(January 2018)

Members thanked Mr. Keane for his presentation and asked the following questions:

- How can we improve turnout time of our stations? Is there a variance between stations in relation to turnout times?
- When will the interviews be held for the vacant positions in Castlerea Fire Station?
- When will the fire Station in Castlerea reopen – there is currently no station officer or substation officer. Concern that the fire personnel in adjacent fire station of Ballaghaderreen is not familiar with the Castlerea fireground.
- What can be done about bog fires?
- Alarmed to see the size of the fireground in South Roscommon – can there be a fresh Service Level Agreement with Galway/Westmeath? Do the new Eircodes cause confusion – address in Roscommon or Westmeath.
- What protocols are in place to direct the quickest/nearest fire appliance to a fire?
- Welcome purchase of new Fire Engine for Boyle Fire Station.
- Congratulate Fire Service and Health & Safety Section on NSAI Certification.
- Compliment the Fire Service on their most professional work and the great service they provide
- Will the Civil Defence have an Open Day in the Fire Station this year as it was a wonderful success last year?

The Chief Fire Officer responded as follows:

- The situation with regard to the vacant positions in Castlerea is that applicants have been invited to Roscommon Fire Station and are to be assessed for physical skills requirements scheduled for next two weeks. Interviews to be carried out subsequent to this. Successful applicants have then to pass a three week recruit training course and a Breathing Apparatus Course. Medicals and Garda Vetting also to take place so cannot give a definite date for opening of fire station as yet.
- As regard the proliferation of bog fires, vigilance is key in managing bog fires
- The turnout figures are from 2016 and we have been aware of them and have been working on improving them since last year. There will be a big improvement for 2017 and there is still room for more improvement. We are looking at clock in systems, accuracy of radio messages and the current fireground boundaries. Where there is a difference in turnout times between different stations we will be discussing these with the Station Officers.
- Breathing Apparatus refresher training is ongoing at minute. When the Castlerea Station is back in operation there will be full schedule of training for new and existing fire officers at this time.
- Satisfied that the boundaries between Athlone and Ballinasloe are accurate but will continue to monitor this.
- The controller in CAMP has access to Eircodes. The accuracy of the caller's location is crucial.

27.18 EXTENSION OF STANDING ORDERS

On the **PROPOSAL** of Cllr. Cummins

SECONDED by Cllr. Keogh

It was **AGREED** to extend Standing Orders after 5.30pm

28.18 CORRESPONDENCE

- Letter of Acknowledgement from Ms Regina Doherty TD, Minister for Employment Affairs and Social Protection regarding resolution in relation to the General Registrar's Office in Roscommon.
- Letter from Minister Zappone TD regarding resolution in relation to the Early Years Sector.
- Letter from Galway County Council RE: Resolution passed by members in relation to illegal parking of caravans and camper vans on public and private roads etc.
- Letter from Ms Regina Doherty TD, Minister for Employment Affairs and Social Protection concerning the future of the General Registrar's Office (GRO) in Roscommon.
- Circular RW 1/2018 from Department of Transport, Tourism and Sport RE: Regional and Local Road Grant Allocations 2018

29.18 QUESTIONS

Question 1 – Councillor Ward:

Can Roscommon County Council inform the Members if the TII have responded to the queries raised by the Chief Executive and Management and the Members of Roscommon County Council at a meeting with them in Dublin last December regarding Road Safety on the N61 at Kiltoom, Athlone and at Ballymurray, Roscommon, and also the flooding of lands off the M6.

The Meetings Administrator circulated the following reply:-

Following the meeting with TII in Dublin it has been agreed with the TII Inspector for Co. Roscommon to procure Safety Consultants from a Framework Agreement run by TII to examine safety at a number of locations in Co. Roscommon including the N61 from Kiltoom to Athlone. Roads Section are currently preparing a brief for the Consultants.

The drainage issues on the M6 have been discussed at the two Steering Committee Meetings held this year and some progress has been made (on the swale at Tonvey and the Ballydangan outfall) but there has been no commitment yet from TII as to monies that will be made available.

30.18 NOTICE OF MOTION

04.18 IRISH WATER

Notice of Motion from Councillor Naughten

That Roscommon County Council request an update from Irish Water as to the investment requirement for upgrade of Monksland Waste Water Treatment Plant and when this investment will take place.

As Cllr. Naughten was not present to move the motion, and had not requested another member to move it in his absence, the motion is withdrawn and shall be referred to the next meeting.

05.18 FUNDING FOR ROADS

Notice of Motion from Councillor Ward

I am calling on the Minister for Local Government, Mr. Eoghan Murphy TD and the Minister for Finance Mr. Paschal Donohoe TD, to provide extra funding for roads in County Roscommon that have been severely damaged due to bad weather conditions in recent months.

Reply: This Notice requires a resolution of the Council.

Cllr. Ward informed the meeting that he has never seen the local roads in South Roscommon in such a bad state of disrepair. Roads that were resurfaced in the last four years now need a complete overlay as travel on these roads is near impossible due to the potholes and craters. Since 2008 funding from the Government has been reduced by 40% leaving a road network that is not fit for purpose. He has estimated road works at a cost of €1.5m – €2.0m are required to bring the network in South Roscommon up to an acceptable standard. The current budget is less than €500k leaving a considerable shortfall.

On the PROPOSAL of Councillor Ward
SECONDED by Councillor Kilduff

It was AGREED to write to the Minister for Local Government, Mr. Eoghan Murphy TD and the Minister for Finance Mr. Paschal Donohoe TD, to provide extra funding for roads in County Roscommon that have been severely damaged due to bad weather conditions in recent months.

Members made the following comments:

- General Municipal road allocation for South Roscommon is not on a par with other two Municipal Districts.
- Problem not isolated to local roads, some regional roads require works also.
- What is the situation with potholes not being repaired following reports of same to relevant office? Is there a staffing issue, should we be going out to contract?
- Poor roads prove hazardous to emergency services.
- Need to look at the gradient on these roads as it is believed that the proper gradient is not being put in and water is lodging on the roads.
- Funding came too late last year to carry out road works.
- The problem with roads is county wide, not just South Roscommon. Roads surfaced last year have started to unravel again.
- Substantial number of local roads are in need of repairs - Are there plans to recruit additional staff for maintenance of local roads or are there plans to contract out these works to get roads up to standard as quickly as possible?

CE Responded as follows:

Mr. Eugene Cummins, CE acknowledged that the roads in the county are in bad state of disrepair. The long winter together with current weather is not conducive to making good repairs. He agreed that money came too late last year but that will be rectified this year with more timely allocation of funding. He also acknowledged the need more funding and we should look for it. He advised members that he will ask each Municipal District Co-ordinator to give a report at next M.D. Meeting outlining the number of roads in need of repair, the number of complaints on hand and their ability or otherwise to carry out these repairs. In the meantime, the CE said he will discuss the matter further with Mr. Eugene Dwyer, Head of Roads. In relation to the allocation of funds between Municipal Districts, the CE advised that the Executive will look at how funds are allocated next year.

Repairs will be carried out in the most efficient way possible and advised that he has committed to some additional staff. Presently overlays are carried out by Contractors and complimented staff who are more effective at repairing potholes. The sheer number and scale of the problem we have is unprecedented. The financial resources we have are limited so we will be looking for solutions to ensure safety is a priority

for motorists. He reminded road users to be careful and cautious over the next couple weeks and asked for their patience as we deal with potholes.

Community Involvement Scheme

Cllr Creighton queried why the Scheme appears to penalise groups who are willing to do the work themselves. There does not appear to be an incentive for people to carry out the works themselves. The CE advised that he was not aware of the details of the scheme but would investigate it further and bring any anomaly to the attention to the Department for correction.

31.18 COUNCILLORS CONFERENCES - PAYMENT/ATTENDANCE

On the **PROPOSAL** of Councillor Keogh

SECONDED by Councillor Connaughton

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

32.18 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

Update on Freedom of County proposed for Brian O'Doherty

The Cathaoirleach informed Members that the date set is Thursday 26th April taking place at Irish Museum of Modern Art (IMMA) in Kilmainham, Dublin. She asked that as many members as possible can travel on the day for this important awards ceremony.

Extreme Weather Forecast

The Cathaoirleach asked the Chief Executive about the Council's readiness for the extreme bad weather forecast this week.

The C.E. said that the Council is ready for the event, but we don't have an amber warning designation yet but neighbouring counties do and we have to date and will be tracking the weather over the weekend. As of this moment we have in excess of 1,500 tonnes of salt in storage and an additional 2,000 tonnes on order, which is more than enough to see us through this event. The ploughs will be put on the vehicles and all outdoor staff are ready. He advised that all road users exercise extreme care.

Members made the following comments:

- Can Scrine Hill and Bealnamullia (S. Kildea's to Rooskey Cross) be included in the Winter Service Plan?
- Can gravel/salt be made available for communities to treat local roads.
- Will the snow plough be in use full time?
- Can a notice be issued to Business owners about their responsibilities in relation to footpaths outside their premises?
- Remind people to look after the elderly.

CE responded as follows:

- The situation will be managed as it happens but we won't be able to do everything.
- Community issues regarding insurance were never resolved so salt will not be made available
- Clear that when the situation arises, we may be able to give insurance
- Social media will be used to give updated information and managed by Corporate Services
- Stock pile of salt that we have is adequate and we have a very good fleet of vehicles.

Motion adopted by Waterford City and County Council

Cllr. Shanagher made reference to a notice of motion received from Waterford City and County Council.

On the **PROPOSAL** of Councillor Shanagher

SECONDED by Councillor Ward

It was **AGREED** that Roscommon County Council calls on the Government to introduce legislation as quickly as possible, to make it an offence for a person or persons to enter the water, that being the sea or river, during a status Red weather warning. To also make it an offence to enter the water, that being the sea or river, when the area has been closed by either the local council or the Gardai as a matter of public safety.

NEXT MEETING

The next meeting will be on Monday, 26th March, 2018.

This concluded the business of the meeting.

The foregoing Minutes are
Confirmed and Signed:

Petrizio Bohon

Meetings Administrator



Cathaoirleach

Petrizio Bohon

Countersigned