

**MINUTES OF MONTHLY MEETING OF ROSCOMMON COUNTY COUNCIL
IN COUNCIL CHAMBER, ÁRAS AN CHONTAE, ROSCOMMON
ON MONDAY, 23rd September, 2024 AT 2.15 pm.**

PRESENT: Councillor Paschal Fitzmaurice **PRESIDED**

MEMBERS: Cllr L. Cull, Cllr S. Moylan, Cllr M. Frain, Cllr G. Scahill, Cllr L. Brennan, Cllr D. Connolly, Cllr J. Keogh, Cllr E. Kelly, Cllr T. Crosby, Cllr M. McDermott, Cllr A. Waldron, Cllr T. Ward, Cllr N. Dineen, Cllr J. Naughten and Cllr L. Callaghan.

OFFICIALS: Shane Tiernan, Chief Executive
Caitlín Conneely, Director of Services
Sean Mullarkey, Director of Finance
Mark Keaveney, Director of Services
Fiona Ni Chuinn, A/Director of Services
Greg O'Donnell, A/Director of Services
Claudette Collins, Staff Officer
Orla Cleary, Assistant Staff Officer

Apologies: Cllr L. Fallon and Cllr V. Byrne

110.24 DISCLOSURE OF CONFLICT OF INTEREST (SECTION 177 OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 2001 AS AMENDED)

There were no Disclosures of Conflict of Interest declared by Members.

111.24 ADOPTION OF MINUTES

On the **PROPOSAL** of Cllr. Crosby
SECONDED by Cllr. Kelly

It was **AGREED** to adopt the minutes of the Plenary Meeting of 22/07/2024.

112.24 MATTERS ARISING

There were no matters arising.

113.24 MANAGEMENT REPORT

- Management Report for July 2024 noted.
- Management Report for August 2024 noted.

114.24 ADOPTION OF STRATEGIC POLICY COMMITTEE SCHEME 2024-2029

Director of Services Caitlín Conneely presented the Strategic Policy Committee Scheme for adoption. The Draft Scheme was presented at the July Plenary Meeting. Following public consultation, five submissions were received, noted and incorporated into the scheme as appropriate. Ms. Conneely requested the adoption of the Scheme which will allow for seeking nominations of the Elected Members and the Sectoral Members to the Strategic Policy Committees.

On the **PROPOSAL** of Cllr. Scahill
SECONDED by Cllr. Moylan

It was **AGREED** to adopt the Strategic Policy Committee Scheme 2019-2024.

115.24 UPDATE ON THE CORPORATE PLAN 2024-2029

Director of Services Caitlín Conneely informed the members that the guidelines have been issued from the Department in respect of the compilation of the Corporate Plan 2019 -2024. Consultation with Key Stakeholders and Elected Members is in process. There is a statutory requirement to complete the Plan within six months of the election of the new Council.

116.24 APPOINTMENTS TO THE AUDIT COMMITTEE

The Director of Finance Mr. Sean Malarkey outlined the statutory regulations with regard to the appointment of external members of the Audit Committee. He stated that the Corporate Policy Group had endorsed the following who have put themselves forward to become members of the committee - Sinead Devine, Willie Murphy, and Michael Hegarty.

On the **PROPOSAL** of Cllr. Callaghan

SECONDED by Cllr. Frain

It was **AGREED** to appoint Sinead Devine, Willie Murphy and Michael Hegarty to the Audit Committee of Roscommon County Council.

117.24 UPDATE ON LPT 2025

The Director of Finance Mr. Sean Malarkey delivered a presentation on the Local Property Tax with the proposal to maintain the LPT at the current rate for a 5 year period. He highlighted the current points:

- For the 73% of property owners in Roscommon that are in Band 1 this amounts to 25c per property per week.
- LPT was introduced in 2013 and revised valuations were brought in 1st November 2021 and the next national revision of property valuation bands will be after 2025.
- 100% of the money is retained within the county, any shortfall from the baseline allocation is met by the exchequer.
- Local Authority variation is plus or minus 15% and the variation factor can now be set for longer than 1 year up to 5 years.
- If a 5 year term is agreed, it can be reviewed in that period by Members, this will require public consultation and voting by Elected Members.
- Public consultation for LPT was advertised from 15 Aug 2024 to 17 Sep 2024, no submissions were received.
- The proposal is to maintain the current LPT rate at +15% for a 5 year period, as essential funding for Roscommon County Council. It is used for GMA, Town Team, street cleaning and local roads funding.

Members discussed the following matters:

- Fixing 5 years gives clear guidance to the Council on the level of funding, and also gives security to householders of the fees for the coming years.
- The ability to review within the 5 year period is important for householders if the bands change, so that Roscommon County Council can respond.
- Clarification was requested on the highest rate currently being paid in Roscommon.
- The LPT has given the Council great stabilisation to help back up other nationally funded projects, as well as supporting Town Teams.
- The importance of funding for verge trimming was highlighted by members.
- Concerns were voiced on fixing for 5 years, and the potential to fix LPT for 1 year was discussed by some members.

Mr. Malarkey responded as follows on the discussion:

- The highest rates currently being paid in Roscommon are:

6% of householders in Band 3 €315.00+€47.25

2% of householders in Band 4 €405.00+€60.75.

- For the majority of householders it will be €90.00+€13.50 per year for 5 years, if the national bands don't change.

It was **PROPOSED** by Cllr. Crosby and **SECONDED** by Cllr. Naughten to maintain the current LPT rate at +15% for a 5 year period.

It was **PROPOSED** by Cllr. Ward and **SECONDED** by Cllr. Waldron to maintain the current LPT rate at +15% for a 1 year period.

The Meetings Administrator took a vote on the counter-proposal to maintain the current LPT at +15% for a 1 year period.

The Meetings Administrator read the result of the vote:

5 for the counter-proposal

10 against the counter-proposal

3 absent

Cllr. Callaghan expressed to the Cathaoirleach that he made an error in voting for the counter-proposal and wished to correct his vote to against the counter-proposal.

For the record the correct count of the vote in relation to the counter-proposal is below:

4 for the counter-proposal

11 against the counter-proposal

3 absent

The Meetings Administrator took a vote on the proposal to maintain the current LPT at +15% for a 5 year period.

The Meetings Administrator read the result of the vote:

11 for the proposal

4 against the proposal

3 absent

The **PROPOSAL WAS CARRIED** that the Council will maintain the current LPT at +15% for a 5 year period.

118.24 PROPOSED BUDGET 2025 TIMETABLE

The following dates have been agreed with regard to the Municipal District Budget Meetings:

- Roscommon MD on Tuesday 15th October 2024 at 10.00am
- Boyle MD on Tuesday 15th October 2024 at 2.30pm
- Athlone MD on Wednesday 16th October 2024 at 10.00am

It was **AGREED** that the Plenary Budget Meeting of Roscommon County Council take place on Thursday 28th November at 10.30am as recommended by the Corporate Policy Group.

119.24 SECTION 22 OF THE HOUSING (TRAVELLER ACCOMMODATION) ACT 1998 AS AMENDED - MAKING OF APPOINTMENTS TO THE LOCAL TRAVELLER ACCOMMODATION CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE (LTACC)

A/Director of Services, Fiona Ni Chuinn, presented nominations for the LTACC Committee and proposed the following appointments:

Officials of the Local Authority:

- Fiona Ni Chuinn, A/Director of Services
- Ann McHugh, Senior Executive Officer
- Vincent Walsh, Senior Executive Officer
- Geraldine Farry, Senior Staff Officer
- Jeanette Dolan, Tenant/Traveller Liaison Officer
- David Kelly, Traveller Caretaker

Representatives of Local Travellers and Traveller Bodies:

- Gail Murray, Traveller Health, Roscommon
- Martin Gerard Ward, Ballaghaderreen
- Niall McGinley, Cornafulla, Athlone
- James McDonagh, Roscommon
- Ellen Louise Ward, Carrick on Shannon

Members broadly welcomed the committee and raised the following points:

- Whether money was previously spent on Traveller Accommodation.
- An update was requested on the 7 vacant houses for travellers in the group scheme.

A/Director of Services, Fiona Ni Chuinn, responded to the queries raised and advised the following:

- This is an extension to the 2019/2020 programme and will be included in the current scheme.
- There has been an increase in uptake of social housing, none specifically in the traveller community as all options are available to them.

On the **PROPOSAL** of Cllr. Brennan

SECONDED by Cllr. Kelly

It was **AGREED** to appoint the nominated people to the LTACC Committee.

120.24 HOUSING (TRAVELLER ACCOMMODATION) ACT 1998 AS AMENDED - DRAFT TRAVELLER ACCOMMODATION PROGRAMME 2025 - 2029 FOR ADOPTION

A/Director of Services, Fiona Ni Chuinn, presented the Draft Report and Chief Executive's Report with regard to the Traveller Accommodation Programme for adoption. Following public consultation, eight pre-draft submissions including five late submissions were received and taken into consideration. In June 2024, the Draft Traveller Accommodation Programme was put out for public consultation; two late submissions were received, and were taken into consideration. Ms. Ni Chuinn advised that the Draft Traveller Accommodation Programme 2025 – 2029 was before the members for adoption.

On the **PROPOSAL** of Cllr. Crosby

SECONDED by Cllr. Connolly

It was **AGREED** to adopt the Traveller Accommodation Programme 2025 – 2029.

121.24 CORRESPONDENCE

Correspondence was circulated to members in advance of the meeting.

122.24 NOTICE OF MOTION

122.24a CLLR P FITZMAURICE - 17.24 PEDESTRIAN CROSSING POINTS IN TOWNS AND VILLAGES IN CO. ROSCOMMON

Notice of Motion calling on Roscommon County Council to install a number of raised type b zebra pedestrian crossings points in each Towns and Villages in County Roscommon and provide for this in the

next budget.

These raised crossing points will act as a traffic calming measure and allow people to cross the road in a safe way at the same level as the footpath.

The Meetings Administrator read the following reply:

The Roads and Transportation Unit, in collaboration with the three Municipal Districts, is committed to providing pedestrian crossings at appropriate locations within our County Towns. However, the implementation of such crossings must be considered on a case-by-case basis, taking into account factors such as:

- **Traffic volume and speed:** The level of traffic and its speed are crucial determinants in selecting the most suitable type of pedestrian crossing.
- **Pedestrian usage:** The expected volume of pedestrian traffic at the proposed location is essential for assessing the need for a crossing.
- **Existing infrastructure:** The presence of footpaths, cycle lanes, and other road features can influence the design and feasibility of a crossing.
- **Land availability:** Sufficient space may be required for the installation of a crossing, especially for larger types like pelican crossings.
- **Risk assessment:** A thorough risk assessment must be conducted to identify potential hazards and ensure the safety of pedestrians and motorists.
- **Loss of Parking:** A compliant design requires a parking free zone all around the crossing to ensure sightlines are not compromised

The type of pedestrian crossing adopted will depend on these factors and must comply with the Department of Transport's guidelines for road safety and quality audits. While we are open to providing pedestrian crossings, it's important to note that a blanket approach of installing them in all County Roscommon towns is not practical or affordable.

It's essential to prioritize locations where pedestrian safety is most compromised and where crossings will have the greatest positive impact. By carefully considering these factors and adhering to established standards, we can ensure that our pedestrian crossing facilities are effective, safe, and meet the needs of our communities.

Finally, while pedestrian crossings can contribute to traffic calming, a comprehensive approach is often necessary, involving measures like narrower lanes, junction tightening and raised platforms where appropriate. Crossings should be limited to areas with well-managed traffic and reduced speeds.

The presence of footpaths on both sides of the road is a factor to consider when planning crossings and adequate funding is essential for the design, installation, and maintenance of pedestrian crossings.

Members supported the motion and raised the following points:

- It is important to push forward with pedestrian crossing points as there is low visibility especially this time of year.
- It was suggested that local donations could be sought and there are issues being raised regarding safety around bus stops and crossing roads to the bus.
- It was suggested that the Council carries out a basic survey in towns and villages and put together a costing of installing pedestrian crossing points.
- The Cathaoirleach, Cllr. Fitzmaurice commented that the motion is proposed over a five year period. It was suggested that there may be funding for feasibility studies which can be used for

- pedestrian crossing point, and an update was requested on this.
- The Cathaoirleach, Cllr. Fitzmaurice suggested working on one village in each MD per year over the five year period.

A/Director of Services, Greg O'Donnell commented that the Council supports the proposal to install pedestrian crossing points in general, but that they are not suitable for all villages and towns where traffic is not already calmed. He suggested taking the type of crossing out of the proposal as these need to be designed on a case by case basis. He advised that TII can facilitate crossings on national routes if they are required.

He commented that a systematic approach is required as these take time to deliver, and cost approximately €30,000 each. He noted that funding will be required for installation.

On the **PROPOSAL** of Cllr. Fitzmaurice

SECONDED by Cllr. Moylan

It was **AGREED** to install pedestrian crossing points in towns and villages over a five year period, where feasible.

122.24b CLLR G. SCAHILL - 18.24 ROADSIDE TREE SURVEY TO IDENTIFY DEAD, DANGEROUS AND INFECTED TREES

Roadside Tree Survey to identify dead, dangerous and infected tree. Ash Dieback has been mentioned at council meetings previously and the dangers it presents to the general public, road users and property. In recent years the changing weather patterns have added to this problem with increasing numbers of storms and high winds. When these storms strike, dead and infected roadside trees coming down has become more common. When this happens, services have to react, be it clearing the roads, redirecting traffic, repairing downed powerlines etc. and more often than not while the conditions are still unfavourable. We need the support of the government to be more proactive on this issue and identify the dangers and address them when it is safer for all to do so. I am asking Roscommon County Council to contact the Government requesting financial support to Identify, safely remove and replace where possible, dead, dangerous and infected roadside trees.

The Meetings Administrator read the following reply:

Trees on private property are the responsibility of the owner. The 1993 Roads Act place a statutory obligation on landowners and occupiers to ensure roadside structures, trees, shrubs or other vegetation do not present a danger to those using and working on public roads. Under the law, landowners are liable for any damage caused by their trees. The Council can serve a notice requiring a landowner to take the necessary steps to address any hazards. In the event that the Council, as the road authority, has to take action it may recover the costs incurred by it from the landowner. Dealing with large dangerous roadside trees is a difficult and expensive undertaking. The Council agrees that a national approach and response is required and agrees with the Notice of Motion to write to the Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine to request that a scheme be put in place to provide financial support to landowners to deal with this issue. Currently there is no such specific funding from the Department. However, the Department has published guidance on the subject of roadside trees, in partnership with the Tree Council of Ireland, "A Guide for Landowners to Managing Roadside Trees" which provides guidance to landowners on how to manage roadside trees and to assess risk associated with trees and describes common defects including dieback, unstable leans, splits and cracks, decay and cavities. Roscommon County Council is currently

drafting a County Tree Management Policy. The Policy will also offer guidance and encouragement to landowners to manage their roadside trees in a responsible manner.

Members supported the motion and raised the following points:

- The query was raised as to who is responsible for a tree between the land boundaries.
- The Local Authority and farmers should not be carrying the cost and it should be the responsibility of the Department.
- It was suggested that funding assistance should be offered as an incentive for landowners, and the Council should contact the Department and include it in the Emergency Plan.
- It was suggested to make an amendment to the motion that the proposal is circulated to other Local Authorities.
- Cllr. Scahill agreed to amend the motion and proposed that Roscommon is put forward as a pilot scheme.

Director of Services, Greg O'Donnell, responded to the query raised and advised that the Local Authority is responsible for road safety. He noted that it's not possible to know the condition of every tree. He suggested carrying out research to prepare a process for dealing with trees in poor condition as to when they should be taken down.

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

It was **AGREED** that Roscommon County Council write to the Department seeking funding for a Roadside Tree Survey to identify dead, dangerous and infected trees, and that Roscommon be put forward as a pilot for a national scheme.

On the **PROPOSAL** of Cllr. Crosby
SECONDED by Cllr. Scahill

It was **AGREED** that the proposal is circulated to other Local Authorities.

122.24c CLLR J KEOGH - 19.24 THAT THIS COUNCIL COMMITS TO USING FACTUAL AND ACCURATE INFORMATION, BASED ON CREDIBLE SOURCES, IN THIS COUNCIL'S DISCUSSION AND DEBATES

That this Council commits to using factual and accurate information, based on credible sources, in this Council's discussion and debates.

This Council is aware of the harmful impact that misinformation has on marginalised communities, including but not limited to those protected under the Equal Status Acts, namely on the grounds of gender, marital status, family status, age, disability, sexual orientation, race, religion and membership of the Traveller community.

In making this commitment, this Council affirms its obligation as a Local Authority, as per Section 42 of the Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission Act 2014, to have regard to the need to:

- a) eliminate discrimination,
- b) promote equality of opportunity and treatment of its staff and the persons to whom it provides services, and
- c) protect the human rights of its members, staff and the persons to whom it provides services.

The Meetings Administrator read the following reply:

Roscommon County Council is committed to meet our obligations under the Equal Status Acts 2000-2018

and Section 42 of the Irish Human Rights and Equality Act 2014 and is committed to be proactive in the promotion of equality and to work towards the prevention of discrimination. The Equal Status Acts 2000-2018 prohibit discrimination in the provision of goods and services, accommodation and education. They cover the nine grounds of gender, marital status, family status, age, disability, sexual orientation, race, religion, and membership of the Traveller community.

The Public Sector Equality and Human Rights Duty is a statutory obligation on public bodies to have regard to the need to:

- Eliminate discrimination;
- Promote equality of opportunity and treatment of its staff and the persons to whom it provides services; and
- Protect the human rights of its members, staff, and the persons to whom it provides services.

Roscommon County Council is committed to delivering a quality service to all of our customers and Roscommon County Council ensures that no-one is discriminated against because of their gender, marital status, family status, sexual orientation, religious belief, age, disability, race and membership of the Traveller Community. Roscommon County Council will accommodate diversity and work to make our services more accessible for people experiencing poverty and social exclusion.

Roscommon County Council is committed to using factual and accurate information based on credible sources in Council discussions and debates. This commitment is reinforced in the codes of conduct for councillors and for employees of local authorities. The code of conduct for employees sets out principles of behaviour that an employee of a local authority must adhere to in the performance of their duties. The code of conduct for councillors sets out principles of behaviour that an elected member of a local authority must adhere to in the performance of their duties.

Proposing the motion, Cllr. Keogh said that he was asked to highlight this issue. He added that an Garda Siochana published figures which showed a 12% increase in the number of reported hate crimes and hate related incidents. He added sexual orientation is the most commonly recorded forms of targeting, and LGBTQ+ community is one of the most consistent victims.

Members supported the motion.

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

It was **AGREED** that the Council affirms its obligation as a Local Authority.

122.24d CLLR S MOYLAN - 20.24 REVIEW OF POLICING POLICY FOR ROSCOMMON

That the Council calls on the Minister for Justice Helen McEntee and Garda Commissioner Drew Harris, to immediately review the policing policy for Roscommon with a view extending opening hours in the smaller Garda stations and to increasing Garda numbers in this area permanently, or at the very least until the much publicised recent spate of burglaries is under control.

The Meetings Administrator read the following reply:

This Motion requires a Resolution of the Council.

Proposing the motion, Cllr. Moylan expressed the importance of Garda Stations. He added that the current policing policy is not working and called for a review in Roscommon. He said that action needs to be taken to ensure safety for home and business owners.

Members supported the motion and raised the following points:

- Deep crisis in Roscommon/Longford Division, 50% reduction in frontline Gardai serving in areas, and no car available in many situations.
- The activity of criminals is a major concern.
- The Cathaoirleach Cllr. Fitzmaurice put forward a proposal that a meeting is sought with the Minister for Justice in relation to the current crisis regarding policing in Roscommon.

On the **PROPOSAL** of Cllr. Moylan

SECONDED by Cllr. Scahill

It was **AGREED** that Roscommon County Council will write to the Minister for Justice Helen McEntee and the Garda Commissioner Drew Harris to review the policing policy for Roscommon with a view to extending opening hours in smaller Garda stations and to increase Garda numbers in the area.

On the **PROPOSAL** of Cllr. Fitzmaurice

SECONDED by Cllr. Connolly

It was **AGREED** that the Council writes to the Minister for Justice seeking a meeting to discuss the current policing crisis in Roscommon.

122.24e CLLR A WALDRON - 21.24 TRANSPORTATION VOUCHERS FOR RURAL RESIDENTS

That this Council calls on the Minister to propose the introduction of transportation vouchers for rural residents in lieu of free public transit, which is often unavailable in rural areas. This voucher would help cover fuel, vehicle maintenance, or ride-sharing expenses, addressing the financial and accessibility challenges rural residents face. Implementing this system would ensure fairness and equal access to essential services, aligning with the government's commitment to rural inclusion.

The Meetings Administrator read the following reply:

This Motion requires a Resolution of the Council.

Proposing the motion, Cllr. Waldron proposed that the Minister considers Roscommon as a pilot for this motion. He emphasised the importance of making taxis more available in local villages, and the importance of encouraging people to meet with each other. He clarified the proposal should be put to the Minister for Finance.

Members supported the motion and raised the following points:

- All senior citizens have a bus pass but there is no system in place for those in rural areas.
- The Local link bus does not cover all areas, and the expansion of the route would also benefit younger people for college or work.
- The Social Care Programme was mentioned and it was suggested to develop the scheme again through Leader.

On the **PROPOSAL** of Cllr. Waldron

SECONDED by Cllr. Ward

It was **AGREED** that the Council writes to the Minister for Finance to propose the introduction of transportation vouchers for rural residents in lieu of free public transit.

122.24f CLLR M FRAIN - 22.24 VERGE TRIMMING

That Roscommon County Council extend the verge trimming programme to include all national secondary and local roads, to maximise the Health and Safety of all road users including pedestrians, cyclists and other vulnerable road users.

Section 70 (2) (a) of the Roads Act 1993 states the obligation of land owners under the act, and while Section 22 of the Wildlife Act of 1976 does state restrictions on hedge cutting, this does not however include verge trimming. The safety of our road users takes precedent, and we must work together to make all our road safer.

The Meetings Administrator read the following reply:

Roscommon County Council undertakes a comprehensive verge maintenance programme across the county, which is managed in two key areas:

1. Roads that are part of the Annual Roadworks Programme.
2. Other roads prioritised based on risk.

Under the second area, we focus on locations with high traffic volumes or specific hazards, such as bends, road signs, and junction sightlines. Issues reported through the Report-IT system are reviewed, and action is taken if they meet these criteria or, in other cases, when resources allow. Due to limited resources and environmental regulations during the summer, Roscommon County Council is unable to maintain all verges and hedgerows.

When resources do not allow for extensive verge maintenance, the Council may issue a notice to landowners, directing them to address any roadside hazards.

Proposing the motion, Cllr. Frain acknowledged the significance of the Wildlife Act, but confirmed that verge trimming is of huge importance in the summer months. The issue is raised on a daily basis to Councillors and needs to be looked at for next year.

Members supported the motion and raised the following points:

- Widespread issue throughout the county and that County Leitrim use a community type model which appears to be effective.
- The onus is on farmers to cut their hedges and suggested that the Council get involved in talks with IFA to negotiate with farmers.
- Funding from property tax should be used to alleviate the issue in rural areas.
- Importance of maintenance to encourage people to be active outside.
- The Cathaoirleach Cllr. Fitzmaurice said there are two issues to be addressed; verges are trimmed too late especially on local roads and suggested the introduction of a database to record which verges are cut annually.

A/Director of Services, Greg O'Donnell noted that there are 4000km of roads in Co. Roscommon and it is not feasible to get these all cut every year, and the Council needs to prioritise the key areas to be cut. It is hoped that proposed new method of procurement of price per KM rather than price per hour will deliver benefits in efficiencies.

Verge trimming focusses on road safety issues on sightlines and safety at junctions. This balances available funding, whilst also supporting the biodiversity in the County, by letting verges grow if not causing a road safety issue.

On the **PROPOSAL** of Cllr. Frain

SECONDED by Cllr. Scahill

It was **AGREED** that that Council extend the verge trimming programme as much as possible to maximise the Health and Safety of all road users including pedestrians, cyclists and other vulnerable road users.

On the **PROPOSAL** of Cllr. Waldron

SECONDED by Cllr. Ward

It was **AGREED** that the Council would investigate a community type model, similar to County Leitrim.

122.24g CLLR T CROSBY - 23.24 SCHOOL TRANSPORT SYSTEM

That Roscommon County Council submit a formal proposal to the Minister and Department of Transport concerning the inefficiencies and deficiencies with Bus Éireann in the administration of the current school transport system. The existing system, characterized by inadequacies and flaws, has resulted in significant stress and concern for parents and students, leaving crucial matters like school bus placements and ticket allocations uncertain well beyond the commencement of the school year. It is imperative that a comprehensive overhaul of the entire system is undertaken to guarantee that allocations are finalised a minimum of four weeks prior to students returning to school.

The Meetings Administrator read the following reply:

This Motion requires a Resolution of the Council.

Cllr. Crosby advised he has been approached by the public advising that tickets are not being allocated, with little communication from Bus Eireann. This creates stress and lack of information for students and parents, even after the school year has started. The service from Bus Eireann is not adequate.

Members supported the motion and raised the following points:

- Bus Eireann's service is not fit for purpose, creating stress for families.
- Timing of buses can be an issue for school users also.

On the **PROPOSAL** of Cllr. Crosby

SECONDED by Cllr. Cull

It was **AGREED** that the Council write to the Minister and Department of Transport to review the system, and to have notice of bus allocation at least 4 weeks prior to the commencement of the school year.

On the **PROPOSAL** of Cllr. Crosby

SECONDED by Cllr. Scahill

It was **AGREED** that the Council would send a letter to other Local Authorities seeking support for the proposal.

122.24h CLLR T WARD - 24.24 CARERS ALLOWANCE

I am calling on the Government, the Minister for Finance, Mr. Jack Chambers T.D. and Minister for Social Protection and Rural and Community Development, Ms. Heather Humphreys T.D., to bring forward legislation in the Dail which will exempt Carers Allowance from means assessment if the person who is being cared for has a full detailed medical report in support of their condition.

The Meetings Administrator read the following reply:

This Motion requires a Resolution of the Council.

Proposing the motion Cllr. Ward advised that he also put this to the HSE in the past. He noted that the increase in demand for nursing home accommodation, and that care can be provided by individuals for people in their own homes. Exemption of means testing for carers would be a benefit to the whole country and reduce the demand for nursing home beds.

Members supported the motion and raised the following points:

- Carers taking a burden off the health service and the state, and the lack of home help services is a key issue.
- Having a family member that is willing to help care for people at home should be supported.

On the **PROPOSAL** of Cllr. Ward

SECONDED by Cllr. Fitzmaurice

It was **AGREED** that Roscommon County Council write to the Minister for Finance, Mr. Jack Chambers T.D. and Minister for Social Protection and Rural and Community Development, Ms. Heather Humphreys T.D., to bring forward legislation in the Dail which will exempt Carers Allowance from means assessment if the person who is being cared for has a full detailed medical report in support of their condition.

123.24 QUESTIONS

Answers were circulated to members in advance of the meeting.

124.24 CHIEF EXECUTIVE BUSINESS

The Chief Executive, Shane Tiernan congratulated and thanked those involved in Culture Night across Co. Roscommon.

He also noted the success of Global Rossie Weekend with great events across the County, building on the Roscommon brand, supported by the Town Teams.

Mr. Tiernan advised that €2m has been secured through the Just Transition Fund, €1m for Lough Key Forest Park and €1m for Hodson Bay. He noted that this is significant funding to bring projects through design and shovel ready status for these flagship tourism locations.

He also confirmed that the Community Activation Fund has been awarded for 3 significant projects in the

County, Ballaghaderreen childcare facility, Roscommon homecare services and the support project in Boyle.

He expressed disappointment that the Minister of Transport is not supportive of the Roscommon County Council proposal for upgrade of N61 to be reclassified as a national primary route. The Council will continue to progress this proposal as an matter of importance.

125.24 COUNCILLORS CONFERENCES - PAYMENT/ATTENDANCE

On the **PROPOSAL** of Cllr. Scahill

SECONDED by Cllr. Brennan

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

126.24 VOTES OF CONGRATULATIONS AND SYMPATHY

- Cllr. Brennan offered sympathy to the Whyte family on the passing of Nollaig Whyte RIP.
- Cllr. Brennan offered sympathy to the Comiskey family on the passing of Seamus Comiskey RIP.

127.24 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

No other business was discussed.

NEXT MEETING

The next meeting will be on Monday, 21st October, 2024.

This concluded the business of the meeting.

The foregoing Minutes are
Confirmed and Signed:



Meetings Administrator



Cathaoirleach



Countersigned