

MINUTES OF MONTHLY Meeting OF ROSCOMMON COUNTY COUNCIL
COUNCIL Chamber, Áras an Chontae, Roscommon
MONDAY, 25TH NOVEMBER, 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 L. Fallon, Cllr E. Kelly, Cllr T. Crosby, Cllr M. McDermott, Cllr A. Waldron, Cllr T. Ward, Cllr N. Dineen, Cllr V. Byrne 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: .

144.24 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.

145.24 ADOPTION OF MINUTES

On the **PROPOSAL** of Cllr. Crosby
SECONDED by Cllr. McDermott
It was **AGREED** to adopt the minutes of the Plenary Meeting of 21.10.2024

146.24 MATTERS ARISING

There were no matters arising.

147.24 MANAGEMENT REPORT

- Management Report for October 2024 noted.

148.24 LEASE OF LANDS - ASSETS

On the **PROPOSAL** of Councillor Kelly
SECONDED by Councillor Keogh
It was **AGREED** that the Council consent to the disposal of property pursuant to the provisions of Article 206 of the Planning and Development Regulations 2001, Section 211 of the Planning and Development Act,

2000 (as amended) and Section 183 of the Local Government Act, 2001 of particulars of property which it is proposed to dispose of at the location in County Roscommon and to the persons set out in the schedule hereunder. Particulars of the property which the County Council proposes to dispose:

The Property: Site comprising 1.81 Ha at Claremont House, Ballyforan Td., Co. Roscommon

The person(s) from whom the land was acquired: Roscommon County Council

The person(s) to whom the land is to be disposed of: Ballyforan Area Transition Team CLG

The consideration proposed in respect of the: €1,000 and €10 per annum for 25 years

149.24 LEASE OF LANDS - ASSETS

On the **PROPOSAL** of Councillor Kelly

SECONDED by Councillor Keogh

It was **AGREED** that the Council consent to the disposal of property pursuant to the provisions of Article 206 of the Planning and Development Regulations 2001, Section 211 of the Planning and Development Act, 2000 (as amended) and Section 183 of the Local Government Act, 2001 of particulars of property which it is proposed to dispose of at the location in County Roscommon and to the persons set out in the schedule hereunder. Particulars of the property which the County Council proposes to dispose:

The Property: Office space comprising a net internal area of 130m² located on the first floor of An Ríoga, Boyle.

The person(s) from whom the land was acquired: Shirley Regan, 10 Glencarraig, Carrick-on-Shannon, Co. Leitrim.

The person(s) to whom the land is to be disposed of: SGL Logistics.

The consideration proposed in respect of the: €11,400 per annum for 4 years and 6 months.

150.24 ROSCOMMON OUTDOOR RECREATION COMMITTEE

On the **PROPOSAL** of Cllr. Keogh

SECONDED by Cllr. Callaghan

It was **AGREED** to appoint Cllr. Tom Crosby to the Roscommon Outdoor Recreation Committee.

151.24 STRATEGIC POLICY COMMITTEE CHAIRPERSON

On the **PROPOSAL** of Cllr. Connolly

SECONDED by Cllr. Keogh

It was **AGREED** to appoint Cllr. Gareth Scahill to the Housing, Integration, Community, Culture Strategic Policy Committee.

152.24 NORTHERN AND WESTERN REGIONAL ASSEMBLY (NWRA) VACANCY

On the **PROPOSAL** of Cllr. Scahill

SECONDED by Cllr. Connolly

It was **AGREED** to appoint Cllr. Liam Callaghan to the Northern and Western Regional Assembly.

153.24 LOCAL AUTHORITY MEMBERS ASSOCIATION (LAMA) VACANCY

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

It was **AGREED** to appoint Cllr. Dominic Connolly for the Local Authority Members Association.

154.24 STANDING ORDERS COMMITTEE VACANCY

On the **PROPOSAL** of Cllr. Callaghan
SECONDED by Cllr. Connolly

It was **AGREED** to appoint Cllr. Gareth Scahill to the Standing Orders Committee.

155.24 MIDLANDS REGIONAL TRANSITION STEERING COMMITTEE (MRTSC) VACANCY

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

It was **AGREED** to appoint Cllr. Liam Callaghan to the Midlands Regional Transition Steering Committee.

156.24 STRATEGIC POLICY COMMITTEES ELECTED MEMBERS NOMINATIONS

Director of Services Caitlín Conneely notified members that the names of the elected members nominated to the SPCs were circulated. Each elected member is a member of two SPCs. She advised that the positions held by the late Cllr. John Naughten will be dealt with at a later date.

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

It was **AGREED** to confirm the Elected Members nominations to the SPCs.

157.24 STRATEGIC POLICY COMMITTEES SECTORAL NOMINATIONS

Director of Services, Caitlín Conneely stated that approval is sought for the appointment of sectoral nominees from each of the National Pillars to each of the SPCs as circulated. She advised that Chambers Ireland were unable to provide some nominees for the Business Pillar. Expressions of Interest will be sought for these vacant positions.

She also advised that the Construction Federation were seeking one further representative nomination and confirmation of same is pending.

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

It was **AGREED** to confirm the Sectoral Nominees for the SPCs.

158.24 ADOPTION OF COUNTY OF ROSCOMMON ROAD TRAFFIC SPECIAL SPEED LIMIT BYE-LAWS 2024

The Cathaoirleach, Cllr. Fitzmaurice stated that this item referred to a mandatory speed reduction on Local Roads.

Director of Services, Greg O'Donnell, stated that a report was carried out in 2023 by the Road Safety Authority (RSA) and made a number of recommendations. The implementation of Phase One will take place

in 2024 and 2025 to reduce the speed limit on Local Road Network from 80km/h down to 60km/h. The legislation has passed and this will become the default speed limit commencing on 7th February 2025.

He advised that the supplementary bye-laws for adoption are to facilitate this legislation. He advised that an opportunity was given to review the network to decide if any roads could be maintained at 80km/h and very extensive criteria had to be met to achieve this. The result of this was the old N5 near Ballaghaderreen met the criteria. The supplementary bye-laws allows for the old N5, now the L1244, to remain at 80km/h.

The supplementary bye-laws revoke the special 60km/h on a number of Local Roads as they are no longer required under the new Legislation, as all Local Roads will be 60km/h by default. He advised that approval is being sought for these supplementary bye-laws.

Members discussed the item and made the following points:

- Acknowledgment of the positive action in an effort to reduce the number of road deaths.
- The query was raised regarding the speed limit outside schools being reduced as a further road safety measure.
- The high criteria set is disappointing as a number of roads could have been considered to be maintained at 80km/h, such as the L2025 Bealnamulla to Taughmaconnell, and L2018, Curraghboy to N61. The query regarding these roads was already raised and an answer was provided confirming it did not meet the criteria.
- The cost of replacing existing signs across County Roscommon was queried.
- A number of main roads will now have the same speed limit as smaller roads and it doesn't make sense.
- It was stated that journey times will increase particularly at peak times and cause frustration for people.
- A question was asked regarding the legal standing of national speed limit black road signs.
- A question was asked regarding whether 50km/h limits on local roads will be maintained.

Director of Services, Greg O'Donnell, responded:

- The change of speed is set by law. The supplementary bye-laws for adoption are to enable the legislation and approve the 80km/h limit on the old N5.
- The cost of new signage is being funded by the Department.
- The national speed limit black road signs will continue to have standing in law in line with the national speed limits.
- Speed limits outside schools will be reviewed in future.
- Existing speed limits below 60km/h on local roads will be maintained.

On the **PROPOSAL** of Cllr. Keogh

SECONDED by Cllr. Crosby

It was **AGREED** to adopt the County of Roscommon Road Traffic Special Speed Limit Bye-laws 2024.

159.24 CHIEF EXECUTIVE BUSINESS

Chief Executive, Shane Tiernan, notified members that Roscommon is a pilot county to provide insurance to Tidy Towns Committees which meet certain criteria. The insurance package will be included in the Council's overall policy thereby allowing the Committees to have extra money for the towns and villages.

The qualifying criteria is:

- that their primary activity and purpose is to improve and enhance the appearance and sustainability of the public realm of their community
- that they are within the catchment area of the Local Authority
- that they are a registered member of the Public Participation Network (PPN)

He stated that the scheme will cover the main cover requirements of Tidy Towns Committees up to the usual sums. He advised that an information leaflet will be circulated to members by Director of Services, Caitlín Conneely. The groups who have initially qualified for the scheme were listed.

Members discussed the insurance and made the following points:

- It was noted that this is fantastic news for the community groups as it brings clarity and will encourage them to continue their great work.
- They welcomed the great news on behalf on local Tidy Towns and community groups.
- They praised the tremendous work completed by local groups.
- It was noted that the cost of insurance for these groups should be not increased due to this scheme.
- It was said that all groups who apply for the Amenity Grant should be given serious consideration for this scheme.
- A question was asked regarding whether the use of lawnmowers and machinery is covered.
- A question was asked regarding whether the list provided is the complete list of groups included in the scheme.
- A question was asked regarding whether the groups were automatically chosen upon meeting the criteria, or if they applied, and if so, can other groups still apply.
- A question was asked regarding adding Fuerty Fair to the list of qualifying groups.
- A question was asked regarding whether the Town Teams covered and whether Monksland Tidy Towns is included in the list.
- A question was asked regarding whether the scheme will be coming into effect immediately or in 2025, so that some groups could claim money back for insurance paid for the coming year.

Director of Services, Caitlín Conneely, responded:

- The scheme has been piloted in respect of Tidy Towns Groups only and this is expected to expand in due course.
- Activities that are carried out by Tidy Towns Groups are covered, but confirmation regarding the inclusion of lawnmowers will be sought.
- Local groups were assessed whether they met the eligibility criteria, there was no application process. Any other groups who meet the criteria over the coming months can be assessed for inclusion on the list.
- Fuerty Fair doesn't meet the criteria for the scheme.
- Town Teams were considered but they did not meet the criteria.
- The commencement date was Friday 22nd November 2024, and a letter was issued to all the groups on the list.

The Cathaoirleach, Cllr. Fitzmaurice sought clarification on whether Tidy Towns groups need to respond to the letters and provided information in order to be included in the scheme.

Director of Services, Caitlín Conneely, responded in saying that information was provided to the groups with a follow up contact in due course. She clarified that there will be an additional charge to the Local

Authority insurance.

Chief Executive, Shane Tiernan, clarified that the insurance is risk based, and it is important that the list is valid and other groups don't assume they are insured. He clarified that fairs and festivals are not included in the pilot scheme.

160.24 CORRESPONDENCE

Director of Services, Caitlín Conneely, notified members regarding an email from Superintendent Jason Miley, Roscommon Garda Station. The email is a response to correspondence to the Garda Chief Superintendent from a motion put forward by Cllr. Moylan in September 2024. Superintendent Miley offered to meet with members to discuss the matters raised. Director of Services, Caitlín Conneely suggested organising an in committee meeting.

Cllr. Moylan welcomed the suggestion and put himself forward to be on the committee to meet Superintendent Miley.

161.24 NOTICE OF MOTION

161.24a DELAYS IN THE ROLL OUT OF FIBRE BROADBAND IN SOME URBAN AND RURAL AREAS OF COUNTY ROSCOMMON - CLLR. MICHÉAL FRAIN

I request that this Local Authority writes to Eir and National Broadband Ireland (NBI) regarding the delay in the roll out of Fibre Broadband in areas of the County. Eir are not prioritizing fibre connection where there is old narrowband copper speed of up to 30 MPS.

In rural locations where NBI are faring a lot better with connections, there seems to be delays where the fibre connection is made to the nearest pole, but connection to the house is taking weeks or months thereafter.

The success of rural businesses and remote working relies on fast and reliable broadband connection.

The Meetings Administrator read the following reply:

This Motion requires a Resolution of the Council.

Members supported the motion and made the following points:

- There are concerns that Eir has moved onto larger towns as the connection has not been made in some areas. Eir should pass the job to NBI to complete. Action needs to be taken to support investment.
- Councillors are unable to contact NBI directly to raise queries.
- It is unclear who is overseeing the rollout of fibre broadband.
- Fibre Broadband is one of the most importance pieces of infrastructure for households and businesses.
- There is a sizable amount of funding being provided by Government and taxpayers for the rollout.
- A proposal was made to write to NBI requesting a meeting with a spokesperson for clarity on the rollout.

On the **PROPOSAL** of Cllr. Fitzmaurice
SECONDED by Cllr. Frain

It was **AGREED** to write to Eir and National Broadband Ireland (NBI) to request a meeting with the elected members regarding the delay in the rollout of fibre broadband in some urban and rural areas in County Roscommon.

161.24b DELAYS TO OR PREVENTION OF INFRASTRUCTURE PROJECTS - CLLR. TOM CROSBY

That Roscommon County Council formally submits a proposition to the Taoiseach requesting the incoming Government enact legislation that would give authority to the Government to address instances where judicial reviews taken by third parties delay or prevent the advancement of infrastructure projects imperative for mitigating risks of harm.

Examples of such events are the flooding in Lough Funshinagh ongoing now for almost 10 years, as well as the opposition to the construction of the 4km section of the N61 from Clashaganny to Tulsk, which has been constantly on the agenda of the Council for the past thirty years.

The Meetings Administrator read the following reply:

This Motion requires a Resolution of the Council.

Members supported the motion and made the following points:

- This is a serious issue which is putting families at risk.
- There are legal challenges being taken on environmental grounds.
- The rights of an individual should be paramount at times.
- Requests were made to the Taoiseach, Tánaiste and the Minister for the OPW with regard to enacting legislation that would circumvent the provisions of the Habitat Directive.
- There needs to be a change at European level and all member states will have to be supportive of amending the Habitats Directive.
- A proposal was made to write to the Minister requesting compensation to be provided to farmers for their loss of income.

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

It was **AGREED** that Roscommon County Council formally submits a proposition to the Taoiseach requesting the incoming Government enact legislation that would give authority to the Government to address instances where judicial reviews taken by third parties delay or prevent the advancement of infrastructure projects imperative for mitigating risks of harm.

It was **AGREED** to circulate this letter to all Local Authorities.

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

It was **AGREED** to write to the Minister for Agriculture and Minister for Finance requesting compensation to be provided to farmers for their loss of income due to the flooding in Lough Funshinagh.

161.24c WATER AND ELECTRICITY INFRASTRUCTURE - CLLR. GARETH SCAHILL

That this council calls on the Department of the Environment, Climate and Communications to prioritise Water and Electricity Infrastructure in Roscommon during the term of the next government.

There are a lot of promises currently around the delivery of housing across the country, but I along with my colleagues, am very familiar with the lack of investment in the water and electricity grid throughout Roscommon.

For our County to be ready for the projected increase in population we need major investment in both the water and electricity grid throughout Roscommon.

The Meetings Administrator read the following reply:

This Motion requires a Resolution of the Council.

Members supported the motion and made the following points:

- The water infrastructure needs to be upgraded to reduce the number of outages.
- The electricity grid needs to be upgraded through investment.
- A programme is in place to encourage farmers to avail of a grant to put solar panels on sheds to generate their own power, but the grid does not have the capacity to take any surplus power being made.
- There has been significant investment by Irish Water through the installation of new water treatment systems.
- Investment is needed to replace the pipes in the county.
- There is a lack of any plan to install sewerage systems into villages to encourage development.
- Proper infrastructure is needed to entice businesses and companies to work in Roscommon.
- The area of Cloonfad into Garranlahan has suffered greatly with outages due to poor infrastructure over the past number of years.
- A proposal was made to write to Irish Water to replace the pipework in this area.

Director of Services, Caitlín Conneely, noted that Uisce Éireann hold a Water Services Workshop annually with Elected Members to give an opportunity to feed into the work programme for the year. The next workshop is being held in January or February 2025 and notification will issue shortly. She advised some of these concerns could be brought to the meeting.

On the **PROPOSAL** of Cllr. Scahill

SECONDED by Cllr. Moylan

It was **AGREED** to write to the Department of the Environment, Climate and Communications, Irish Water, ESB Networks, and EirGrid to request they prioritise water and electricity infrastructure in Roscommon during the term of the next government.

On the **PROPOSAL** of Cllr. Scahill

SECONDED by Cllr. Fitzmaurice

It was **AGREED** to write to Irish Water requesting that that the infrastructure from Cloonfad to Garranlahan in Co. Roscommon is investigated due to consistent outages.

161.24d CRIMINAL JUSTICE SYSTEM - CLLR. ANTHONY WALDRON

I Cllr. Anthony Waldron, call on the incoming government to carry out an in-depth investigation why the criminal justice system is not operating effectively.

The Meetings Administrator read the following reply:

This Motion requires a Resolution of the Council.

Members supported the motion and made the following points:

- A proposal was made to write to the new Minister for Justice when appointed to reopen the Garda Stations which were closed in the last 9 or 10 years in Roscommon and East Galway areas.
- It was suggested to meet with the Superintendent in Roscommon initially which is already in process.
- It was suggested to raise the query with the Superintendent regarding why a Roscommon Councillor is not permitted to sit on the Westmeath Committee where Monksland is covered.
- Rural crime is a major ongoing issue at present.
- The process has commenced to set up a Community Safety Partnership in every county.

Director of Services, Mark Keaveney, noted that seven elected members will be nominated onto the forum. A recommendation for Chair of the forum has been sent to the Minister but confirmation is on hold until the new Government is in place. There are a number of organisations that are mandated to be on the Local Community Safety Partnership.

A question was asked regarding when the meeting with Superintendent Miley might take place.

Director of Services, Caitlín Conneely, responded confirming that an in camera meeting with Superintendent Miley was previously agreed and contact will be made with his office. There is no timeline for the meeting yet.

Cllr. Waldron put himself forward to attend the meeting with the Minister.

The Cathaoirleach, Cllr. Fitzmaurice advised there is currently no confirmed meeting with the Minister. It has already been agreed in a previous meeting that the Cathaoirleach and the four Municipal District Chairpersons would attend any such meeting if confirmed. The Cathaoirleach stated that if a meeting is confirmed with the Minister, the Council would revisit the attendees.

Director of Services, Caitlín Conneely, read out Paragraph A Section 138 of The Standing Orders.

On the **PROPOSAL** of Cllr. Waldron

SECONDED by Cllr. Ward

It was **AGREED** to write to the new Minister for Justice to call on the incoming government to carry out an in-depth investigation why the criminal justice system is not operating effectively and a query regarding electronic monitoring to be extended its current form.

On the **PROPOSAL** of Cllr. Ward

SECONDED by Cllr. Waldron

It was **AGREED** to write to the new Minister for Justice when appointed to reopen the Garda Stations which were closed in recent years.

161.24e WINTER GRITTING PROGRAMME - CLLR. SEAN MOYLAN

I call on Roscommon County Council to extend the Winter gritting programme, to include the approach

roads to the rural schools that are not currently on this programme, and this would be to extend 500 metres in each direction from these schools.

Although this may be expensive, it would be for a very short period when you take into account Christmas holidays etc. This would greatly enhance the safety around our schools at peak times.

Members supported the motion and made the following points:

- The area around schools should be included in the Winter gritting programme as a priority to prevent the schools being closed due to frost.
- It was suggested that there would be five weeks of gritting required in December and January due to holidays.
- A question was asked regarding whether a private gritting company could be used to grit around the school areas where materials are supplied by the Local Authority.
- Churches and dangerous junctions should be included in the Winter gritting programme.
- It was suggested to look at alternative ideas such as providing salt to schools where caretakers could use it.
- An alternative idea was trialled by Galway County Council whereby salt bins and salt were provided to schools.
- There is no public transport systems in place for a number of rural schools so they rely on their own method of transport or walking to bring children to school.
- A proposal was made to write to Galway County Council to find out if the project was successful and cost effective, and potentially implement in Roscommon.

Director of Services, Greg O'Donnell responded to the points raised and made the following points:

- National and Regional roads are treated as priority.
- Potentially dangerous to grit a section of the road in front of schools as people would expect the entire road to be gritted.
- The Winter Service Plan is at capacity and it cannot be extended to cover all school areas.
- Approximately half of all schools are covered by the Winter Service Plan.
- The Department of Education is permitted to hire an independent company for schools.
- Roscommon County Council has a scheme whereby salt bins can be provided in a community setting to salt footpaths. The issue was referred to a sub-committee in relation to schools being included.

The Cathaoirleach, Cllr. Fitzmaurice queried the mechanism to get salt bins.

Director of Services, Greg O'Donnell confirmed that a request can be made to the local Area Office.

Cllr. Moylan requested to amend the motion to include writing to the Department of Education to seek funding for bins or apparatus for around National Schools to treat car parks and footpaths by staff.

On the **PROPOSAL** of Cllr. Moylan

SECONDED by Cllr. Keogh

It was **AGREED** to write to Minister for Education to look at providing salt bins and salt to all schools in rural areas in County Roscommon.

On the **PROPOSAL** of Cllr. Kelly

SECONDED by Cllr. Scahill

It was **AGREED** to write to Galway County Council to understand the pilot that they ran on salt banks for schools.

162.24 QUESTIONS

Responses to Questions were circulated to members in advance of the meeting.

163.24 COUNCILLORS CONFERENCES - PAYMENT/ATTENDANCE

On the **PROPOSAL** of Cllr. Keogh

SECONDED by Cllr. Moylan

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

164.24 VOTES OF CONGRATULATIONS AND SYMPATHY

Cllr. Ward congratulated Oran GAA on winning the Camogie County Final. He also wished Padraig Pearses good luck in the upcoming Connaght Final.

The Cathaoirleach Cllr. Fitzmaurice offered good wishes all candidates in the upcoming general election.

165.24 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

Meetings Administrator Karen Hanley stated that subsequent to the last Plenary Meeting, the date for the Budget Meeting was changed at the request of the members to from the 20th November 2024 to 4th December 2024.

The new Budget Meeting date was **AGREED** by members.

The Chief Executive, Shane Tiernan mentioned the Christmas events across Roscommon in the coming weeks and encouraged members to promote Roscommon towns for Christmas.

NEXT MEETING

The next meeting will be on Monday, 16th December, 2024.

This concluded the business of the meeting.

The foregoing Minutes are
Confirmed and Signed:



Meetings Administrator



Countersigned



Cathaoirleach