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**MINUTES OF MONTHLY Meeting OF ROSCOMMON COUNTY COUNCIL  
COUNCIL Chamber, Áras an Chontae, Roscommon  
MONDAY, 23rd March, 2026 AT 2.15 pm.**

**PRESENT:** Councillor Liam Callaghan **PRESIDED**

**MEMBERS:** Cllr L. Brennan, Cllr V. Byrne, Cllr R. Conboy, Cllr D. Connolly, Cllr T. Crosby, Cllr L. Cull, Cllr N. Dineen, Cllr V. Duffy, Cllr L. Fallon, Cllr P. Fitzmaurice, Cllr M. Frain, Cllr M. Holland, Cllr E. Kelly, Cllr J. Keogh, Cllr S. Moylan, Cllr M. McDermott and Cllr T. Ward.

**OFFICIALS:** Shane Tiernan, Chief Executive  
Caitlín Conneely, Director of Services  
Mark Keaveney, Director of Services  
Sean Mullarkey, Director of Finance  
Fiona Ni Chuinn, A/Director of Services  
Karen Hanley, Meetings Administrator  
Claudette Collins, Staff Officer

**Apologies:**

**31.25 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.

**32.25 DERMOT EARLEY BURSARY 2025**

The awards for the Dermot Earley Bursary 2025 were presented. Cathaoirleach Cllr. Callaghan extended a warm welcome to Paula Earley, daughter of the late Dermot Earley, as well as this year's recipients, Niall Henegahan of Michael Glavey's GAA Club and Aisling Shanagher of Kilbride LGFA Club.

He stated that the Council is proud to continue its support for sporting excellence and highlighted the value of sport in all its forms, particularly its contribution to wellbeing and healthy living.

The Cathaoirleach also welcomed Gerry Fitzmaurice, former county footballer and All-Ireland winner, acknowledging his involvement with the bursary committee. He paid tribute to the Earley family and recognised the impact that Dermot Earley has had across the county, as well as the family's long-standing contribution to the GAA community.

Cllr. Callaghan congratulated Aisling Shanagher and Niall Henegahan on their selection as recipients of the Dermot Earley Sports Bursary for 2025, wishing them every success in their future academic and sporting pursuits.

A presentation was also made to Paula Earley and the Cathaoirleach thanked Paula for representing the Earley family on this occasion.

### **33.25 ADOPTION OF MINUTES**

On the **PROPOSAL** of Cllr. Fitzmaurice

**SECONDED** by Cllr. McDermott

It was **AGREED** to adopt the minutes of the Plenary Meeting of 23.02.2026.

### **34.25 MATTERS ARISING**

There were no matters arising.

### **35.25 MANAGEMENT REPORT**

- Management Report for February noted.

Cllr. Conboy requested that additional data be included in the Planning section of the Management Report for monitoring purposes. While the number of applications approved is currently reported, she asked that these figures be further broken down to show the number of housing units associated with both approvals and refusals. She also requested that a year-to-date total be included in each monthly report, and that quarterly reports include a monthly breakdown for greater clarity.

Cllr. Conboy further requested a once-off Chief Executive's Report for 2025 outlining detailed planning information, including:

- The number of successful versus unsuccessful applications following pre-planning meetings, to assess whether the pre-planning process is having a positive impact.
- The number of applications that received a decision within 6 months and 9 months, for timeline analysis.
- An overview of common reasons for refusal such as challenges relating to national routes, wastewater treatment systems, and other recurring issues.
- And that all figures be provided per Municipal District, rather than the current North/South Roscommon format.

Director of Services, Mr. Mark Keaveney, advised that the request would be reviewed and aim to provide as much of the information as possible.

Cathaoirleach Cllr. Callaghan noted that a revised Management Report structure had been approved at the recent CPG meeting and noted that it would enhance the information going forward.

Chief Executive, Mr. Shane Tiernan, added that data would be provided where possible. He reminded Members that the preparation of planning reports is an executive function, and that planning decisions must align with national policy and the County Development Plan. He also reiterated that discussions cannot be held in relation to individual planning applications.

### **36.25 CORRESPONDENCE**

Noted as circulated in advance of the meeting.

Cllr. Duffy referred to correspondence received from the Office of Minister Browne regarding the proposed review of income thresholds in early 2026. She requested that a follow-up letter issue to the Minister's office seeking an update once this review has been completed.

### **37.25 PLANET YOUTH**

Cathaoirleach Cllr. Callaghan welcomed Mr. Emmet Major, Planet Youth Co-Ordinator, and Mr. Michaél Durkin, Co-ordinator with the Western Region Drug & Alcohol Task Force (WRDATF).

Mr. Major outlined his role as Planet Youth Co-ordinator and advised that the WRDATF is the coordinating body for the regional delivery of the National Drugs Strategy. He noted that a new draft strategy is currently being prepared and is due to commence this summer for a four-year period, with consultation still open through the Department of Health.

He advised that the WRDATF was established in 2003 and operates across Galway, Mayo and Roscommon, and is one of ten Regional Drug and Alcohol Task Forces nationally, which meet eight times annually. Its core function is to identify regional substance-use challenges and coordinate effective responses. In Roscommon, engagement includes nine post-primary schools and two Youthreach centres, with areas of work spanning policy and collaboration, training and capacity building, rehabilitation and recovery, family support, prevention and early intervention.

Mr. Major explained that Planet Youth is the WRDATF's flagship programme and is a public health-led prevention initiative based on the Icelandic Prevention Model, addressing alcohol and drug use, excessive screen time, mental health and sleep. He noted that the model emerged following exceptionally high adolescent substance-use rates in Iceland 25 years ago and has since achieved some of the lowest rates globally, with the approach now recognised internationally as best practice.

He outlined that biennial surveys of 15 and 16 year olds provide detailed insight into young people's behaviours, environments and experiences. The data informs targeted interventions across the home, peer group, school and leisure settings, with an emphasis on keeping young people active, engaged and connected.

Following each survey, information booklets are issued to parents of First Year students in September and Junior Cycle students in November, with a new booklet for parents of pre-school children to be introduced this year. These resources focus on family time, communication, routines, bedtimes, screen use, interests and sleep.

Mr. Major advised that detailed reporting is provided on substance use, binge drinking, parental tolerance and alcohol supply, with data available at school, municipal district, county and agency level. He highlighted that sleep deficit is a significant concern, with only 4–5% of young people achieving sufficient sleep.

Additional supports include the Step-Up website, parental information sessions and SPHE teaching resources. While bullying and cyber-bullying are not identified as major issues, social exclusion is a significant concern and shows correlations with mental health challenges and substance use, leading to the development of a dedicated teaching module.

Approximately 800 students in Roscommon participate annually. Current trends show a decline in cannabis use, a minor reduction in lifetime alcohol use, but an increase in reported drunkenness in the previous 30 days, later bedtimes, worsening sleep deficits and increased night-time phone use. While overall mental health indicators show improvement, outcomes for female students remain lower than for males.

Mr. Major concluded by noting that Planet Youth data is widely used to support funding applications, service and policy planning, local economic and community development, national public health initiatives, academic research and suicide prevention work. The next survey will take place in November, with reports to be published in April 2027.

Cathaoirleach Cllr. Callaghan thanked Mr. Major for his comprehensive presentation, noting the significant changes in young people's lives and stressing the importance of early supports, open communication and setting boundaries.

Members welcomed the presentation and highlighted the following points:

- Strong support for the Icelandic Prevention Model, which has proven effective internationally.
- Agreement that substance use, mental health, sleep deprivation and screen use are serious and growing issues across the county.
- Appreciation for the quality and depth of the data, with acknowledgment that while some trends are improving, challenges remain significant.
- A recommendation that Planet Youth data be used to inform regional and local strategies, including the Local Economic and Community Plan and the Local Community Safety Partnership.
- Noted that the Roscommon Local Community Safety Partnership will launch its countywide community safety survey in the coming days to directly inform its three-year Community Safety Plan. It was advised that the survey is anonymous, available online, with hard copies accessible in libraries, and participation was strongly encouraged to ensure data reflects county needs.
- Calls to ensure adequate facilities, spaces and activities for young people, with a suggestion that Roscommon County Council engage with Comhairle na nÓg to audit public amenities and identify gaps.
- Recognition of the positive role of sporting clubs, youth clubs and community organisations in prevention and engagement.
- Queries regarding whether future surveys could reflect emerging issues such as vaping, artificial intelligence and social media use.
- Questions on whether the survey could be expanded to include younger and older age groups, and whether it captures young people outside formal education and from diverse or migrant backgrounds.
- Concerns about excessive social media use, its impact on sleep and concentration, and the need for greater parental awareness.
- Agreement that drug availability is no longer confined to urban areas and is now a local rural issue.
- Discussion on links between substance use and criminal activity, and concerns about media glorification of drugs.
- Queries as to whether consideration has been given to the development of drug courts outside Dublin, or whether this could be explored at a regional level.
- Expressions of concern and surprise at the scale of sleep deprivation highlighted in the data.
- Recognition of the significant impact of video gaming and online interaction, with concern that virtual engagement is replacing in-person socialising, contributing to declining participation in youth clubs and, in some cases, their closure.

- Concerns that national messaging on drugs is not sufficiently impactful, with calls for stronger prevention messaging.
- Requests for increased school-based engagement, including education for parents and young people.
- Queries on peer responses to substance use and the need to support, rather than ostracise, affected young people.
- Calls for increased Garda checks on underage alcohol sales.
- Significant concern regarding the scale of vaping, regulation, and commercial interests involved.
- Recognition of pressures on CAMHS and family support services.
- Agreement that prevention must begin at primary level.

Mr. Major, in response, advised that survey questions evolve over time, participation is expanding to include more 17-year-olds, and work is underway to explore data gaps for older age groups. He confirmed that night-time phone use correlates strongly with sleep deprivation and reiterated that Planet Youth focus on environmental change rather than education led approaches, with an emphasis on health-based prevention over justice led responses.

Mr. Durkin added that while the Citizens' Assembly recommended expanding drug courts, current emphasis is on the health model. He noted that the WRDATF provides a parent hub online and cautioned that awareness talks can be informative and compelling, however there is no evidence to suggest that they are effective.

### **38.25 CHIEF EXECUTIVE'S REPORT - NPF IMPLEMENTATION: HOUSING GROWTH REQUIREMENTS (GUIDELINES FOR PLANNING AUTHORITIES AS ISSUED UNDER SECTION 28 OF THE PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT ACT 2000 (AS AMENDED))**

Ms. Mary Grier, Senior Planner, and Mr. Brian Farragher, Senior Executive Planner, delivered a presentation on the Chief Executive's Report relating to the implementation of the National Planning Framework (NPF) Housing Growth Requirements.

Ms. Grier advised that the presentation followed an earlier briefing to Members in October, which introduced the NPF Housing Growth Guidelines issued in July 2025, requiring Planning Authorities to take action to implement revised housing targets. She explained that the guidelines respond to population growth since 2018 significantly exceeding projections, with Ireland's population now expected to exceed 6 million by 2040, necessitating revised approaches to accommodating housing demand nationwide. The guidelines assess housing demand to 2040 for each local authority and support delivery of approximately 50,000 additional households per annum nationally.

Ms. Grier outlined that Planning Authorities are required to review and amend their Core Strategies, including zoning of additional serviced or serviceable lands, and that the guidelines facilitate an "additional provision" of up to 50% above baseline housing targets. She referred to Appendix 1 of the guidelines, noting that for Roscommon the baseline housing target for 2025–2034 remains at 392 units, consistent with the 2022–2028 County Development Plan (CDP). Applying the additional provision allowance results in a revised target of 588 units, with a slightly reduced total of 534 units for the period 2035–2040.

Mr. Farragher outlined the preparatory work undertaken to date, including a comprehensive Core Strategy review; analysis of permissions granted; uptake of zoned land; assessment of remaining available zoned

lands; identification of additional lands potentially suitable for zoning; settlement capacity audits considering water services, roads, footpaths and public lighting; and preparation of a draft revised Core Strategy and zoning maps, undertaken in collaboration with the GIS Section.

He advised that the next steps include preparation of the Chief Executive's Report in accordance with the Section 28 Guidelines, drafting the Proposed Variations to the Roscommon CDP 2022–2028 and the Roscommon Town LAP 2024–2030, and completion of statutory environmental assessments (AA, SEA and SFRA) by external consultants. Subject to consultant timeframes, the statutory plan variation process will then commence.

Mr. Farragher advised that the revised Core Strategy increases overall settlement allocations from 1,726 units to 3,012 units countywide. The variation will include updates to CDP Volume I to reflect the NPF requirements, revised zoning maps in Volume II, a new settlement plan for Boyle, a new land-use zoning strategy for Cortober, and a new settlement plan for Roscommon Town, replacing the existing LAP.

He outlined the proposed statutory process, noting that public consultation on the Draft Variation is expected to commence in late April/early May 2026 for a minimum four-week period. A Chief Executive's Report on submissions will then issue approximately eight weeks after commencement of consultation, with Members required to consider the report within six weeks thereafter. The overall post-consultation process will take approximately 14 weeks, subject to material alterations.

The Cathaoirleach, Cllr. Callaghan, thanked Ms. Grier and Mr. Farragher for their presentation and noted the scale and ambition of the targets in the context of current construction activity levels. He observed that the targets equate to investment of approximately €200 million per annum in housing across the county, representing a substantial increase on current private expenditure.

Members thanked the presenters and raised the following matters:

- Calls for equitable growth across the county, ensuring all towns have fair opportunities to develop.
- Enquiries regarding disparities in zoning increases, with Roscommon Town (100%) and Monksland (80%) compared to Castlerea (25%), which was considered disappointing. Queries were raised as to why uptake rates (30% in Castlerea, 7% in Boyle, 4% in Roscommon Town, 0% in Ballaghaderreen) were not more strongly reflected in zoning allocations.
- Concern that Castlerea, which has available water and wastewater capacity, received a lower zoning uplift than towns requiring infrastructure upgrades.
- Views that provision could potentially be increased further to stimulate development.
- It was raised that villages were not sufficiently addressed, despite strong demand and limited housing availability, with calls for more planned residential development to support rural regeneration and counteract depopulation and ageing.
- Concern that without increased housing delivery, Roscommon risks losing out on economic growth, with calls for renewed government incentives similar to the former Section 23 scheme.
- Queries regarding how appetite or willingness of landowners to develop zoned lands is assessed.
- Queries regarding future planning for the Ballinasloe/Athlone area and interaction with the Athlone Joint Area Plan.
- Calls for additional growth allocation in Monksland, reflecting Athlone's housing pressures, FDI levels and growth trajectory.
- Calls to recognise serviced lands in South Roscommon, including Barrymore, Kiltoom and Hodson Bay, which were de-zoned during the downturn.

- Questions regarding the impact of the variation on the vacant site levy/RZLT.
- Queries regarding flexibility to exceed targets where demand exists.
- Concerns regarding wastewater constraints in Ballaghaderreen and future engagement with Uisce Éireann.

Ms. Mary Grier, Senior Planner, responded to Members' queries by clarifying that the housing growth figures presented in the Chief Executive's Report relate specifically to existing settlements that already have residential zoning under the current CDP. She emphasised that opportunities for residential development within town centres, town cores, outer cores and designated opportunity sites remain available and are not fully reflected within the new zoning figures. She noted that, in the case of Castlerea, in addition to newly zoned residential lands, existing town core and outer core lands, opportunity sites and a number of whitelands identified in the 2022 CDP continue to contribute towards the Core Strategy housing capacity.

Ms. Grier explained that the proposed variation is an interim measure, intended to bridge the period between now and the making of the next generation of 10-year County Development Plans. She advised that the variation takes account of the current CDP expiry date of 2028, while introducing contingency to 2031, in anticipation that all local authority development plans may be extended nationally, although formal confirmation is awaited. She further clarified that new 10-year CDPs cannot commence until updated Regional Spatial and Economic Strategies are adopted across the regions.

She advised that once regional strategies are in place, extensive pre-draft engagement with Members will be undertaken as part of the next CDP review process, at which stage broader ambitions, including the role and growth potential of villages, can be fully revisited. In the interim, she noted that villages are not precluded from development, and that the absence of residential zoning in some villages can, in practice, offer greater flexibility for appropriately scaled housing proposals, particularly in serviced or semi-serviced locations.

In relation to South Roscommon, including Hodson Bay, Barrymore and Kiltoom, Ms. Grier clarified that Hodson Bay is addressed within the settlement strategy and remains capable of accommodating development within its defined settlement boundary. She advised that during the current CDP process Members were informed that assigning additional population or zoned growth to Hodson Bay would have necessitated reallocating growth away from other settlements. She confirmed that significant residential development has already taken place in the area and that opportunities for further appropriate development remain.

Addressing concerns regarding whether zoned lands are realistically developable, Ms. Grier outlined that the Planning Authority has drawn extensively on evidence from the Vacant Site Levy and Residential Zoned Land Tax (RZLT) processes. Lands where owners have indicated no intention to develop, or have sought exclusion from levies, have generally not been prioritised. She emphasised that the lands proposed under the variation are those considered to have a reasonable prospect of development, subject to market interest, and that the forthcoming public consultation provides landowners with an opportunity to make submissions, which may result in amendments where warranted.

With regard to Monksland, Ms. Grier noted that substantial areas of land remain available for mixed-use development, including Council-owned lands such as Hanlon's Quarry, which offer significant long-term development potential. In relation to the Athlone Joint Area Plan, she explained that while the Core

Strategy variation must include all settlements, the joint planning process with Westmeath County Council must proceed separately. She advised that coordination of timelines, variations and public consultation will be required, and that while work is ongoing, indicative timeframes suggest progress later in the year, subject to inter-authority alignment.

Ms. Grier further advised that recent legislative changes under the Planning and Development Act 2024 have replaced Joint Area Plans with Co-ordinated Area Plans, which require designation by the Regional Assembly. She encouraged Members to engage with the Assembly should they wish to pursue this approach. She also clarified that the NPF guidelines do not permit the introduction of entirely new zoning concepts in locations not previously zoned, and therefore the variation is confined to settlements with existing residential zoning.

Ms. Grier stressed that housing targets should not be viewed as caps, noting that Planning Authorities are required to monitor and report on delivery, but that appropriate proposals consistent with policy are considered on their planning merits. She also highlighted that Roscommon County Council's approach differs from some authorities that rely heavily on increased densities to meet targets, explaining that the Council has sought a practical and context-sensitive balance, applying density standards appropriately while ensuring development remains compatible with the character of towns and rural settlements.

Mr. Mark Keaveney, Director of Services, advised that the variation seeks to maximise the opportunities afforded by the NPF guidelines, providing capacity for over 3,000 housing units to 2031, equating to well in excess of 500 units per annum. He noted that approximately 220 housing units were delivered in 2025 and 200 in 2024, demonstrating an upward trend. He emphasised that zoning decisions are informed not only by availability of land, but by the likelihood of delivery, including infrastructure capacity, market demand and economic viability, which is currently strongest in Roscommon Town and Monksland, while still allowing for growth across all towns.

Mr. Keaveney added that the Council remains open and supportive of pre-planning engagement with developers and landowners to facilitate reasonable and sustainable housing proposals on appropriately zoned or suitable lands.

Following further clarification queries, Ms. Grier confirmed that the housing growth figures are based on the 2022 Census, that whitelands can accommodate limited residential development, but are not suitable for significant increases, and that any extension of CDPs beyond 2028 will be a national policy decision. The Chief Executive, Mr. Shane Tiernan, noted that the existing CDP already provided a substantial uplift above baseline housing targets, and that the proposed variation effectively represents a significant further increase, while acknowledging that actual delivery remains dependent on economic conditions and developer confidence. He emphasised that housing supply will not materialise without sufficient market demand and return on investment.

### **39.25 DRAFT POLICY AND PROCEDURE FOR ALLOCATION AND ADMINISTRATION OF BURIAL GROUNDS MAJOR REPAIR AND EMERGENCY REPAIR BUDGETS (2026)**

Chairperson of the Roads, Planning and Emergency Services SPC, Cllr. Crosby introduced the Draft Policy and Procedure for Allocation and Administration of Burial Ground Major Repair and Emergency Repair Budgets 2026, which had been presented to the SPC on 25th February.

He outlined that the policy sets out the processes for administering, prioritising and approving and delivering works funded through the major repair works budget (€25,000 per MD annually) and the emergency repairs works budget (€7,500 per MD annually). It is designed to ensure compliance with statutory obligations, local bye-laws and the schedule of MD works as provided for under Section 103A of the Local Government Act 2001 (as amended).

This policy applies to all burial grounds managed by Roscommon County Council across the three Municipal Districts (Boyle, Athlone and Roscommon) and extends to council staff, caretakers, engineer personnel, Elected Members and community groups.

Major repair works are defined as construction related activities such as structural repairs, drainage improvements, significant tree surgery beyond routine maintenance and repairs to gates, boundary walls or other structural elements. Such works are defined as urgent interventions required to address hazardous conditions including storm damage, unstable structures or failures that pose risk to public safety or burial operations.

The SPC had considered the draft policy and recommended it for approval and adoption. Cllr. Crosby requested that Members adopt the policy.

Members welcomed the policy and funding being made available and raised the following:

- Acknowledgment for the voluntary work undertaken by community members in graveyards.
- Concerns regarding overgrown trees and incidents of falling trees across graveyards; a request was made for a review and survey of trees that may pose risks.
- An update was sought on the Crypt in Ballintubber which was damaged during Storm Éowyn.
- It was queried whether preventative works are covered under the tree surgery provisions.
- A recommendation to amend the policy to include damage to headstones/graves following storms such as the example of Castlerea graveyard following Storm Éowyn and lack of communication from IPB regarding insurance cover.

Cllr. Keogh, as representative on the IPB board, offered to raise the matter at the IPB AGM in May.

Cathaoirleach Cllr. Callaghan advised that the proposed policy is separate from works covered by insurance.

Director of Services, Mr. Mark Keaveney, confirmed that storm-related damage to headstones and graveyards falls under insurance and must be submitted accordingly. He advised that the Castlerea case is progressing and reiterated that the policy relates to non-insurance works. He further confirmed that preventative works are covered within the policy, but requests will be prioritised as they arise. He added that the Ballintubber crypt is a Protected Structure, requiring a feasibility study, which is currently underway.

On the **PROPOSAL** of Cllr. Crosby

**SECONDED** by Cllr. Moylan

It was **AGREED** to adopt the Draft Policy and Procedure for Allocation and Administration of Burial Ground Major Report and Emergency Repair Budgets 2026

On the **PROPOSAL** of Cllr. Dineen

**SECONDED** by Cllr. Conboy

It was **AGREED** to extend Standing Orders until 6.20pm.

#### **40.25 2025 IMPLEMENTATION REPORT LA CLIMATE ACTION PLAN**

Director of Services, Ms. Caitlín Conneely, advised that the 2025 Local Authority Climate Action Plan Implementation Report was included in the agenda pack. She noted, however, that due to the length of the agenda, the full presentation would be deferred to the April meeting, while the report itself must be submitted to the Department before the end of March. She outlined that this is the second implementation report of the Climate Action Plan, which was adopted in January 2024. The report summarises progress made on actions during 2025, reflects a whole Council approach, and includes examples of implementation across all service areas, along with case studies. She noted that significant progress has been achieved to date and sought the Members' approval to adopt the report.

On the **PROPOSAL** of Cllr. Fitzmaurice

**SECONDED** by Cllr. Dineen

It was **AGREED** to adopt the 2025 Local Authority Climate Action Implementation Report.

#### **41.25 NOTICES OF MOTION**

##### **41.25a CLLR. FITZMAURICE - M3:26 - ROAD RESURFACING**

###### **Notice of Motion from Cllr. Fitzmaurice**

Notice of motion calling on Roscommon County Council to surface dress the area set back outside houses on roads which are on the roads program when requested by the homeowner.

###### **The Meetings Administrator read the following reply:**

Section 103A(1) of the Local Government Act 2001, as amended, provides that "As soon as may be following the adoption of the local authority budget, a schedule of proposed works of maintenance and repair to be carried out during the financial year in each municipal district shall be prepared under the direction of the chief executive, having regard to the availability of resources."

Section 103A(2) states "A schedule prepared for the purposes of subsection (1) shall be considered by the **municipal district members** concerned and be adopted by resolution, with or without amendment by it, within such time limit and in accordance with such conditions and requirements as may be prescribed by the regulations made by the Minister."

Section 103A(3) goes on to state "In making an amendment under subsection (2) the municipal district members shall have due regard to the local authority budget adopted".

Roscommon County Council's Roads & Transportation Unit, on behalf of the Chief Executive, prepares the Annual Roads Programme in accordance with engineering best practice, available funding, and established operational procedures. This programme outlines the funding available and the routes to be included in the works schedule for consideration of the members.

If adopted by the District, it then falls to the Roads Department to implement the Schedule of Municipal District Road Works in accordance with all standards and funding requirements in an efficient and effective manner to obtain maximum value for money.

While the area between the edge of the carriageway and the boundary wall of individual dwellings may, in some cases, fall within the public road, it is generally not included in resurfacing works for the following reasons:

1. Planning and Design Responsibility:

In rural areas, property owners were often required under planning permission to set back boundary walls to facilitate sightlines, provide pull-in areas, prevent runoff onto the public road, provide adequate drainage, etc. These works were to be constructed to an appropriate standard at the time of development. Retrospective resurfacing of these areas—especially where standards were not met—would represent a poor use of public funds and could be contrary to their planning permission.

Road levels are not typically raised outside residential properties. In cases where this occurs, accommodation works are agreed with the landowner and necessary surfacing and drainage works, etc are completed by the Council as part of the road project.

2. Drainage Considerations:

Resurfacing set-back areas would introduce drainage responsibilities for each individual property, which should have been addressed during the original planning and design of the dwelling. This would be a considerable burden on the Council, in terms of funding and risk (including claims), in some circumstances.

3. Resource Allocation:

Extending resurfacing to include all such areas would significantly reduce the funding available for the main carriageway network, which serves the broader public interest and is a NOAC indicator. This would compromise the Council's ability to maintain road safety and connectivity across the county.

4. Operational Protocols:

The Council's current approach aligns with engineering norms and practices in many other local authorities. It ensures consistency, fairness, and the most effective use of limited resources.

Cllr. Fitzmaurice noted that although this was recently raised, colleagues in neighbouring Local Authorities have confirmed that this practice is carried out and noted that it was the standard practice in Roscommon a few years ago. He noted that set-back areas are used as pull-ins on narrow roads, serving the Council's interests. He added that planning conditions require residents to set back their walls, and residents comply, however, questions arise regarding insurance liability for incidents occurring in these areas.

Members supported the motion and raised the following points:

- The issue was raised recently and received unanimous support.
- This is a policy matter and should be brought to the SPC for formal policy development.
- The practice occurs in many other local authorities.
- Rural homeowners feel they receive little in return for property tax.
- The practice was carried out historically.
- Resurfacing outside houses without proper works can raise road levels and create flooding.
- In North Roscommon, particularly with current road closures and diverted traffic, areas outside houses are being damaged, causing significant issues.

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

It was **AGREED** to support the motion.

Director of Services, Mr. Mark Keaveney, clarified that where resurfacing alters levels and affects water runoff, accommodation works are carried out. He also noted that it is not just as simple as resurfacing, in some cases foundation works and drainage works are required. He added that Local Authorities in Westmeath, Cavan, Galway, Offaly, Sligo do not carry out this practice. He explained that Departmental funding requirements for regional and local roads require engineers to certify works are carried out only on the road and not adjoining areas.

Chief Executive, Mr. Shane Tiernan, advised that, if this practice were adopted, the length of road resurfaced annually would be significantly reduced. He explained that the funding received is based on the new map roads system which calculates every square millimetre of tar and chip, leaving no scope to extend works beyond the road surface.

On the **PROPOSAL** of Cllr. Kelly  
**SECONDED** by Cllr. Keogh  
it was **AGREED** to extend Standing Orders until 6.40pm.

**41.25b CLLR D CONNOLLY, CLLR V DUFFY, CLLR L FALLON, CLLR E KELLY, CLLR J KEOGH, CLLR T WARD - M4:26 - PROPOSED WIND FARM DEVELOPMENT AT CORNAFULLA**

Cathaoirleach Cllr. Callaghan welcomed those in the public gallery including Martin Daly TD and friends of Clonmacnoise, Cornafulla and Shannon Callows.

**Notice of Motion from Cllr. Connolly, Cllr. Duffy, Cllr. Fallon, Cllr. Kelly, Cllr. Keogh & Cllr. Ward**

We, the 6 councillors in South Roscommon, strongly feel that the proposed wind farm development at Cornafulla is not in keeping with the County Development Plan and its associated strategies. We propose that any planning bodies involved with the process are made aware of the sensitivities of the area and give a detailed outline of acknowledging these in their decision-making.

**The Meetings Administrator read the following reply:**

The Planning Authority has not, to date, had any approach from prospective applicants in relation to the development described in this Notice of Motion.

The process provides that the applicant must seek determination from An Coimisiún Pleanála as to whether the proposed constitutes a SID.

In the event of a proposal of the nature referenced being the subject of a planning application submitted to Roscommon County Council as Planning Authority, a comprehensive assessment will, as always, be undertaken, including identification of all relevant designations etc. with the assessment and conclusions reached being detailed in a Planning Report and a decision on the application being made as part of the executive functions of Roscommon County Council.

In the event of a development of the nature referenced constituting a Strategic Infrastructure Development, a planning application would be made directly to An Coimisiún Pleanála. In such an instance, Roscommon County Council, as a prescribed body, would be consulted and under Section 37E of the Planning and Development Act 2000 would be required "to prepare and submit to the Board a report setting out the views of the authority on the effects of the proposed development on the environment and

the proper planning and sustainable development of the area of the authority.” The Chief Executive is required, prior to the submission of a report to An Comisiún Pleanála, to submit the report to Members of the Authority in order to seek their views on the development proposal. In the event that Members decide, by resolution, to attach further recommendations to the report, irrespective of the recommendation of the Chief Executive, those recommendations would be attached to the Chief Executive’s Report for overall submission to An Comisiún Pleanála.

Cllr. Connolly introduced the motion, describing it as an appeal for all planning bodies involved in the proposed windfarm development to recognise the sensitivities of the area. He stated that the proposal is not in keeping with the County Development Plan (CDP). While acknowledging the importance of renewable energy for climate action, he emphasised that the location is a distinctive mid-Shannon landscape, close to the Shannon floodplains, the Shannon Callows and Clonmacnoise. He noted that the CDP highlights the need to balance environmental protection, heritage and community wellbeing, and that the nearby Athlone area is entering a significant phase of development under Ballymore’s masterplan. He stressed the environmental value of Cornafulla Bog within this wider landscape.

Cllr. Duffy highlighted that Cornafulla Bog has been undergoing natural ecological restoration since peat extraction ceased in 2020, with stabilising groundwater, re-emerging wetlands, fen habitats and open water increasing biodiversity. She noted that rewetted peatlands act as major natural carbon stores, recognised internationally, and that the CDP acknowledges the significance of these peat depths. She stated that while renewable energy is necessary, it should not be located in a recovering ecosystem of growing ecological value.

Cllr. Fallon stated that he supports wind energy in principle but believes this location is unsuitable, citing the proximity and significance of the Clonmacnoise monastic site—one of Ireland’s top visitor destinations, dating back to 544 AD.

Cllr. Kelly stressed that large-scale developments have significant impacts on communities, noting that Cornafulla is surrounded by long-established settlements. She raised concerns regarding noise, traffic, lighting, and the impact on landscape character and quality of life and emphasised the importance of retaining rural populations.

Cllr. Keogh stated his strong support for renewable energy, particularly offshore wind, but noted that the area is clearly identified in the CDP as unsuitable for wind development due to ecological sensitivity, landscape character, and proximity to key heritage and environmental features. He emphasised that Ireland’s planning system is plan-led, and the CDP is a statutory framework adopted by elected members.

Cllr. Ward highlighted that the Middle Shannon Callows is one of Europe’s most important floodplains and is designated both a Special Protection Area and Special Area of Conservation. He referred to the wildlife dependent on the wetlands—including the whooper swan, otter, golden plover and teal—and noted the callows’ key role in water regulation during flooding. He expressed support only for offshore wind, citing concerns about the depopulation and devaluation effects of onshore turbines.

On the **PROPOSAL** of Cllr. Connolly  
**SECONDED** by Cllr. Keogh  
It was **AGREED** to support the motion.

#### **41.25c CLLR. FRAIN - M5:26 - PLANNING OBJECTIONS**

With the agreement of Cllr. Frain, this motion was postponed until the April meeting.

#### **42.25 CHIEF EXECUTIVE BUSINESS**

Director of Services, Mr. Mark Keaveney, informed the meeting that Section 1 of the N5 Ballaghaderreen to Scramogue Project, the Frenchpark Bypass, will be officially opened on Thursday, 26th March at 12.00 p.m. by the Cathaoirleach and the Minister for Transport, Mr. Darragh O'Brien. He noted that Members should have received their invitations, including details and instructions regarding access to the site.

The Cathaoirleach Cllr. Callaghan added that the opening would be a significant and positive day for the area and one he is very much looking forward to.

#### **43.25 COUNCILLORS CONFERENCES - PAYMENT/ATTENDANCE**

On the **PROPOSAL** of Cllr. Connolly

**SECONDED** by Cllr. Fitzmaurice

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

#### **44.25 VOTES OF CONGRATULATIONS AND SYMPATHY**

Sympathies were expressed to Cllr. Frain, on the recent passing of both his mother & father-in-law Olive & Tim Dowd.

Cathaoirleach Cllr. Callaghan congratulated the local towns & villages across the county on their St. Patrick's day parades and acknowledged all those involved in organising and participating in the events.

He advised that he had travelled to New York for St. Patrick's Day, accompanied by the Chief Executive, Mr. Shane Tiernan, and Director of Services, Ms. Caitlín Conneely. He expressed his appreciation to the welcoming committee and to the New York–Roscommon Association for their hospitality throughout the visit. He also acknowledged the Castlerea Brass Band for their attendance and valued contribution to the festivities.

The Cathaoirleach noted their attendance at the launch of the extension of the Famine Trail to New York, an initiative led by Roscommon native Mr. Hilary Beirne. He reported that very productive meetings were also held with IDA Ireland, Enterprise Ireland, and representatives of the tourism board.

He noted that the trip was a great honour and a wonderful experience.

#### **45.25 ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

There was no further business.

***NEXT MEETING***

**The next meeting will be on Monday, 27th April, 2026.**

This concluded the business of the meeting.

The foregoing Minutes are  
Confirmed and Signed:



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Meetings Administrator

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Cathaoirleach

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Countersigned

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