

Minutes of Meeting of Leitrim County Council held in the Council Chamber, Carrick-on-Shannon, Co Leitrim on Monday 6th March, 2017

Members Present: Councillor Armstrong–McGuire, Finola
Councillor Barry, Brendan
Councillor Dolan, Gerry
Councillor Dolan, Frank
Councillor Fallon, Pdraig
Councillor Ellis, Caillian
Councillor Guckian, Des
Councillor Guckian, Sinead
Councillor Logan, Seadhna
Councillor Mulvey, Caroline
Councillor McCartin, John
Councillor McDermott, Sean
Councillor McGowan, Sean
Councillor O'Rourke, Paddy
Councillor Stenson, Enda
Councillor Warnock, Justin

And Councillor Mary Bohan, Cathaoirleach presiding

Apologies: Councillor Gurn, Felim

Officials Present: Mr. Frank Curran, Chief Executive
Mr. Joseph Gilhooly, Director of Services, Economic Development, Planning, Environment and Transportation
Ms. Mary Quinn, Director of Services, Housing and Community, Corporate Services, Culture and Emergency Services
Mr. Vincent Dwyer, A/Head of Finance and Water Services
Mr. Billy Lowe, Senior Engineer, Water Services
Mr. Shay O'Connor, Senior Engineer, Infrastructure
Mr. Bernard Greene, Senior Planner
Ms. Vivienne Egan, Senior Executive Planner
Mr. Shane Tiernan, Senior Executive Officer
Mr. Terry McGovern, A/Senior Executive Officer
Ms. Una Wynne, Financial/Management Accountant
Ms. Ann Warnock, Administrative Officer
Ms. Sinead Flynn, Meetings Administrator
Ms. Kathleen McGovern Ellis, Assistant Staff Officer

17/27

06/03/2017 **Votes of Sympathy**

The Members extended a vote of sympathy to the following:

- The family of the late Caroline Moran, Drumrahill, Mohill, Co Leitrim
- The family of the late Freddie Easterbook, Drumcong, Co Leitrim
- Maureen Connolly, Monien, Kinlough, Co Leitrim on the death of Sean Connolly.
- Ruth Abbott, Druminchin, Carrigallen, Co Leitrim on the death of John Abbott.

17/28

06/03/2017 Deimhniu Miontuairisci

Proposed by Councillor Enda Stenson, seconded by Councillor Brendan Barry and RESOLVED:

“That the Minutes of Leitrim County Council Meeting held in the Council Chamber, Aras An Chontae, Carrick-on-Shannon, Co Leitrim on Monday, 9th January, 2017 be adopted”.

Councillor Des Guckian requested that the following amendments be made to the Minutes of the January Council meeting:

- “No” reference in the Minutes to €53,000 for works at Mountcampbell.
- “Councillor Des Guckian stated that he was not given the right of reply to his Notice of Motion”.

Councillor Brendan Barry requested the following amendments to the Minutes of the January Council Meeting: -

- “That a clause should be in place that a farmer that is approved for a forestry grant should be residing within a certain distance of the landholding”.

The above amendments to the Minutes were agreed by the Members and incorporated into the Minutes of 9th January, 2017.

17/29

06/03/2017 Presentation on the proposed Phase II Development of the Civic Office Development in Carrick-on-Shannon

Mr. Frank Curran, Chief Executive welcomed Mr. James O’Donoghue and Mr. Cormac O’Sullivan from Bluett O’Donoghue, Architects to deliver their presentation on the proposed Phase II Development of the Council’s Civic Office Development in Carrick-on-Shannon, Co. Leitrim.

Mr. O’Sullivan thanked the Cathaoirleach and Elected Members for affording him and Mr. O’Donoghue the opportunity to address the meeting. He provided a detailed presentation on the proposed Civic Office Development in Carrick-on-Shannon. A copy of the presentation appears as **Appendix 1** to the Minutes of this meeting in the Minute Book.

The Cathaoirleach, Councillor Mary Bohan thanked Mr. O’Sullivan and Mr. O’Donoghue for their presentation and invited questions and comments from the Members. The following comments were raised:

- Councillor Des Guckian stated that the proposed office development at an estimated cost of €5 million is unwarranted and he called for the project to be abandoned. Councillor Guckian also referred to the tunnels underneath the building and he requested that they be retained having regard to their historical importance.
- Councillor Sinead Guckian also referred to the historical significance of the tunnels and she requested that consideration be given to opening up of the tunnel to public access as part of the design of the proposed extension. Councillor Sinead Guckian also queried what provision has been made for Members facilities in the new building.

Mr. O'Sullivan outlined that O'Donovan Archaeologists have been engaged to consult on the project. He advised that the recommendations of the Archaeologist and the associated cost will be considered with regard to any proposal to open the tunnels.

Mr. Frank Curran advised that the proposed extension will provide for a fit-for-purpose Housing Department and will ensure that all local authority services can be located on one campus. He also advised that the new building incorporates a new staff canteen and that the old canteen will then be re-designed to provide meeting facilities for the Elected Members. Mr. Curran informed the Members that this is an opportune time to proceed with the proposed re-development as the financing of the project by a loan is at a very competitive interest rate.

The Cathaoirleach, Councillor Mary Bohan thanked Mr. O'Sullivan and Mr. O'Donoghue for addressing the meeting.

17/30

06/03/2017 Raising of a loan of €5m for the purposes of the construction of Phase II of the Civic Office Development in Carrick-on-Shannon, Co. Leitrim.

Report dated 6th March, 2017 from Mr. Vincent Dwyer, A/Head of Finance & Water Services with regard to the loan proposal for the Civic Office Phase II Development as circulated to each Member appears as **Appendix 2** to the Minutes of this meeting in the Minute Book. Mr. Dwyer advised that the loan proposal is in effect a rollover on the previous loan which financed Phase I of the works. He also advised that the Council has made provision for continued loan repayments in the 2017 Annual Budget. Mr. Dwyer outlined that the estimated cost of the project is based upon a borrowing requirement of €5m over a repayment period of 25 years at a 1.5% fixed interest rate with an annual repayment of €240,579.

Councillor Frank Dolan welcomed the proposed extension to Aras-an-Chontae. He also requested that the Chief Executive Mr. Frank Curran progress the development of office facilities in North Leitrim.

Councillor John McCartin also welcomed the proposal and he requested that consideration be given to the provision of meeting rooms for the Elected Members in the proposed extension. Councillor McCartin stated that the Council may generate additional revenue by leasing or disposing of office accommodation currently in the Council's ownership, which will be surplus to requirements once the extension is completed.

Councillor Justin Warnock also supported the request to provide office accommodation in North Leitrim for the Manorhamilton Municipal District members.

The Cathaoirleach, Councillor Mary Bohan welcomed the proposed extension to the County Building in Carrick-on-Shannon and she also supported the call for office accommodation to be provided in North Leitrim.

Councillor Des Guckian expressed his concern about the cost of servicing the annual loan repayment of €240,579. He also stated that the closure of the Mohill Area Office in recent years was a great loss to the local community.

Councillor Pdraig Fallon and Councillor Brendan Barry also welcomed the proposal which will provide for the re-location of all local authority services to one campus in Carrick-on-Shannon.

Mr. Frank Curran stated that the new Civic Headquarters will assist in the provision of local authority services to the citizens of Leitrim. He advised that the funding of the project will not divert funding away from other service areas e.g. roads or housing. Mr. Curran outlined that the Council will consider alternative uses for the properties that will be vacated once the build is complete e.g. for use by community groups etc. He confirmed that the estimated overall cost of the project is €5.8 million, with €800,000 of funds available from the Council's own resources and €5 million to be financed by a loan.

Proposed by Councillor Sinead Guckian, seconded by Councillor Brendan Barry and RESOLVED

"That the raising of a loan of €5 million by Leitrim County Council for the purposes of construction of Phase II of the Civic Office Development in Carrick-on-Shannon be approved".

17/31

06/03/2017

Transfer Plot of Land at Aughameeny and Keenaghan

Notice of intention dated 17th February, 2017, from Mr. Joseph Gilhooly, Director of Services, Economic Development, Planning, Environment and Transportation with regard to the transfer of a plot of land comprising 1.265Ha or thereabouts in the townlands of Aughameeny and Keenaghan, Carrick-on Shannon comprised in Folio 3941F of the Register of Freeholders of County Leitrim and the option to transfer a plot of land comprising 0.992Ha or thereabouts in the above townlands comprised in Folio 3941F of the Register of Freeholders of County Leitrim in accordance with Section 183 of the Local Government Act, 2001 as circulated to each Member appears as **Appendix 3** to the Minutes of this Meeting in the Minute Book.

Proposed by Councillor Enda Stenson, seconded by Councillor Finola Armstrong-McGuire and UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED:

"That the transfer of Plot of land comprising 1.265Ha or thereabouts in the townlands of Aughameeny and Keenaghan, Carrick on Shannon comprised in Folio 3941F of the Register of Freeholders County Leitrim and option to transfer plot of land comprising 0.992Ha or thereabouts in the above townlands comprised in Folio 3941F of the Register of Freeholders of County Leitrim in accordance with Section 183 of the Local Government Act, 2001 and Notice of intention to transfer a plot of land comprising 1.265Ha or thereabouts in the townlands of Aughameeny and Keenaghan, Carrick on Shannon comprised in Folio 3941F of the Register of Freeholders of County Leitrim and the option to transfer a lot of land comprising 0.992Ha or thereabouts in the above townlands comprised in Folio 3941F of the Register of Freeholders County Leitrim dated 17th February, 2017 as circulated to each Member be approved".

17/32

06/03/2017

Disposal of plot of ground at Lisdarush, Rossinver

Notice of intention dated 23rd February, 2017, from Ms. Kathyryne Bohan, Administrative Officer, Housing in relation to the disposal of a plot of ground comprising circa 0.5634 acres (0.228 hectares) in the townland of Lisdarush, Rossinver, Co. Leitrim (registered in the name of Leitrim County Council – Folio No LM 19460 in accordance with Section 183 of the Local Government Act, 2001 as circulated to each Member appears as **Appendix 4** to the Minutes of this Meeting in the Minute Book.

Proposed by Councillor Padraig Fallon, seconded by Councillor Justin Warnock and UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED:

“That the disposal of a plot of ground comprising circa 0.5634 acres (0.228 hectares) in the townland of Lisdarush, Rossinver, Co Leitrim (registered in the name of Leitrim County Council – Folio No. LM 19460 in accordance with Section 183 of the Local Government Act, 2001 and Notice of intention to dispose of plot of ground comprising circa 0.5634 acres (0.228 hectares) in the townland of Lisdarush, Rossinver, Co Leitrim (registered in the name of Leitrim County Council – Folio No LM 19460 dated 23rd February, 2017 as circulated to each Member be approved”.

17/33

06/03/2017 Disposal of freehold interest in Rural Cottage

Notice of intention dated 23rd February, 2017, from Ms. Kathryne Bohan, Administrative Officer, Housing in relation to disposal of the Freehold interest in rural cottage No. 215, and adjoining site comprising circa 1.05 acres (0.425 hectares in the townland of Ardrum, Ballinamore, Co Leitrim (Freehold interest Registered in name of Leitrim County Council – Folio No LM17434) in accordance with Section 183 of the Local Government Act, 2001 as circulated to each Member appears as **Appendix 5** to the Minutes of this Meeting in the Minute Book.

Proposed by Councillor Brendan Barry, seconded by Councillor Gerry Dolan and UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED:

“That the disposal of Freehold interest in rural cottage no 215, and adjoining site comprising circa 1.05 acres (0.425 hectares in the townland of Ardrum, Ballinamore, Co Leitrim (Freehold interest Registered in name of Leitrim County Council – Folio No LM17434) in accordance with Section 183 of the Local Government Act, 2001 and Notice of intention to dispose of Freehold interest in rural cottage no 215, and adjoining site comprising circa 1.05 acres (0.425 hectares in the townland of Ardrum, Ballinamore, Co Leitrim (Freehold interest Registered in name of Leitrim County Council – Folio No LM17434) dated 23rd February 2017 as circulated to each Member be approved”.

17/34

06/03/2017 Management of Invasive Alien Plant Species on Roads

Report dated 24th February, 2017 from Mr. Shay O'Connor, Senior Engineer recommending that Leitrim County Council enter into an agreement under Section 85 of the Local Government Act, 2001 as amended, with Roscommon County Council in respect of the programme for the management of Invasive Alien Plant Species on roads whereby Roscommon County Council will be enabled to undertake the works as may be necessary in the Administrative Area of Leitrim County Council as circulated to the Members, appears as **Appendix 6** to the Minutes of this meeting in the Minute Book.

Proposed by Councillor Finola Armstrong McGuire, seconded by Councillor Sean McGowan and UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED:

“That Leitrim County Council hereby resolves to enter into an agreement under Section 85 of the Local Government Act, 2001 with Roscommon County Council in respect of the programme for the management of Invasive Alien Plant Species on roads whereby Roscommon County Council will be enabled to undertake the above as may be necessary in the Administrative Area of Leitrim County Council be approved”.

Councillor Des Guckian queried what is meant by the term “Management of Invasive Alien Plant Species”. He also requested an indication as to when this programme will commence.

Mr. Frank Curran advised that the proposal before the Members is to agree to enter into an agreement with Roscommon County Council to the management of Invasive Alien Plant Species (Japanese Knotweed) and that it may take up to four years before the plant can be eliminated from roadsides etc.

17/35

06/03/2017

Annual Service Delivery Plan 2017

The Draft Annual Service Delivery Plan, 2017 as circulated to the Members appears as **Appendix 7** to the Minutes of this meeting in the Minute Book.

Mr. Frank Curran, outlined that in accordance with the provisions of Section 134A of the Local Government Act, 2001 (as inserted by Section 50 of the Local Government Reform Act, 2014), that each local authority is required to prepare an Annual Service Delivery Plan which sets out the activities to be undertaken by that local authority in 2017 to deliver on the objectives of the Corporate Plan.

Proposed by Councillor Enda Stenson, seconded by Councillor Finola Armstrong McGuire and UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED:

‘That Leitrim County Council’s Annual Service Delivery Plan, 2017 is adopted’.

17/36

06/03/2017

Prevention and Control of Litter

Report dated 28th February, 2017 from Mr. Joseph Gilhooly, Director of Services, Economic Development, Planning, Environment and Transportation on the operation of the Litter Pollution Act, 1997 with regard to measures taken during 2016 for the prevention and control of litter as circulated to the Members appears as **Appendix 8** to the Minutes of this meeting in the Minute Book.

Mr. Gilhooly advised Members that the Litter Management Plan 2016-2019 sets out the Council’s role, policy and commitment to the control of litter. He informed the Members that the Council will continue to work directly and in partnership with a variety of volunteers to implement the Litter Management Plan.

Councillor Pdraig Fallon expressed concern that the current budget allocation and resources are inadequate to address illegal dumping in the county. He proposed that the Council should recruit additional Community Wardens to increase the level of enforcement against persons that illegally dispose of their household or other waste.

Councillor Sean McDermott noted that the unauthorised disposal of litter is visible on roads and laneways throughout the county. He stated that this has a negative impact of the county and he appealed to the public to refrain from this practice.

Councillor Caillian Ellis referred to a recent incident of illegal dumping in Fenagh, Co. Leitrim. He stated that when the matter was reported to the Council by a member of the public and they were advised that there was no Community Warden available to remove the rubbish.

Councillor Finola Armstrong McGuire highlighted that the disposal of chewing gum on footpaths in towns and villages is becoming a serious problem.

Councillor Seadhna Logan acknowledged the role of the Environment Department in litter management and control and he also supported the request for additional funding to be made available to finance this service.

Councillor Sinead Guckian also supported the comments of her fellow members and she commended the voluntary efforts of many community groups in their role in organising clean-ups etc in their local areas. Councillor Guckian stated that it is difficult to identify and impose fines on persons that are carrying out illegal dumping. She proposed that a letter issue to the Minister for Housing, Planning, Community and Local Government calling for an increase in the level of fines that can be applied to persons that have illegally disposed of waste materials.

This proposal was supported by Councillor Enda Stenson.

Councillor Justin Warnock outlined the a Local Community Group in Tullaghan, Co. Leitrim regularly organise litter pick-up's. He advised that an agreement had been in place whereby rubbish collected was then removed for disposal by Gateway employees. Councillor Warnock advised that this agreement is no longer in place. He outlined that the only alternative available to the Community Group is to use a private collector at a cost of €360 per year and he requested that this cost be funded by Leitrim County Council.

Mr. Frank Curran, Chief Executive agreed to fund the €360 waste disposal cost for the Tullaghan Community Group.

Councillor Enda Stenson and Councillor Brendan Barry requested clarification in relation to the Gateway Scheme.

Mr. Frank Curran advised that the Gateway Scheme is no longer available from the Department of Social Protection.

Councillor Seadhna Logan proposed that income from fines received from litter offences be ring fenced specifically for the Environment Department. Mr. Joseph Gilhooly confirmed this is the case presently, however, he advised that income generated is relatively low.

The Cathaoirleach, Councillor Mary Bohan paid tribute to the many positive environmental initiatives that are ongoing by the local authority and in the schools. She also supported the call for the Council to employ additional Community Wardens.

Mr. Joseph Gilhooly stated that littering and illegal dumping incidents will continue to be problematic regardless of the number of staff employed in this area.

The report was noted by the Members.

17/37

06/03/2017

Hedge Cutting Grants Scheme

Report dated 28th February, 2017 from Mr. Joseph Gilhooly, Director of Services, Economic Development, Planning, Environment and Transportation on the proposed Hedge Cutting Grant Scheme as circulated to the Members appears as **Appendix 9** to the Minutes of this meeting in the Minute Book.

Mr. Gilhooly outlined that arising from the review of the Environment, Transportation and Infrastructural Strategic Policy Committee the Hedge Cutting Grant Scheme was agreed for referral to the Council with the following recommendations:-

- The Hedge-Cutting Grant Scheme will be introduced as a pilot basis for one year i.e. one hedge cutting season.
- Hedges will be cut to 6ft in height.
- The distance to be reduced to 3 km. i.e. €50 per Km of roadside hedge/overhanging trees
- The area proposed for hedge cutting will be agreed in advance with the District Engineer.

Mr. Gilhooly outlined that the Scheme including the proposed amendments is recommended for approval to be implemented from September, 2017.

The Members welcomed the scheme and stated that the issue of landowners not maintaining hedges on their land-holdings is an ongoing problem for motorists and commercial drivers in many locations throughout the county. Mr. Joseph Gilhooly clarified that the grant will only be available to land-owners and that State Agencies e.g. Coillte will not be eligible to apply for the grant.

Proposed by Councillor Brendan Barry, seconded by Councillor Enda Stenson and UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED:

“That the implementation of a Hedge Cutting Grants Scheme on a 1 year Pilot Scheme basis be approved”.

17/38

06/03/2017

Schedule of Uncollected Rates

Mr. Vincent Dwyer, A/Head of Finance and Water Services presented an over-view of the Schedule of Uncollected Rates. He informed the Members that the Schedule of Uncollected Rates Report was available for inspection at the meeting.

This update was noted by the Members.

17/39

06/03/2017

Rate Collection Report for 2016

The Rate Collection Report, 2016 dated 27th February, 2017 from Mr. Vincent Dwyer, A/Head of Finance as circulated to the Members, appears as **Appendix 10** to the Minutes of this meeting in the Minute Book. Mr. Dwyer gave an over-view of the contents of the report.

The report as circulated was noted by the Members.

The Cathaoirleach, Councillor Mary Bohan proposed that Motion No's 22 in the name of Councillor John McCartin, Motion No. 28 in the name of Councillor Finola Armstrong McGuire, Motion No. 31 in the name of Councillor Frank Dolan and Motion No. 35 in the name of Councillor Felim Gurn be taken at this point as they relate to the current revaluation process currently in progress by the Valuation Office.

This was agreed by the Members.

To consider the following Notice of Motion submitted by Councillor John McCartin;

"In the recent commercial premises revaluation, drink sales were multiplied by 7% and food sales were multiplied by 5% annually to establish the rate liability.

It is clear that this has amounted to a significant rise in rates for pubs and restaurants against a back drop of falling turnover and tightening margins.

This flat rate does not take into account economies of scale. Pubs with a large turnover can achieve a greater margin than those with a smaller turnover.

I propose a progressive rate for pubs and restaurants as follows;

Food sales up to €200,000 to be rated at 3%

Food sales above €200,000 to be rated 5%

Drink sales up to €500,000 to be rated at 5%

Drink sales above €500,000 to be rated at 7%"

Report by Head of Finance & Water Services, Finance

"The Valuation Office has recently notified Ratepayers of their proposed valuation as part of the revaluation process for County Leitrim. Ratepayers were afforded the opportunity to make representations within a forty day period which has now expired. The Valuations Office will consider all representations made and issue a final valuation to Ratepayers in September 2017, which will be applicable in 2018 for Commercial Rates purposes.

The methodology used for revaluation is a matter exclusively for the Valuation Office."

To consider the following Notice of Motion submitted by Councillor Finola Armstrong-McGuire;

"Town Centre Retail is changing rapidly. With revaluation of Rates now leaving most of Carrick-on-Shannon's town centre retailers experiencing upward costings can this chamber examine the of giving Rates allowances where occupiers of premises have created a unique style outlet of tourist, historical, artistic and economical benefit. Many premises see no return from Leitrim County Council for Rates paid. We may lose key businesses in town through the costing of Rates increasing. Rent is fixed but much increased rates are sprung on businesses. Credits should be earned by recognising uniqueness and excellence."

Report by Head of Finance & Water Services, Finance

"The Valuations Office has recently issued indicative valuations to Ratepayers as part of the revaluation process. Ratepayers were afforded an opportunity to make representations in this regard and the Valuations Office held a workshop and attended meetings with Ratepayers to explain the process. Leitrim County Council have not increased the Annual Rate on Valuation over the last nine years and as a result, have one of the lowest rates in the region, notwithstanding the fact that the collection of commercial rates is critical to the financial management of the Local Authority. The introduction of credits or allowances cannot be facilitated, within the current system."

To consider the following Notice of Motion submitted by Councillor Frank Dolan;

"As a result of the revaluation process rate payers in Dromahaire Village have received a significant increase, so much so that other doors may be forced to close, and should this happen the village will have very little left. I ask in light of this that we write to the relevant Department calling for a complete change to this out dated system of collecting revenue in an effort to save not just Dromahaire but all our small towns and villages."

To consider the following Notice of Motion submitted by Councillor Felim Gurn;

"The methodology employed for determining the rate-able valuations of licensed premises and restaurants in Ireland by the Valuation Office is placing an impossible burden on such businesses in rural Ireland. We call on the appropriate authorities to reduce the turnover percentage used in the calculation by 50% - otherwise employment in these sectors will be adversely affected and may result in some people going out of business."

Report by Head of Finance & Water Services, Finance

"The Valuation Office has recently notified Ratepayers of their proposed valuation as part of the revaluation process for County Leitrim. Ratepayers were afforded the opportunity to make representations within a forty day period which has now expired. The Valuations Office will consider all representations made and issue a final valuation to Ratepayers in September 2017, which will be applicable in 2018 for Commercial Rates purposes. The methodology used for revaluation is a matter exclusively for the Valuation Office."

Mr. Vincent Dwyer, A/Head of Finance outlined that the Valuation Office recently notified ratepayers of their revised commercial rate liability following the conclusion of the revaluation process. He also advised that letters of notification issued by the Valuation Office informed ratepayers that they had the right to make representations to the Valuation Office within a 40-day period. Mr. Dwyer outlined that the Valuation Office will review all representations received and that they will issue a final revaluation in September, 2017 to come into effect in 2018. He also advised that ratepayers will have the right of appeal to the Valuation Tribunals Office if they are dis-satisfied with the decision.

Councillor John McCartin expressed his dissatisfaction with the methodology used for calculating commercial rates liabilities. He stated that the system is flawed and that many businesses operating in rural areas have seen a significant increase in their commercial rate liability at a time when they are struggling to keep their businesses operating.

Councillor Finola Armstrong McGuire also expressed her concern in relation to the impact of increased rates for the business community. She stated that increased rates may be unsustainable for some businesses that may result in the business closing. Councillor Armstrong-McGuire also outlined that a number of business owners have made investments in older buildings which is also preserving the history and heritage of the town. She proposed that there should be a means to offset an amount of their commercial rates liability in recognition of their contribution to preserving the heritage of these buildings.

Mr. Vincent Dwyer, A/Head of Finance advised that credits or allowances cannot be applied to businesses under the current rates system.

Councillor Finola Armstrong McGuire also paid tribute to the staff in the Finance Department for the manner in which they engage with customers in relation to the collection of commercial rates. Councillor Enda Stenson also acknowledged the role of the Finance Staff in this regard.

Councillor Frank Dolan stated that if ratepayers are not in a position to pay their rates, then this will have a negative impact on the local authority's income. He outlined that ratepayers in Dromahaire see no return for the money they paid for their commercial rates as the town has lost out on potential funding streams under the Town and Village Renewal Scheme and Rural Economic Development Zone funding. Councillor Dolan expressed concern that there is a lack of local authority funding to provide basic infrastructure requirements e.g. footpaths.

Councillor Paddy O'Rourke concurred with the comments of his fellow members and outlined that the full impact of the Rates Re-evaluation process will only be evident in 2018 when the revised rates come into effect.

Councillor Mary Bohan proposed that the Notice's of Motions raised by the Members be forwarded to the Valuation Office. She also proposed that a meeting with staff from the Valuation Office and Elected Members of Leitrim County Council be arranged to afford the Members the opportunity to discuss the Revaluation Scheme in detail. It was agreed that the meeting should take place before 15th September, 2017.

This proposal was unanimously supported by all members with the exception of Councillor Des Guckian. Councillor Guckian stated that he saw no merit in having a meeting with the Valuation Office.

Proposed by Councillor Mary Bohan supported by Councillor Frank Dolan and resolved that:

'Motion No. No's 22 in the name of Councillor John McCartin, Motion No. 28 in the name of Councillor Finola Armstrong- McGuire, Motion No. 31 in the name of Councillor Frank Dolan and Motion No. 35 in the name of Councillor Felim Gurn be forwarded to the Valuation Office and that a meeting with the Elected Members of Leitrim County Council and staff from the Valuation Office be arranged before 15th September, 2017'.

17/40

06/03/2017

Leitrim Joint Policing Committee

Report dated 28th February, 2017 from Ms. Mary Quinn, Director of Services, Housing, Corporate, Culture & Emergency Services as circulated to the Members, appears as **Appendix 11** to the Minutes of this meeting in the Minute Book.

The report was noted by the Members.

17/41

06/03/2017

Audit Committee Report, 2016

The Annual Report, 2016 from the Audit Committee to Leitrim County Council, dated 6th February, 2017 and submitted in accordance with the provisions of Section 122 of the Local Government Act, 2001, as amended by Section 5 of the Local Government (Business Improvement Districts) Act 2006, as circulated to each Member appears as **Appendix 12** to the Minutes of this Meeting in the Minute Book.

Mr. Frank Curran, Chief Executive gave an overview of the report.

The report was noted by the Members.

17/42

06/03/2017 Schedule of Municipal District Works including the Road Works Programme 2017

Mr. Joseph Gilhooly, Director of Services outlined that the Schedule of Municipal District Works including the Road Works Programme, 2017 was agreed at the three Municipal District Meetings in February, 2017. The Annual Area Programme, 2017 as circulated to the Members appears as **Appendix 13** to the Minutes of this meeting in the Minute Book.

Councillor Padraig Fallon expressed his disappointment that the Road Works Programme, 2017 makes no provision for the installation of new public lighting in estates. He requested that the Chief Executive and the Executive look favourably on requests from housing estates to be taken in charge.

Councillor Seadhna Logan supported Councillor Fallon's comments on public lighting and he also called for funding to be made available for the maintenance of footpaths.

Councillor Des Guckian stated that he submitted two roads for inclusion in the 2017 Roads Works Programme. He expressed his dis-satisfaction that the specific roads were not included in the programme and he called for fairness in the allocation of funding under the programme.

Mr. Frank Curran, Chief Executive advised Members that the Road Works Programme, 2017 is prepared having regard to the available allocation of €7.8 million and is distributed as equitably as possible across the three Municipal Districts. He advised that a budget in the region of €14 million would be required to adequately maintain the roads infrastructure in the county.

This update was noted by the Members.

17/43

06/03/2017 Monthly Management Reports by the Chief Executive

Monthly Management Reports for the period 1st December, 2016 to 31st December, 2016 and 1st January, 2017 to 31st January, 2017 by Mr. Frank Curran, Chief Executive, dated 13th January, 2017 and 13th February, 2017 respectively, prepared in accordance with Section 136 (2) of the Local Government Act, 2001 as inserted by Section 51 of the Local Government Reform Act, 2014, as circulated to the Members, appear as **Appendix 14** and **Appendix 15** to the Minutes of this meeting in the Minute Book.

This update was noted by the Members and the following items were raised:

- Councillor Brendan Barry sought an update on the current position in relation to unfinished estates in the county.
- Councillor Caillian Ellis stated that a number of estates, have a short-fall of €1,000 required to complete works before the estate can be taken-in-charge. He queried if the Council will fund the cost of these works.

Mr. Curran advised that it is proposed to hold a Workshop with the Members in relation to Unfinished Estates and the Taking-in-Charge process in May, 2017.

17/44

06/03/2017

Section 138 (1) of the Local Government Act 2001

Ms. Sinead Flynn, Meetings Administrator outlined that there were no commitments to note under this item.

17/45

06/03/2017

Corporate Policy Group Report

Ms. Sinead Flynn, Meetings Administrator gave an overview of the items considered by the Corporate Policy Group at their meeting held prior to the Council meeting.

Update from Strategic Policy Committee's

- **Environmental, Transportation & Infrastructural Policy Strategic Policy Committee**
A meeting of the Environmental, Transportation & Infrastructural Policy Strategic Policy Committee was held on the 22nd February 2017. The SPC considered the Draft Hedge Cutting Grant Scheme and agreed the SPC Work Programme for 2017.
- **Housing Policy, Social & Cultural Development Strategic Policy Committee**
A meeting of the Housing Policy, Social & Cultural Development Strategic Policy Committee was held on 28th February, 2017. The SPC Work Programme 2017 was agreed and updates were also provided on the Peace IV Programme, the Floral Pride/Community Awards Scheme, the Statutory Assessment of Housing Need 2016, the Housing & Disability Strategy and on the Creative Ireland Programme.

Meeting with Minister Shane Ross on the East/West Link Road

Ms. Flynn advised that Cavan County Council passed a Resolution requesting that Leitrim, Sligo, Louth and Monaghan County Council seek a joint delegation with Cavan County Council to meet with Minister Shane Ross in relation to the East/West Link Road. Ms. Flynn outlined that the Corporate Policy Group agreed that Councillor Sinead Guckian, Councillor Frank Dolan and Councillor Enda Stenson will attend this meeting in their capacity as Chairperson of the three Strategic Policy Committees.

National Planning Framework

Mr. Frank Curran, Chief Executive advised that a new National Planning Framework is being prepared by the Department of Housing, Planning, Community and Local Government to replace the National Spatial Strategy 2002-2020. He advised that submissions for the first consultation stage of the National Planning Framework process are invited by 16th March, 2017.

Presentations at the Municipal District Meetings

Ms. Flynn advised that the CPG agreed to facilitate a request from Mr. Sean O'Suilleabhain to give a presentation on the Irish language at the April Municipal District meetings.

Ms. Flynn advised that the Corporate Policy Group also considered agenda items for the Council meeting and approved the attendance of members at forthcoming conferences and training seminars. This update was noted by the Members.

Proposed by Councillor Sinead Guckian, seconded by Councillor Justin Warnock AND UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED:

“That the attendance of Councillor Caillian Ellis and Councillor Paddy O’Rourke at the Conference on “Tax Entitlements and Relief” at the Clonakilty Hotel, Co Cork on the 24th to 26th February, 2017 be retrospectively approved”.

Proposed by Councillor Sean McGowan, seconded by Councillor Sinead Guckian AND UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED:

“That the attendance of Councillor Caillian Ellis at the AILG Training in Waterford City on the 11th February, 2017 be retrospectively approved”.

Proposed by Councillor Paddy O’Rourke, seconded by Councillor Enda Stenson AND UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED:

“That the attendance of Councillor Padraig Fallon, Councillor Caillian Ellis and Councillor Felim Gurn at the LAMA 2017 Spring Training Seminar in City North Hotel, Gormanstown, Co. Meath on the 28th April to 29th April, 2017 be approved”.

“That the attendance of Councillor Padraig Fallon at the AILG Training in the Border & Western Region in Westport on the 13th May, 2017 be approved”.

“That the attendance of Councillor Finola Armstrong McGuire at the “Fair Deal Scheme Conference” in the Clonakilty Hotel, Clonakilty, Co Cork on the 10th March to 12th March, 2017 be approved”.

“That the attendance of Councillor Padraig Fallon at the Conference on “What does a hard Brexit Mean for Ireland?” in the Four Seasons Hotel, Carlingford, Co. Louth on the 31st March to 2nd April, 2017 be approved”.

“That the attendance of Councillor Finola Armstrong McGuire at the two day Social Media Training for Councillors in the Four Seasons Hotel, Carlingford, Co Louth on 5th April, 2017 be approved”.

“That the attendance of Councillor Finola Armstrong McGuire at the Conference on “Rural Revitalization Conference” on the 26th May, 2017 in Dublin be approved”.

“That the attendance of Councillor Caillian Ellis at the AILG Annual Conference in Tracey’s West County Hotel, Ennis, Co Clare on the 6th to 7th April 2017 be approved”.

“That the attendance of Councillor Mary Bohan at the Tourism Conference in The Riverside Park Hotel, Enniscorthy, Co. Wexford on Wednesday 29th and Thursday 30th March, 2017 be approved”.

Meeting Correspondence

The following items were considered under Meeting Correspondence:

1. Letter dated 11th January, 2017 from Cavan County Council enclosing response received from the Office of the Minister for Finance dated 30th November, 2016 in relation to a Resolution passed by Cavan County Council with regard to taxation of self employed cross border workers.
2. Letter dated 13th January, 2017 from the Department of Housing, Planning, Community and Local Government with regard to a Resolution passed by Leitrim County Council on the financing of Leitrim County Council by Central Government.
3. Letter dated 16th January, 2017 from the Department of Housing, Planning, Community and Local Government acknowledging receipt of a Resolution passed by Leitrim County Council with regard to the closed periods for the spreading of slurry.
4. Letter dated 17th January, 2017 from the Department of Health with regard to a Resolution passed by Leitrim County Council on Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) in the Sligo/Leitrim Catchment area.
 - Councillor Sinead Guckian expressed her disappointment at the ongoing failures to address both the waiting list and the lack of a Consultant Child Psychiatrists for Sligo/Leitrim. She stated that this issue was referred to the Department of Health for a response in September, 2016, yet no response was received until January, 2017. Councillor Guckian proposed that a further letter issue to the Minister for Health

This proposal was unanimously supported by all members.

5. Letter dated 19th January, 2017 from the Office of the Minister for Agriculture, Food and the Marine acknowledging receipt of a Resolution passed by Leitrim County Council with regard to forestry planting in County Leitrim.
 - Councillor Justin Warnock referred to the reference in this correspondence which stated that the Department of Agriculture, Food and Marine is preparing to conduct a mid-term review of the current forestry programme. He expressed his concern in relation to the increased levels of forestation that is occurring in North Leitrim and he stated that rural communities should be supported to be able to continue to reside in rural parts of the county.
 - Councillor Gerry Dolan and Councillor Caroline Mulvey welcomed that a mid-term review of the current forestry programme will be conducted and they stated that the industry needs to be regulated and have restrictions put in place in relation to the amount of land that can be planted for forestry.
 - Councillor Warnock queried if a response from Mr. Phil Hogan, EU Commissioner has been received in relation to a previous Notice of Motion.
 - Ms. Sinead Flynn, Meetings Administrator advised that a response in this regard is awaited.

6. Letter dated 3rd January, 2017 from the Office of the Minister for Education and Skills acknowledging receipt of a Resolution passed by Leitrim County Council with regard to the Leaving Certificate Applied Course and Youthreach.
7. Letter dated 6th February, 2017 from the Office of the Minister of State of Public Expenditure and Reform acknowledging receipt of a Resolution passed by Leitrim County Council with regard to motor insurance.
8. Letter dated 20th February, 2017 from the Office of the Minister for Foreign Affairs and Trade with regard to a Resolution passed by Leitrim County Council on International agreements.
9. Letter dated 14th February, 2017 from the Health Service Executive with regard to a Resolution passed by Leitrim County Council with regard to the Home Help Scheme.
- 9(a) Letter dated 22nd February, 2017 from the Office of the Minister for Health with regard to a Resolution passed by Leitrim County Council with regard to the Home Help Scheme.
10. Letter dated 21st February, 2017 from the Head of Social Care with regard to the new Community Hospital/Day Centre at Carrick-on-Shannon.
- 10(a) Letter dated 23rd February, 2017 from the Office of the Minister for Health acknowledging receipt of a Resolution passed by Leitrim County Council with regard to the provision of a Community Hospital/Day Care Centre in Carrick-on-Shannon.
11. Letter dated 31st January, 2017 from the Office of the Minister for Foreign Affairs and Trade acknowledging receipt of a Resolution passed by Leitrim County Council with regard to organ harvesting in China.
- 11(a) Letter dated 6th February, 2017 from the Office of the Taoiseach acknowledging receipt of Resolution passed by Leitrim County Council in regard to organ harvesting.
- 11(b) Letter dated 20th February 2017 from the Office of the Minister for Foreign Affairs and Trade with regard to organ harvesting.
12. Letter dated 28th February, 2017 from the Office of the Minister for Health with regard to Organ harvesting.
13. Letter dated 28th February, 2017 from the Department of Health with regard to the provision of a Community Hospital/Day Care Centre at Carrick-on-Shannon.
14. Letter dated 10th January, 2017 from Cavan County Council seeking a delegation from Leitrim County Council to join a joint delegation with Cavan, Sligo, Louth and Monaghan County Councils to meet Minister Ross in relation to the East/West link Road.

The following item was also raised under Meetings Correspondence:

- Councillor John McCartin proposed that a letter issue to the Minister for Social Protection Mr. Leo Varadkar requesting that he reverse the decision by the Department of Social Protection to consolidate MABS Offices. Councillor McCartin outlined that the current service provision provided by MABS is vital to assist persons experiencing poverty and debt problems. He stressed that the service provided by MABS should be maintained in rural areas like Leitrim having regard to the rural nature of the county and the number of low income households residing in the county.

Councillor Caillian Ellis and Councillor Brendan Barry supported the Notice of Motion.

Notices of Motions

17/48

06/03/2017

Areas of Natural Constraint Scheme

The Cathaoirleach, Councillor Mary Bohan proposed that Motion No 21 in the name of Councillor Gerry Dolan and Motion No 29 in the name of Councillor Justin Warnock would be taken concurrently as they both relate to the same matter. This was agreed by the Members.

To consider the following Notice of Motion submitted by Councillor Gerry Dolan;

"I ask this Council to call on the Minister of Agriculture before the new proposal is completed. The Department of Agriculture is currently carrying out a review of the Areas of Natural Constraint Scheme. This payment has been reduced from €4,454 in mountain areas to €3,400 since 2008. Current proposals mentioned that if more than 50% of the land in a DED is afforested (Planted) then this DED would not be eligible for Areas of Natural Constraint Scheme payments."

To consider the following Notice of Motion submitted by Councillor Justin Warnock;

"I ask my fellow Councillors for their support for this Notice of Motion in calling on Leitrim County Council to ask the Minister for Agriculture, Michael Creed, following the ANC (Areas of Natural Constraint) review this year, that monies retrieved from lands which are deemed ineligible be returned to the farmers of this county and those in the disadvantaged areas of the West of Ireland."

Proposed by Councillor Gerry Dolan, seconded by Councillor Justin Warnock AND UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED:

"That Leitrim County Council call on the Minister of Agriculture before the new proposal is completed. The Department of Agriculture is currently carrying out a review of the Areas of Natural Constraint Scheme. This payment has been reduced from €4,454 in mountain areas to €3,400 since 2008. Current proposals mentioned that if more than 50% of the land in a DED is afforested (Planted) then this DED would not be eligible for Areas of Natural Constraint Scheme payments."

Proposed by Councillor Justin Warnock, seconded by Councillor Gerry Dolan AND UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED:

"That Leitrim County Council ask the Minister for Agriculture, Michael Creed, following the ANC (Areas of Natural Constraint) review this year, that monies retrieved from lands which are deemed ineligible be returned to the farmers of this county and those in the disadvantaged areas of the West of Ireland."

17/49

06/03/2017

Unfinished Housing Estates in County Leitrim

To consider the following Notice of Motion submitted by Councillor Des Guckian;

"That, we the Elected Members, request the Government to hold a public investigation into how and why we have so many unfinished housing estates in County Leitrim and into the ill-effects this

is having on the county in general."

Report by Director of Service, Economic Development, Planning, Environment and Transportation.

"The Department published its first national survey of unfinished housing developments in 2010 at which time there was 96 recorded for Leitrim. In 2011 the Department introduced a more refined categorisation process within which there were 84 recorded developments where the developer was no longer active or the site was abandoned. In 2012 the Department's number of seriously problematic developments in Leitrim was recorded at 69. This number has been steadily reducing to 26 developments in the last published report for 2015. At this stage the position in Leitrim is not exceptional ranking 10th overall. The pace of reduction in Leitrim was the 18th highest reduction out of 31 Local Authority areas. In comparison the 2015 report details counties such as Roscommon at 40 and Cavan at 33. The Councils estimates that the 2016 report will show Leitrim at approximately 20 unfinished housing developments and it is hoped that the figure will reduce again during 2017."

Councillor Des Guckian referred to the reply to his Notice of Motion. He stated that he did not ask for a reply to his Notice of Motion as he was calling on the Government to hold a public investigation into the matter. Councillor Guckian then contested the figures detailed in the reply and he stated that the level of unfinished estates in the county is greater than the figures outlined. Councillor Guckian outlined that Leitrim has a 13% vacancy rate of dwellings which is the worst in the country and he advised that additional supply of vacant dwellings is required to address the social housing need of applicants on the Council's Housing Waiting List. Councillor Guckian also stated that local people had been denied planning permission to build on family landholdings yet Developers were granted planning permission to build estates in many locations in the county.

Mr. Joseph Gilhooly outlined that a report due to be published by the Department of Housing, Planning, Community & Local Government will outline that Leitrim has approximately 20 unfinished housing developments. He advised that efforts will continue to reduce the total number of unfinished estates in the county in 2017.

Councillor Des Guckian disputed the figures provided by Mr. Gilhooly and he stated that they are fictional.

The Cathaoirleach, Councillor Mary Bohan advised that the Chief Executive has agreed to have a workshop with the Elected Members in May, 2017 to discuss the issue of unfinished estates and the taking in charge process. Councillor Bohan stated that that work is ongoing to reduce the number of unfinished estates in the county and that the matter is very complex.

Councillor Des Guckian stated that he was leaving the meeting in protest and he proceeded to leave the meeting at this point.

Councillor Sinead Guckian requested a copy of the reply to Councillor Des Guckian's Notice of Motion to be circulated to all members. This request was agreed by Ms. Flynn.

17/50

06/03/2017 Protocols and Procedures for Deputations

To consider the following Notice of Motion submitted by Councillor Sinead Guckian;

"I ask the Chief Executive, what protocols and procedures are being followed within the Council,

when deputations are requested to meet with the Chief Executive or other Executives of the Council regarding public issues."

Report by Director of Service, Housing and Community, Corporate Services, Cultural and Emergency Services

"Requests for meetings with the Executive are received from groups across the County from time to time. In some cases, the request will be made by an Elected Member on behalf of the group and they will attend the meeting with the group. In other cases, the meeting will be requested directly by the group and where appropriate will be facilitated by the Executive."

Councillor Sinead Guckian proposed that a standard protocol/procedure should be put in place to respond to requests from deputations or groups to meet with the Chief Executive of other Executives of the Council regarding public issues. She stated that this process should be managed have regard to the protocol in order to protect democracy.

The Cathaoirleach, Councillor Mary Bohan advised that the Corporate Policy Group reviewed the matter at their meeting and it was agreed to formulate a draft policy to address this issue.

Councillor Padraig Fallon proposed that the Sinn Fein Group should also have an input into the policy formulation as they are not currently represented on the Corporate Policy Group.

The Cathaoirleach, Councillor Mary Bohan agreed to this request.

17/51

06/03/2017

Recruitment of Nurses and Midwives

To consider the following Notice of Motion submitted by Councillor Padraig Fallon;

"That Leitrim County Council recognises the very difficult working conditions of our Nurses and Midwives and supports their campaign demands, in particular, their demands around staffing, recruitment and staff retention."

Councillor Padraig Fallon referred to the "Day for Action" which was planned for the 7th March, 2017 has now been postponed. He outlined that he recently visited a relative in hospital and witnessed the extremely difficult working conditions that nursing staff have to deal with on a daily basis. Councillor Fallon called on the Health Services Executive (HSE) to recruit additional nursing and midwifery staff to alleviate the problem.

This Notice of Motion was unanimously supported by all members.

17/52

06/03/2017

Rivers and Tributaries in need of cleaning

To consider the following Notice of Motion submitted by Councillor Sean McGowan;

"I ask Mr. Joseph Gilhooly, Director of Services, Economic Development, Planning, Environment and Transportation, what progress has been made with regard to putting together a list of rivers and tributaries which are in need of cleaning within the county. Has contact being made with the OPW with a view to securing a funding package over the next 4 to 6 years to clean and dredge all those rivers which feed into the main rivers and lakes within the county of Leitrim."

Report by Director of Service, Economic Development, Planning, Environment and Transportation.

"As discussed previously with the relevant Strategic Policy Committee Leitrim County Council is responsible for the maintenance of 241 kms of rivers and drains within the county. The Council is at present putting together our program for 2017 with regard to the funding provided in the Budget. The Council have been in informal discussions with the OPW regarding securing funding to maintain not only the rivers that we are responsible for but other rivers in need within the county. However, there is limited potential that any such works will be funded in the short or medium term. Notwithstanding this though, a formal submission will be made."

Councillor Sinead Guckian moved this Notice of Motion on behalf of Councillor Sean McGowan as he had to leave the meeting early.

17/53

06/03/2017

Rural Development in Leitrim

To consider the following Notice of Motion submitted by Councillor Sean McDermott;

"I ask Leitrim County Council to consider the establishment of a Forum on Rural Development in Leitrim. Recently the Government launched its National Action Plan for Rural Ireland, as a framework, this action plan has significant opportunities for rural development in Leitrim. I feel now might be the time to establish a Rural Development Forum in Leitrim. I am aware that Clare County Council is in the process of establishing a Forum on Rural Development."

Report by Director of Service, Economic Development, Planning, Environment and Transportation.

"County Leitrim is the most rural county in Ireland with around 90% of the population to be deemed living in rural areas. This is in contrast to the stated example of Clare where the population is around 60% rural. As a consequence of the County's rural profile practically all development plans and strategies of the Council along with the implementation ethos is of a rural development mind-set. The steering of the development of the County by the Council is supported through the Local Community Development Committee which is now also the Local Action Group for the Leader Program, the Tourism Growth Alliance and its working groups and other supportive groupings such as the Age Friendly Alliance, Joint Policing Committee etc. The Council has in place the County Development Plan, the Local Economic and Community Plan, Economic Development Strategy, Tourism Development Strategy, Local Development Strategy, Arts Development Plan etc. Each of these plans and strategies were developed based on substantial community consultation across the entire County which ensured the full involvement of all towns, villages and hinterlands. The implementation of this suite of plans and strategies is ongoing and has been assisted in the recent through the commencement of new funding opportunities. In addition implementation is supported and monitored through the groups referred to above. Therefore it is unnecessary to consider the establishment of a further forum which would serve only to duplicate the work and efforts of the existing structures which are actively working for the development of this rural county."

Councillor Sean McDermott acknowledged the reply to his Notice of Motion, however, he called for additional measures to be put in place to protect rural communities against de-population. He stated that there is a risk of closure to many rural schools if measures are not put in place to support people living in rural locations. Councillor McDermott stated that a Forum for Rural Development would address these issues.

Councillor Justin Warnock stated that he did not agree with the establishment of a Forum for Rural Development, however, he proposed that an Economic Development Officer and a Tourism Officer should be employed to work specifically in North Leitrim.

Mr. Gilhooly acknowledged the concerns of the members. He advised that the Leader Project will result in an investment of €4 million to the county to commence a new era of rural development.

Mr. Frank Curran also advised that other funding streams have also been accessed under the Towns and Villages Scheme and the Rural Economic Development Zones (REDZ) to deliver a range of projects all over the county.

17/54

06/03/2017

Public Library Service

To consider the following Notice of Motion submitted by Councillor Seadhna Logan;

"Leitrim County Council members view with alarm the recent decision of the Department of Housing, Planning, Community and Local Government to change the qualifications required for posts in the Public Library Service by dropping the requirement for an ability to transact business in the Irish Language. This decision means that there is now no requirement for anyone working with Leitrim County Council and other local authorities to have any knowledge of Irish whatsoever. This Council calls on the Minister to reverse this decision immediately in the national interest and in order to provide services to the public through the medium of the first official language of the state."

Councillor Seadhna Logan outlined that Library staff have a major input into the cultural, heritage and linguistic affairs of their counties. He stated that it is not possible to fulfil those roles without staff having knowledge of the Irish language. Councillor Logan called on the support of the members to request that the Minister for Housing, Planning, Community and Local Government reverse his decision which remove the requirement for Library Staff to have knowledge of the Irish language.

All Members supported the Notice of Motion.

Proposed by Councillor Seadhna Logan, seconded by Councillor Gerry Dolan AND UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED:

"Leitrim County Council members view with alarm the recent decision of the Department of Housing, Planning, Community and Local Government to change the qualifications required for posts in the Public Library Service by dropping the requirement for an ability to transact business in the Irish Language. This decision means that there is now no requirement for anyone working with Leitrim County Council and other local authorities to have any knowledge of Irish whatsoever. This Council calls on the Minister to reverse this decision immediately in the national interest and in order to provide services to the public through the medium of the first official language of the state this Council calls on the Minister to reverse this decision immediately in the national interest and in order to provide services to the public through the medium of the first official language of the state."

17/55

06/03/2017

Regional Veterinary Laboratory in Doonally, Co Sligo

To consider the following Notice of Motion submitted by Councillor Brendan Barry;

"I request that Leitrim County Council call on the Minister for Agriculture, Michael Creed to maintain and invest in the Regional Veterinary laboratory in Doonally, Co. Sligo. This is a vital service to maintain and improve Ireland's high Animal disease control and prevention standards. The highest possible standards are required to secure new, and grow existing export markets. We need to encourage farmers to use the laboratories more by keeping them within a reasonable distance."

Councillor Brendan Barry stressed the importance of having balanced regional development. He called for the Regional Veterinary Laboratory in Doonally, Co. Sligo to be retained as the facility employs a number of staff and is an importance service for the region.

Proposed by Councillor Brendan Barry, seconded by Councillor Frank Dolan AND UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED:

"That Leitrim County Council call on the Minister for Agriculture, Michael Creed to maintain and invest in the Regional Veterinary laboratory in Doonally Co. Sligo. This is a vital service to maintain and improve Ireland's high Animal disease control and prevention standards. The highest possible standards are required to secure new, and grow existing export markets. We need to encourage farmers to use the laboratories more by keeping them within a reasonable distance".

17/56

06/03/2017

Aughavas Post Office

Cathaoirleach, Councillor Mary Bohan proposed that Motion No. 33 submitted by Councillor Caroline Mulvey and Motion No. 34 submitted by Councillor Paddy O'Rourke be considered concurrently as they relate to the same issue. This was agreed by the Members.

To consider the following Notice of Motion submitted by Councillor Caroline Mulvey;

"I request that Leitrim County Council call on the Minister for Communications, Climate Change and Natural Resources, Denis Naughton to save the post office in Aughavas, County Leitrim as this is a vital service to the local community and also to call on Minister of State for Regional Economic Development, Michael Ring to prevent any further cuts to our rural services"

To consider the following Notice of Motion submitted by Councillor Paddy O'Rourke;

"I ask that this Council call on the Minister for Regional Economic Development, Michael Ring TD to use his influence with An Post to help retain the postal services in Aughavas where there is evidence of a necessity for such a service along with genuine support for it in the community."

Councillor Caroline Mulvey stated that there has been significant support received from the local community to safeguard the future of Aughavas Post Office. Councillor Mulvey referred to a recent meeting with An Post, which had take place recently. She stated that the local community are hopeful that a positive outcome will be achieved and that the post office in Aughavas will be retained.

Councillor Paddy O'Rourke expressed his concern about the meeting with An Post and said he felt

that the meeting was not very positive. Councillor O'Rourke stated that An Post is completing a major re-structuring of the Postal Network and that many rural Post Offices may be at risk.

Cathaoirleach, Councillor Mary Bohan stressed that the public need to use the services of the local post offices in order to ensure their continued operation.

Proposed by Councillor Caroline Mulvey, seconded by Councillor Paddy O'Rourke AND UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED

"That Leitrim County Council call on the Minister for Communications, Climate Change and Natural Resources, Denis Naughton to save the Post Office in Aughavas, County Leitrim as this is a vital service to the local community and also to call on Minister of State for Regional Economic Development, Michael Ring to prevent any further cuts to our rural services".

Proposed by Councillor Paddy O'Rourke, seconded by Councillor Mary Bohan AND UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED

"That Leitrim County Council call on the Minister for Regional Economic Development, Michael Ring TD to use his influence with An Post to help retain the postal services in Aughavas where there is evidence of a necessity for such a service along with genuine support for it in the community."

17/57

06/03/2017

St Patrick's Hospital, Carrick-on-Shannon

To consider the following Notice of Motion submitted by Councillor Enda Stenson;

"I ask has this Council received any plans, or other indication, from the H.S.E. as to their future intentions to build the long awaited new St Patrick's Hospital, in Carrick-on-Shannon."

Councillor Enda Stenson queried if the Council has received any plans from the HSE with regard to the proposed new hospital for Carrick-on-Shannon.

Mr. Frank Curran, Chief Executive confirmed that the Council will engage with the HSE in this regard.

Councillor Finola Armstrong McGuire advised that she recently met Mr. John Hayes and he had given an assurance that the St. Patrick's Hospital Project is a priority for the HSE and will be progressed.

17/58

06/03/2017

DEIS Status

To consider the following Notice of Motion submitted by Councillor Mary Bohan;

"I call on the Minister for Education, Mr Richard Bruton TD and the Department of Education to grant Deis status to St Brigid's N.S. Drumkeerin and to Lough Allen College, Drumkeerin as a matter of urgency in the interest of fairness and equality for students and parents."

Councillor Mary Bohan welcomed the introduction of the DEIS Scheme and noted that Drumkeerin National School and Lough Allen Secondary College have applied on social economic factors to be awarded DEIS School Status. Councillor Bohan stated that if the applications for DEIS Status for the schools are unsuccessful, then there must be a clear rationale given by the Department of Education to justify the decision. She stated that other schools in the local area had previously been awarded DEIS status and that the same socio economic factors are in place in relation to St. Brigid's National School, Drumkeerin and to Lough Allen College, Drumkeerin, Co. Leitrim.

Proposed by Councillor Mary Bohan, seconded by Councillor Padraig Fallon AND UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED

"That Leitrim County Council call on the Minister for Education, Mr Richard Bruton TD and the Department of Education to grant Deis status to St Brigid's N.S. Drumkeerin and to Lough Allen College, Drumkeerin as a matter of urgency in the interest of fairness and equality for students and parents."

The business of the meeting concluded at 1.45 p.m.

Signed:
Councillor Mary Bohan
Cathaoirleach

Signed:
Sinead Flynn
Meetings Administrator

Dated: 2nd May, 2017