

Minutes of Meeting of Leitrim County Council held in the Council Chamber, Carrick-on-Shannon, Co Leitrim on Monday 9th January, 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 Gurn, Felim
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

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. Finian Joyce, Chief Fire Officer
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. Michael Gunning, Administrative Officer
Ms. Sinead Flynn, Meetings Administrator
Ms. Kathleen McGovern Ellis, Assistant Staff Officer

17/01

09/01/2017 Votes of Sympathy

The Members extended a vote of sympathy to the following:

- The family of the late Betty McManus, High Street, Drumshanbo, Co Leitrim.
- Michael Doherty, Annaghealy, Kilclare, Carrick-on-Shannon on the death of Delia Doherty.
- Brendan Lowe, 9 Glen Carraig, Carrick-on-Shannon on the death of Kathleen Lowe.
- Shane Conlon, Hilly Road, Drumshanbo on the death of Olive Conlon.
- Nora Beirne, Cloonboney, Mohill, Co Leitrim on the death of John Beirne.
- Catherine Lynch, Creenagh, Drumshanbo, Co Leitrim on the death of Lorraine Lynch.

- Seamus O'Connor, An Dun, Woodbrook, Carrick-on-Shannon, Co Roscommon on the death of Kathleen O'Connor.
- Helen McCaffrey, Carrowkeel, Rossinver, Manorhamilton, Co Leitrim on the death of Paddy McCaffrey.

17/02

09/01/2017 **Deimhniu Miontuairisci**

Proposed by Councillor Callian Ellis, seconded by Councillor Enda Stenson and UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED:

“That the Minutes of Leitrim County Council Meeting held in the Council Chamber, Aras An Chontae, Carrick-on-Shannon, Co Leitrim on Monday, 7th November, 2016 be adopted”.

Proposed by Councillor Callian Ellis, seconded by Councillor Enda Stenson and UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED:

“That the Budget Minutes of Leitrim County Council Meeting held in the Council Chamber, Aras An Chontae, Carrick-on-Shannon, Co Leitrim on Thursday, 24th November, 2016 be adopted”.

Councillor Des Guckian Minutes disputed the Minutes of the Budget Meeting as he outlined that there was no reference in the Minutes to €53,000 for works at Mountcampbell.

Mr. Frank Curran, Chief Executive advised that this project was financed by capital funding and therefore was not included in the Minutes of the Budget Meeting.

17/03

Corporate Plan

09/01/2017

Report dated 4th January, 2017 from Mr. Frank Curran, Chief Executive in relation to progress achieved in 2016 on Leitrim County Council’s Corporate Plan 2014-2019, in accordance with the provisions of Section 134 of the Local Government Act, 2001 as amended, as circulated to each Member appears as **Appendix 1** to the Minutes of this Meeting in the Minute Book.

Mr. Frank Curran, Chief Executive gave a summary of the report and highlighted a number of key initiatives delivered in 2016.

The report as circulated was noted by the Members.

17/04

09/01/2017 **Capital Programme for the forthcoming 3 years**

Report dated 3rd January, 2017 from Mr. Frank Curran, Chief Executive on Leitrim County Council’s Programme of Capital Projects for the forthcoming three years, in accordance with the provisions of Section 135 of the Local Government Act 2001, as amended, as circulated to each Member appears as **Appendix 2** to the Minutes of this Meeting in the Minute Book.

Mr. Frank Curran, Chief Executive outlined that the report provides an overview and estimate of capital projects that are anticipated to be progressed over the next three years. He then gave an

overview of the report and highlighted a number of significant projects that the Council wish to advance in the next three years to improve the County's Infrastructure and Facilities.

The following comments were raised by the Members:

- Councillor Caillian Ellis welcomed the update on the Capital Programme and he raised the issue of the Fire Station in Ballinamore, Co. Leitrim. He referred to the condition of the existing building and he stated that staff should not have to work in those conditions. Councillor Ellis stated that he was aware that an inspection of alternative premises in Ballinamore is to take place tomorrow to assess if this building is suitable for the relocation of the Fire Station. He requested clarification in relation to the time-scale for the proposed re-location of the facility. Councillor Ellis also stated that the provision of a new Fire Station could take up to 5 years to complete if funding was sanctioned by the Department of Housing, Planning, Community and Local Government.
- Councillor Brendan Barry supported Councillor Ellis's comments and he queried if the €120,000 allocation for Fire Services in 2018 included in the Capital Report could be utilised in 2017 to progress the possible re-location of the Fire Station to an alternative building. Councillor Barry also welcomed that Drumshanbo is included in the Active Towns Project.

Mr. Finian Joyce, Chief Fire Officer advised that the Fire Service is currently exploring options to seek an alternative location for the Fire Department in Ballinamore pending a more permanent long-term solution. He advised that Department of Housing, Planning, Community and Local Government have sanctioned €120,000 for the temporary works.

- Councillor Enda Stenson requested an update on the Waste Water Treatment Plant. He also requested that a marketing campaign be put in place to advertise the rowing facilities at Lough Rynn, Mohill.

Mr. Billy Lowe, Senior Engineer advised that the closing date for receipt of tenders for the Waste Water Treatment Plant is the end of this week.

Mr. Curran advised that Waterways Ireland will launch a marketing campaign to promote the Lough Rynn Rowing Facilities in 2017. He also advised that there will be a strong marketing campaign in 2017 to promote the facility and to attract more groups to use the facilities at Lough Rinn.

- Councillor Sean McDermott paid tribute to the Council for the completion of the upgrading of the N16. He also welcomed the proposed Greenway Project for Glenfarne, Co. Leitrim.

Mr. Frank Curran advised that the Council will be seeking funding to progress the Greenway Project in Glenfarne.

- Councillor Des Guckian referred to the projected capital budget of €8 million for the delivery of the Council's Housing Programme. He expressed his concern in relation to how this money will be spent and he also queried the cost of the proposed extension to Aras-an-Chontae. Councillor Des Guckian noted that the Capital Programme indicates significant investment in walking and cycling routes over the next three years and he called for greater investment in Libraries and Fire Stations.

Mr. Frank Curran advised that a former loan to finance works to the Council Headquarters in Arasan-Chontae has been re-deemed in full. He further advised that a loan for the new extension will be financed over a 25-30 year term.

- Councillor Seadhna Logan queried if any dwellings in NAMA ownership could be utilised for social housing support by the local authority.

Ms. Mary Quinn advised that the Council may consider the acquisition of units from NAMA for social housing. She advised that any dwellings proposed must be located in an area where there is a demand for social housing support.

Mr. Curran also outlined that the Minister for Housing, Planning, Community and Local Government has indicated that is supportive of local authorities acquiring dwellings for use for social housing in unfinished estates, however, the number of units acquired must be limited in order to support mixed tenure types within the estate.

- Councillor Justin Warnock proposed that the Council should invest in the provision of local authority accommodation in Tullaghan. He also requested that funding be provided to facilitate public access to the coastline in Tullaghan.

Mr. Curran advised agreed to examine those requests.

Councillor Sean McGowan complimented the Council on the completion of the Lough Rinn Rowing Facility. He suggested that the Council invite the O'Donovan Brothers (Silver Medal Olympian Winners at the 2016 Olympics in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil) to Leitrim to publicise the Lough Rynn Rowing Facilities. Councillor Sean McGowan also proposed that the REDZ scheme should be pursued for towns and villages that were not grant-aided under the scheme previously.

Mr. Curran advised that towns and villages can apply for REDZ Funding when a call for proposals is issued.

This update was noted by the Members.

17/05 Upgrading of Public Lighting on the N4 Dromod/Rooskey By Pass
09/01/2017

Report dated 3rd January, 2017 from Mr. Joseph Gilhooly, Director of Services, Economic Development, Planning, Environment and Infrastructure recommending that Leitrim County Council enter into an agreement under Section 85 of the Local Government Act, 2001 as amended, with Mayo County Council in respect of the upgrading of public lighting on the N4 Dromod/Rooskey By Pass whereby Mayo County Council will be enabled to undertake the above works as may be necessary in the Administrative Area of Leitrim County Council as circulated to the Members, appears as **Appendix 3** to the Minutes of this meeting in the Minute Book.

Proposed by Councillor Sinead Guckian, seconded by Councillor Enda Stenson and UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED:

“That Leitrim County Council hereby resolves to enter into an agreement under Section 85 of the Local Government Act 2001 as amended with Mayo County Council in respect of the upgrading of public lighting on the N4 Dromod/Rooskey By Pass whereby Mayo County Council will be enabled

to undertake the above as may be necessary in the Administrative Area of Leitrim County Council be approved”.

Mr. Shay O'Connor outlined that Mayo County Council are the lead authority for this project to upgrade the lighting to LED lighting on the N4. He also outlined that the Council submitted a funding request to the NRA to upgrade the public lighting in Jamestown and Drumsna, however, this request was refused.

Councillor Sinead Guckian expressed her disappointment that the proposed upgrade to the public lighting in Jamestown and Drumsna was refused by the NRA.

Councillor Brendan Barry welcomed the upgrading of the public lighting. He queried why Leitrim County Council is not carrying out the works. He also sought clarification on how much money was spent on Consultants for this project.

Mr. Frank Curran advised that Transport Infrastructure Ireland (TII) manage this project and that they are responsible for the completion of the works and any Consultants costs incurred.

Proposed by Councillor Sinead Guckian, seconded by Councillor Enda Stenson and UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED:

“That Leitrim County Council hereby resolves to enter into an agreement under Section 85 of the Local Government Act, 2001 as amended with Mayo County Council in respect of the upgrading of public lighting on the N4 Dromod/Roskey By Pass whereby Mayo County Council will be enabled to undertake the above as may be necessary in the Administrative Area of Leitrim County Council be approved”.

17/06

09/01/2017 Vacant Site Levy in County Leitrim

The Cathaoirleach, Councillor Mary Bohan welcomed Ms. Vivienne Egan, Senior Executive Planner to present a report on the Vacant Site Levy in County Leitrim as provided for in the Urban Regenerations and Housing Act, 2015. A copy of the presentation appears as **Appendix 4** to the Minutes of this meeting in the Minute Book.

Ms. Egan presented her report which outlined the background to and the rationale for the Vacant Site Levy. She outlined next steps that the Council must implement in relation to the Vacant Site Levy. Ms. Egan advised that the Council must ensure the vacant site levy provisions are appropriately reflected in the development planning process. She advised that the Council must include a specific objective in the County Development Plan for the development of vacant sites in designated areas and then identify designated areas – either residential and/or regeneration land where the levy will be applied. Ms. Egan also outlined that from 1st January, 2017 Planning Authorities shall establish and maintain a Register of sites vacant for the previous year.

The Cathaoirleach, Councillor Mary Bohan thanked Ms. Egan for her presentation and invited any questions and comments from the Members. The following items were raised:

- The Members welcomed that there is no proposal to impose a site levy in Leitrim on residential land proposed for housing.
- The Members queried if Developers can be encouraged to construct additional family type dwellings in Leitrim.

The Cathaoirleach, Councillor Mary Bohan proposed that Motion No. 15 in the name of Councillor Seadhna Logan be taken at this point as it related to the Urban Regeneration and Housing Act, 2015. This was agreed by the Members.

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

"Under the Urban Regeneration and Housing Act, 2015 each local authority will have to compile a register of lands in its area that are suitable for housing but are not coming forward for development. Have we started this process of data collection in the county. Will this process automatically include lands previously zoned for development that have no active planning permissions or have allowed permissions to lapse. Will landowners potentially be liable for vacant land levys on properties they no longer consider viable to develop? Is there a process in place for de-zoning these lands prior to completion of this register?"

Report by Director of Service, Planning, Community and Economic Development

"The detail associated with this legislation is that which item number 4 addresses."

The Members also raised the following issues in relation to the Vacant Site Levy:

- The Members acknowledged that the Vacant Site Levy is more applicable to larger urban centres rather than rural counties.
- Councillor Enda Stenson welcomed that it is not proposed to introduce a vacant site levy at this time. He queried how development in Carrick-on-Shannon can be encouraged and he suggested that the imposition of a levy may have a positive impact in certain locations e.g. Mohill to encourage the development of vacant buildings.
- Councillor Seadhna Logan referred to his Notice of Motion and he queried if zoned land will automatically be included on the Register.
- Councillor Sinead Guckian expressed her concern in relation to the Vacant Site Levy. She stated that the levy is more relevant to larger urban centres rather than rural Counties. She stated that the Vacant Site Levy is being imposed on local authorities as a revenue generating exercise. Councillor Guckian also raised her concern about varying the County Development Plan to reflect the Vacant Site Levy without having knowledge of the number of sites that may be affected by the levy. Councillor Sinead Guckian outlined that a number of local authorities have published an unpopulated Register from 1st January, 2017. She proposed that the Planning Department prepare the details to populate the Register for review by the Elected Members.
- Councillor Des Guckian also voiced his objections and he stated that the Vacant Site Levy was an attempt by the State to interfere with private property. He queried the merits of the Vacant Site Levy and he suggested that the levy was not in the public interest and will only benefit Vulture Funds or other similar groups.
- Councillor Sean McDermott referred to the Housing Need and stated that rural areas will not benefit from regeneration proposals.
- Councillor Pdraig Fallon queried if the Vacant Site Levy will be an additional means to address derelict buildings.
- Councillor Justin Warnock referred to the number of ghost estates in the county and made reference to one such estate in Kinlough, Co. Leitrim. He outlined that the planning

permission for the estate also included permission for a Health Centre and this was never progressed.

Ms Vivienne Egan, Senior Executive Planner responded as follows:-

- Acknowledged that the Vacant Site Levy is more applicable for Urban Areas than a rural county, however, the Council must comply with the legislation.
- The Planning Department will monitor closely if a housing need establishes itself in Carrick-on-Shannon. The proposed variation to the County Development Plan will be broad enough to ensure that a further variation will not be required should the situation change in Carrick-on-Shannon.
- The Planning Department will review vacant dwellings in Mohill where sites are larger than a quarter of an acre in size.
- The Vacant Site Levy will include Derelict Buildings.
- Previously zoned lands will automatically be included on the Register.
- The de-zoning of lands can only be undertaken as part of a review of the County Development Plan.
- A number of sites have already been identified that may be included on the Register, however, the Council must establish that the sites have been vacant for a 12 month period.
- If a site is included on the Register, the owners of the site will be able to appeal the decision to An Board Pleanala.

Mr. Frank Curran advised that the Council is not proposing a levy for residential land.

Mr. Joseph Gilhooly advised that the Council must also assess the housing need in the various locations and that not all land that is within a zoned area will be included in the Register. He advised that the Planning Department will now commence the process of preparing the variation to the County Development Plan.

This update was noted by the Members.

17/07

09/01/2017 Completion of Mid Term Review of the Traveller Accommodation Programme 2014-2018 at 31st December 2016

Report dated 5th January, 2017 from Ms. Mary Quinn, Director of Services, Housing, Corporate, Culture and Emergency Services on the Mid-term review of the Traveller Accommodation Programme 2014-2018 in accordance with Section 17(1) of the Housing (Traveller Accommodation) Act, 1998 in consultation with the Local Traveller Accommodation Consultative Committee as circulated to the Members, appears as **Appendix 5** to the Minutes of this meeting in the Minute Book.

Ms. Quinn outlined that the Council completed the Mid-Term Review of the Traveller Accommodation Programme 2014-2018 at 31st December, 2017. She advised that arising from the review it was determined that no amendment to the Programme was required.

This update was noted by the Members.

07/08

09/01/2017 Monthly Management Reports by the Chief Executive

Monthly Management Reports for the period 1st October, 2016 to 31st October, 2016 and 1st November 2016 to 30th November, 2016 by Mr. Frank Curran, Chief Executive, dated 11th November, 2016 and 13th December, 2016 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 6** and **Appendix 7** to the Minutes of this meeting in the Minute Book.

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

- Councillor Sinead Guckian proposed that an Arts Awards Event be considered in the development of the new Arts Strategy for Leitrim. She outlined that the event would acknowledge the role of fine arts in the County,

This proposal was also supported by Councillor John McCartin and Councillor Paddy O'Rourke.

Mr. Frank Curran agreed that this proposal could be considered in the preparation of the new Arts Strategy.

- Councillor Padraig Fallon sought an update on the funding request to the Department of Transport, Tourism and Sport to upgrade a number of bridges in the county.

Mr. Shay O'Connor advised that the Roads Department are awaiting a response from the Department in relation to a funding request to upgrade a number of bridges in the county. He agreed to keep the Members informed of progress in this regard.

17/09

09/01/2017 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.

17/10

09/01/2017 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 23rd November, 2016 and considered the following items:- Graveyard Policy, Grave Space Size, Review of General Speed Limits and a presentation was given on the Rural Water Strategic Review.

- **Economic Development, Enterprise & Planning Strategic Policy Committee**

A meeting of the Economic Development, Enterprise & Planning Strategic Planning Committee was held on 12th December, 2016 and considered the following items: - Amendments to the

County Development Plan arising from implementing the Vacant Site Levy. Ms. Sheena O'Dowd gave a presentation on the Upper Shannon Erne Future Economy Project (USEFE).

- **Housing Policy, Social & Cultural Development Strategic Policy Committee**

A meeting of the Housing Policy, Social & Cultural Development Strategic Policy Committee was held on Tuesday 6th December, 2016 and considered the following items:- Statutory Assessment of Housing Need 2016, Mid-Term Review of the Traveller Accommodation Programme 2014-2018, Housing Assistance Payment (HAP) and the Housing Grants. Mr. Philip Delamere gave a presentation on the Arts Strategy.

Ms. Flynn concluded by stating 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.

17/11

09/01/2017

Conferences/Training

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

"That the attendance of Councillor Mary Bohan at the Leitrim People's Association Dinner Dance in London on the 24th February, 2017 to 26th February, 2017 be approved".

"That the attendance of Councillor Mary Bohan at the County Leitrim Society of New York Dinner Dance and St. Patrick's Day Parade in New York on the 9th March, 2017 to 19th March, 2017 be approved".

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

"That the attendance of Councillor Frank Dolan at the Conference on "A Practical Guide to Budget 2017" in the Clonakilty Hotel, Clonakilty, Co Cork from the 2nd to 4th December, 2016 be retrospectively approved".

"That the attendance of Councillor Frank Dolan at Excel Training in the Clonakilty Hotel, Clonakilty, Co Cork on the 14th to 15th December, 2016 be retrospectively approved".

17/12

09/01/2017

Meeting Correspondence

The following items were considered under Meeting Correspondence:

1. Letter dated 21st November, 2016 from the HSE regarding the School Dentist in County Leitrim.

Councillor Caroline Mulvey proposed that a further letter issue to the HSE requesting that the School Dentist be replaced. This proposal was supported by Councillor Enda Stenson.

2. Letter dated 9th December, 2016 from the Office of the Minister for Housing, Planning, Community and Local Government acknowledging receipt of a Resolution passed by Leitrim County Council seeking additional funding to offset Development Contribution Charges.
3. Letter dated 15th December, 2016 from Mr. Páraic Ó Dufaigh, Ard Stiúrthóir, GAA Croke Park with regard to a Resolution passed by Leitrim County Council.
4. Letter dated 13th December, 2016 from the Office of the Minister for Agriculture, Food and the Marine, Dublin 2 acknowledging receipt of Resolution passed by Members regarding tree-planting in County Leitrim.
- 5(a) Letter dated 9th December, 2016 from the Office of the Minister for Housing, Planning, Community and Local Government acknowledging receipt of a Resolution passed by Leitrim County Council requesting additional funding for the 2017 Roads Allocation.
- 5(b) Letter dated 13th December, 2016 from the Office of the Minister for Housing, Planning, Community and Local Government acknowledging receipt of a Resolution passed by Leitrim County Council requesting additional funding for 2017 Roads Allocation.
- 5(c) Letter dated 14th December, 2016 from the Office of the Minister for Transport, Tourism and Sport acknowledging receipt of a Resolution passed by Leitrim County Council with regard to additional funding for roads.
- 5(d) Letter dated 20th December, 2016 from the Office of the Minister for Transport, Tourism and Sport acknowledging receipt of a Resolution passed by Leitrim County Council with regard to funding for roads.
6. Letter dated 12th December, 2016 from the Office of the Taoiseach acknowledging receipt of a Resolution passed by Leitrim County Council with regard to CETA.
7. Letter dated 12th December, 2016 from the Office of the Taoiseach acknowledging receipt of a Resolution passed by Leitrim County Council with regard to the Citizens Assembly.
8. Letter dated 12th December, 2016 from the Office of the Taoiseach acknowledging receipt of a Resolution passed by Leitrim County Council with regard to Brexit.
9. Letter dated 13th December, 2016 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 Land Drainage and Improvement Grant Scheme.
10. Letter dated 15th December, 2016 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 Payments to Farmers.
- 11(a). Letter dated 14th December, 2016 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 a request for an extension of slurry spreading dates.
- 11(b) Letter dated 15th December, 2016 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 a request for the extension of slurry spreading dates.

- 11(c) Letter dated 19th December, 2016 from the Office of the Minister for Housing, Planning, Community and Local Government acknowledging receipt of a Resolution passed by Leitrim County Council with regard to a request for the extension of slurry spreading dates.
12. Letter dated 5th January, 2017 from the Office of the Minister for Transport, Tourism and Sport acknowledging receipt of a Resolution passed by Leitrim County Council with regard to funding of Regional and Local Road network and the reinstatement of the Local Improvement Schemes.
13. Letter dated 5th January, 2017 from the Department of Transport, Tourism and Sport with regard to regional and local roads funding.

The following item was also raised under Meetings Correspondence

- Councillor Mary Bohan advised that the Oireachtas Joint Committee on Communications, Climate Action and Environment are currently inviting public submissions on the issue of Fracking before 2nd February 2017 to Fracking@oireachtas.ie.

Notices of Motions

17/13

09/01/2017

Leaving Certificate Applied Course

It was agreed by the Members that Motions 12 and 22 should be taken concurrently.

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

"I will ask for the support of Members in calling on the ETB and the Minister for Education, Richard Bruton TD, to intervene and address the current situation where students in Leitrim have no access to the Leaving Certificate Applied Course, or a dedicated YouthReach Service, in their own county."

Councillor Sinead Guckian requested the support of her fellow Members to call on the Minister for Education to give students in Leitrim the option of completing the Leaving Certificate Applied or to attend a Youthreach Centre as an alternative to completing the Leaving Certificate syllabus. She stated that students in Leitrim are being denied access to these courses and that a child's education is protected under our Constitution and the Education Act, 1998 which requires the Government to ensure that everyone living in the State is guaranteed a level and quality of education appropriate to meeting the needs and abilities of that person.

Councillor Sinead Guckian outlined that there are in excess of one hundred Youth Reach Centres in Ireland with none available in Leitrim. She noted that the most recent figures available in relation to students sitting the Leaving Certificate Applied exams show that there are 149 students in Longford, 168 students in Roscommon, 511 students in Mayo, 267 students in Sligo and 878 students in Donegal.

Councillor Sinead Guckian proposed that the ETB Members and the Minister for Education intervene on this issue urgently.

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

"That members join with me in condemning the Mayo/Sligo/Leitrim Education and Training Board for not providing any Leaving Certificate Applied within County Leitrim, nor a Leaving Cert Applied course, anywhere in County Leitrim, through Youth reach. We must demand emergency provision of same."

Councillor Des Guckian called on the Minister for Education to address this issue as a matter of urgency. He outlined that up to 40 students per year would enrol in the Leaving Certificate Applied or attend a Youthreach Course if these options were available in Leitrim. Councillor Des Guckian indicated that he is prepared to picket the offices of the Educational and Training Board Headquarters in Mayo if the issue is not addressed. He proposed that Leitrim County Council Members who are representatives on the ETB must put pressure on the ETB to provide funding for the Leaving Cert Applied to be available in schools in Leitrim.

Councillor Mary Bohan responded by stating that she is a long-serving member of the ETB and she stated that the three largest schools in Leitrim are not under the governance of the ETB. She also outlined that the Department of Education will not sanction funding for the Leaving Certificate Applied unless a minimum of ten students are enrolled in the course. Councillor Bohan called for a balanced discussion and stated that the Department of Education are ultimately responsible for the programme and she dismissed the idea of picketing the ETB Offices and expressed her objection Councillor Des Guckian's proposal to do so.

Councillor Mary Bohan supported Councillor Sinead Guckian's Notice of Motion but stated that she did not support Councillor Des Guckian's Notice of Motion.

Councillor Des Guckian stated that he was not given the right of reply to his Notice of Motion.

Proposed by Councillor Sinead Guckian, seconded by Councillor Mary Bohan AND UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED:

"That Leitrim County Council call on the ETB and the Minister for Education, Richard Bruton TD, to intervene and address the current situation where students in Leitrim have no access to the Leaving Certificate Applied Course, or a dedicated YouthReach Service, in their own county".

Proposed by Councillor Des Guckian, seconded by Councillor Sinead Guckian AND RESOLVED:

"That Members join with me in condemning the Mayo/Sligo/Leitrim Education and Training Board for not providing any Leaving Certificate Applied within County Leitrim, nor a Leaving Cert Applied course, anywhere in County Leitrim, through Youth reach. We must demand emergency provision of same."

17/14

09/01/2017 Community Hospital/Day Centre in Carrick-on-Shannon

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

"I seek the support of the Members in calling on Mr. Frank Morrison Acting Area Manager, Sligo/Leitrim & West Cavan, HSE West and the Department of Health, to outline what is the up to date position with the provision of the new Community Hospital/Day Centre at Carrick-on-Shannon."

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

"That Leitrim County Council call on Mr. Frank Morrison Acting Area Manager, Sligo/Leitrim & West Cavan, HSE West and the Department of Health, to outline what is the up to date position with the provision of the new Community Hospital/Day Centre at Carrick-on Shannon".

17/15

09/01/2017

Pilot Zero Discharge Scheme

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

"I ask Leitrim County Council for an update on how the new planning pilot Zero Discharge Scheme is progressing."

Report by Director of Service, Planning, Community and Economic Development

"The Council currently has 7 approved applicants for the Zero Discharge Scheme and it is anticipated that a maximum of 20 applications could be accommodated in the scheme. In response to an advertisement of the closing date for participants in the pilot scheme to test possible zero discharge wastewater treatment and disposal systems the Council received expressions of interest well in excess of the number that can be accommodated. In addition the Council became aware of updated technical design guidelines with regard to Building Regulation H for wastewater treatment systems. Arising from the above matters, the Council is currently reviewing the applications in order to identify a short list of expressions of interest to be invited forward into the scheme. It is expected that all applicants will be advised shortly as to the outcome of their application. Secondly the Council is now also commencing a process to develop the parameters within which this phase of the scheme will operate taking into account, in particular, the revision to the building regulations guidance document. This process will lead to the identification of the type, scale and conditions that will be applicable in general to the system that will be accepted for piloting. Once this process is concluded, which will take some time yet, those shortlisted to be part of the pilot scheme will be contacted further outlining the next steps."

Councillor Padraig Fallon acknowledged the reply to his Notice of Motion. He proposed that a delegation from Leitrim County Council should meet with the Minister for Housing, Planning, Community and Local Government to ensure that adult children of farming households can build a new family home on the family landholding.

Councillor Sean McDermott queried if all applicants for the Zero Discharge Scheme had been notified of the status of their application.

Mr. Joseph Gilhooly confirmed that 26 applications for the Zero Discharge Scheme by the closing date and one late application was also received. He advised that notification will issue to the applicants within the next 10 days. Mr. Gilhooly advised Members that the Council have become aware of updated Technical Design Guidelines with regard to the Building Regulations for Wastewater Treatment Systems. He advised that the Council is currently reviewing the applications in order to identify suitable sites for inclusion in the scheme.

Mr. Gilhooly also outlined that the Council in conjunction with UCD are commencing a process to develop the parameters within which the scheme will operate taking into account the revision to the Technical Design Guidelines.

Councillor John McCartin proposed that when application are being assessed and considered for inclusion in the scheme that regard is given to young families. He also queried what the new restrictions are in relation to Wastewater Treatment Systems.

Councillor Des Guckian expressed his concerns about the Zero Discharge Scheme.

Mr. Gilhooly advised that the Code of Practice will have to be reviewed and that the Council are in regular contact with the Department in this regard. He stated that the proposal to have a delegation from Leitrim County Council meet with the Minister for Housing, Planning, Community and Local Government would be of minimum benefit at this time.

The Cathaoirleach, Councillor Mary Bohan outlined that she supported the Notice of Motion and she advised that Leitrim County Council has been very proactive in seeking solutions to address the problem. Councillor Bohan agreed that the meeting with the Minister would be premature at this stage and the matter can be reviewed at a later date.

17/16

09/01/2017 Treatment and eradication of Japanese Knotweed

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

"I ask what has been planned nationally for the treatment and eradication of Japanese Knotweed in Ireland? It is growing locally and moves made by this Council on our own to eradicate it are not going to go any distance with eliminating the problem. Have we committed to any National Plan."

Report by Director of Service, Planning, Community and Economic Development

"Leitrim County Council in conjunction with Transport Infrastructure Ireland will be engaging a Contractor in March this year to survey all national and regional roads in the county for the presence of Japanese Knotweed. It is expected that this Contractor will also treat the plants over a four year period to eradicate the plants along the road. This program will be monitored to assist in informing potential options for future programs on other roads."

Councillor Finola Armstrong welcomed the response to her Notice of Motion as she advised that the problem needs to be addressed to stop the spread of Japanese Knotweed. She proposed that a scheme should be put to eradicate the proliferation of the plant on both public and private property.

The Members unanimously supported Councillor McGuire's Notice of Motion.

Mr. Frank Curran outlined that Transport Infrastructure Ireland (TII) will be engaging a Contractor to survey all national and regional roads in the County for the presence of Japanese Knotweed. He also advised that the Council will be educating staff on ways to eradicate the plant and that information for the public will also be published on the Council's website.

17/17

09/01/2017 Social Housing Support

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

"I ask Leitrim County Council for a summary of the number of people registered as homeless in

County Leitrim, and how prepared are we as a Council to deal with such people."

Report by Director of Services, Housing, Corporate, Community & Emergency Services

"There are currently no households, categorised as 'homeless' within the administrative area of Leitrim County Council. There are 366 households on the Council's Housing Waiting List (HWL) at present, which have been assessed by this authority as being eligible for, and in need for Social Housing Support, details of which are set out below: -

Category of Household	Total of All Households
Concluded that Mortgage is unsustainable	4
Currently Dependent on Rent Supplement	186
Disability requirement - intellectual	13
Disability requirement - mental health	36
Disability requirement - physical	9
Disability requirement - sensory	8
Exceptional Medical or Compassionate Grounds	44
Involuntary Sharing	22
Unfit	3
Unsuitable - Particular Household Circumstances	41
Total	366

The 366 households above incorporate a number of applicants, who presented to this authority as homeless, but currently have accommodation available to them, albeit in some cases this may not be suitable to address the long term housing requirements of the household (e.g. they may, on a short term basis, be involuntarily sharing accommodation with family members/friends). Households who are reporting to be homeless must present to the housing authority for assessment, in order to determine if they are eligible for, and in need of social housing support. Heretofore assistance was provided by Leitrim County Council to households, who were assessed as having a requirement for social housing support, by way of including the applicant household on the HWL to facilitate access to the Rent Supplement Scheme, administered by the Department of Social Protection (DSP). In a number of cases support has been provided by the Council by way of payment of a rent deposit to the landlord in order to secure private rented accommodation for such households. Where there are extenuating circumstances, the Council may consider the provision of emergency B & B accommodation to address a households urgent accommodation requirements. In 2016 deposits totalling €6,080.00 and B & B amounting to €96.00 (2 nights), were paid by Leitrim County Council in order to secure accommodation to meet the housing need of 18 no. applicant households, who had presented to this authority as homeless. Since the introduction of the Housing Assistance Payment (HAP) within the administrative area of Leitrim County Council with effect from 1st December 2016, the local authority is responsible for the provision of assistance to households who have a long-term housing need and qualify for social housing support. Under HAP, the local authority will not pay a deposit to a landlord in order to secure private rented accommodation. In some circumstances a household may be eligible to apply for an 'exceptional needs' payment from the DSP to help with paying a deposit. This is subject to approval by the DSP."

Councillor Frank Dolan acknowledged the reply to his Notice of Motion and he thanked Ms. Mary Quinn for the detailed reply. He advised that he had recently attended a meeting in North Leitrim that was organised by another agency to highlight the issue of homelessness in North Leitrim. Councillor Dolan advised that he considered that the information relayed at that meeting may have mis-represented the incidents of homelessness in the County and he put forward this Notice of Motion to seek clarity on the matter from the local authority perspective. Councillor Dolan

highlighted that one of the areas of concern highlighted at the meeting was the amount of a rent deposit that can be approved by the local authority.

Councillor Paddy O'Rourke commended Comhairle na nÓg for the DVD they produced on 'Youth Perceptions on Homelessness' that was presented at the Municipal District Meetings.

Councillor Paddy O'Rourke paid tribute to a presentation presented by Comhairle Na nÓg at a recent Ballinamore Municipal District meeting. Councillor O'Rourke said that he was aware of a few isolated cases of homelessness.

The Members unanimously agreed that there is not a significant issue with homelessness in Leitrim and that there is adequate support available in the local authority to assist households that may be at risk of or have become homeless.

Ms. Mary Quinn concurred that Leitrim does not have a significant number of homeless cases and in circumstances where such cases arise that the local authority can provide alternative emergency B&B accommodation, rent deposits or a local authority tenancy to address the emergency housing need. Ms. Quinn stated that the circumstances that result in a homeless presentation can be highly complex and that in many cases additional tenancy sustainment and supports need to be put in place to maintain the tenancy. Ms. Quinn agreed to examine the issue of rent deposits and she advised that the HAP Scheme may address one aspect of the rent deposit payment as the weekly rent will be paid directly to the landlord of the property which may negate the requirement to pay a month's rent in advance in addition to the rent deposit.

17/18
09/01/2017

Forestry in County Leitrim.

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

"I ask my colleagues to support this motion in calling on Leitrim County Council in asking the Agriculture and Rural Development Commissioner Phil Hogan, is it EU policy to financially support the "Land Grab" which is taking place unabated in County Leitrim by agents and agencies of forestry companies which in time will render whole communities throughout Leitrim into oblivion."

Councillor Warnock called on the support of his fellow Members for his Notice of Motion. He stated that he has concerns that Vulture Funds are now targeting the County and buying up agricultural land to be planted for forestry purposes. Councillor Warnock stated that approximately 50% of agricultural land in the county is now planted with forestry and he raised his concern of the impact that this is having on rural communities. He acknowledged importance of farming as an economic generator of income for the County and he expressed concern that the forestation of land will have a negative impact on local communities if land that was previously used for agricultural purposes is planted by Forestry Company.

- Councillor John McCartin expressed his objection to Councillor Warnock's Notice of Motion, he called for a more balanced discussion to be held at a national level and he urged caution on writing to Mr. Hogan in this regard. Councillor McCartin stated that forestry is also a viable industry that can have a positive economic impact for the County and he advised that he would not support this Notice of Motion.
- Councillor Brendan Barry proposed 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. Councillor Caroline Mulvey also supported this proposal.

- Councillor Enda Stenson stated that such a clause should be incorporated into the County Development Plan.
- Councillor Mary Bohan stated that it is Government Policy to include such a clause in the County Development Plan.

Proposed by Councillor Justin Warnock, seconded by Councillor Paddy O'Rourke AND RESOLVED:

"That Leitrim County Council call on the Agriculture and Rural Development Commissioner Phil Hogan, is it EU policy to financially support the "Land Grab" which is taking place unabated in County Leitrim by agents and agencies of forestry companies which in time will render whole communities throughout Leitrim into oblivion."

17/19

09/01/2017

Social Day Care Services

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

"I request that Leitrim County Council call on the HSE to provide Social Day Care Services in the recently officially opened HSE Ballinamore Community Nursing Unit and Primary Care Centre. I believe that there is a high demand and need for this service in Ballinamore and surrounding areas."

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

"Leitrim County Council call on the HSE to provide Social Day Care Services in the recently officially opened HSE Ballinamore Community Nursing Unit and Primary Care Centre. I believe that there is a high demand and need for this service in Ballinamore and surrounding areas."

17/20

09/01/2017

Home Improvement/Reconstruction Grant Scheme

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

"I propose that Leitrim County Council call on the Minister for Housing, Planning, Community and Local Government, Mr Simon Coveney T.D to introduce a Home Improvement/Reconstruction grant scheme as soon as possible."

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

"That Leitrim County Council call on the Minister for Housing, Planning, Community and Local Government Mr, Simon Coveney T.D to introduce a Home Improvement/Reconstruction grant scheme as soon as possible."

17/21
09/01/2017

Home Help

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

"I ask the HSE or Department of Health, the following: What if any Home Help is available now for people to remain in their own homes rather than sending them to Nursing Homes."

Councillor Enda Stenson expressed his concern in relation to the delay in sanctioning Home Help for elderly people particularly those that are living alone. This Notice of Motion was unanimously supported by all Members and it was acknowledged that in many cases the allocation of Home Help Supports is assisting people to continue to reside in their homes rather than having to enter long-term care.

Proposed by Councillor Enda Stenson, seconded by Councillor Sean McGowan AND UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED:

"That Leitrim County Council call on the HSE or Department of Health, the following: What if any Home Help is available now for people to remain in their own homes rather than sending them to Nursing Homes."

17/22
09/01/2017

Local Improvement Schemes

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

"I ask that this Council to contact the Department of Transport and insist that they meet a delegation from this Council regarding the provision of funds to deal with the backlog of LIS's which is now entering its 7th year since any works was undertaken under that scheme. Rural dwellers whose homes are served by roads eligible under LIS are just as entitled to a safe access to their home as any other section of the community."

Proposed by Councillor Paddy O'Rourke, seconded by Councillor Sean McGowan AND UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED:

"That Leitrim County Council contact the Department of Transport and insist that they meet a delegation from this Council regarding the provision of funds to deal with the backlog of LIS's which is now entering its 7th year since any works was undertaken under that scheme. Rural dwellers whose homes are served by roads eligible under LIS are just as entitled to a safe access to their home as any other section of the community."

17/23
09/01/2017

Bus Services to be restored to Schools

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

"I propose that Leitrim County Council write to the Minister for Transport and demand that full bus services are restored for our schools."

Proposed by Councillor Caroline Mulvey, seconded by Councillor Brendan Barry AND UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED:

"That Leitrim County Council write to the Minister for Transport and demand that full bus services are restored for our schools."

17/24

09/01/2017

Irish Water Service

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

"I ask at the January Council Meeting for a breakdown of monies spent in Leitrim by Irish Water since they have come on board?"

Report by Head of Finance, Finance

"The Water Services function is managed under a Service Level Agreement (SLA) with Irish Water. The following is a breakdown of total revenue spend within the County on day to day operations under the SLA (inclusive of some minor capital works)

2014 - €7.39 Million

2015 - €7.39 Million

2016 - €7.80 Million

Over the period 2014 - 2016, expenditure of €5.6 Million has been incurred under the Irish Water Capital Programme, within County Leitrim.

There are a number of schemes scheduled to commence construction in early 2017, such as the North Leitrim Regional Water Supply Scheme and Wastewater Treatment Plant upgrades at Manorhamilton and Mohill."

Councillor Sean McDermott acknowledged that a lot of good work has been done in regard to water services. Councillor McDermott said that 40% of water was leaking into the ground and he queried if this problem has now been rectified. Councillor McDermott queried if Irish Water could be regionalised and he proposed that a letter issue to the Minister in this regard.

Councillor Mary Bohan supported Councillor Sean McDermott.

Councillor Bohan said that she was aware of a situation before Christmas where the sewerage was coming through a garden. Irish Water had been contacted in this regard and they advised it was the Local Authority who was responsible. The Local Authority checked same and identified the problem and said it was Irish Water's responsibility. Irish Water came back and advised that the problem had been resolved and it had not.

Frank Curran advised that a Regional Structure is already in place.

Councillor Mary Bohan raised the question if contact numbers can be made available to Elected Members, of Leitrim County Council water staff that can be contacted outside of working hours when an urgent issue arises in regard to water.

Mr. Billy Lowe, Senior Engineer agreed that he can be contacted outside of normal working hours in the event of a water emergency.

Councillor Des Guckian expressed his concerns that the water structure is now being dealt with on a Regional basis and said he would prefer if it went back to Local Authorities.

17/25

09/01/2017

Historical and Archaeological

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

"I propose that the Heritage Officer would advise as to what sources of funding are available to the Council from outside agencies for the preservation and development of the many sites of historical and archaeological interest in the county. I believe that if such funding could be identified and sourced, properly spent, it would be of benefit to further attracting visitors to Leitrim."

Report by Director of Service, Planning, Community and Economic Development

"There are a number of potential sources of funding for restoration works to buildings/structures which are Protected Structures. In the case of a Protected Structure (some of which are also Recorded Monuments) there would be the possibility of funding under the Structures at Risk Fund and the Built Heritage Investment Scheme (both of these funds have yet to be announced for 2017). Another source of funding has previously been made available from the Irish Georgian Society Conservation Grant Scheme. Priority is given to Protected Structures and Recorded Monuments of significant importance. The Heritage Council's Community Grants Scheme is also another possibility – these grants have previously funded some conservation works. The Planning Authority will contact the Department of Arts, Heritage, Regional, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs with a view to identifying potential funding sources for other archaeological sites. At local level the new Leader program provides some opportunity also."

Councillor Felim Gurn outlined that if funding was available for the preservation and development of the many historical and archaeological sites in the County that there is potential to increase the number of tourists to the County.

Councillor John McCartin supported the Notice of Motion and he also referred to the success of the Greenway and Blueway Projects in the County in terms of the economic benefit that they generated.

Councillor Des Guckian also supported the Notice of Motion.

Councillor Caroline Mulvey proposed that funding be provided for the cleanup around the Selton Hill Memorial.

Mr. Frank Curran advised that the Heritage Officer will have all the details in this regard.

17/26

09/01/2017

Organ Harvesting

The Chairperson, Councillor Mary Bohan indicated that she was permitting an urgent Notice of Motion to be raised and this was agreed by the Members:

"I ask Leitrim County Council to call on the following

- (a) Irish Government to ratify as soon as possible, the Convention against Trafficking in Human Organs which was adopted by the Council of Europe on 9th July 2014 in order to criminalise

illegal organ transplantations(1). The Irish Government has already signed this convention, but is vet to ratify it.

- (b) The Oireachtas Foreign Affairs Committee to follow through on the pledge made by the Oireachtas Sub Committee on Human Rights to “investigate to the maximum extent possible”(2), persistent, credible reports of forced organ harvesting and other severe human rights abuses imposed on Falun Gong practitioners and other prisoners of conscience in China.
- (c) The Chinese Government to end its practice of forced live organ harvesting or prisoners of conscience and release all illegally detained Falun Gong Practioners in China

Proposed by Councillor Mary Bohan, seconded by Councillor Sean McGowan AND UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED:

“That Leitrim County Council call on the following:-

- (a) Irish Government to ratify as soon as possible, the Convention against Trafficking in Human Organs which was adopted by the Council of Europe on 9th July 2014 in order to criminalise illegal organ transplantations(1). The Irish Government has already signed this convention, but is vet to ratify it.
- (b) The Oireachtas Foreign Affairs Committee to follow through on the pledge made by the Oireachtas Sub Committee on Human Rights to “investigate to the maximum extent possible”(2), persistent, credible reports of forced organ harvesting and other severe human rights abuses imposed on Falun Gong practitioners and other prisoners of conscience in China.
- (c) The Chinese Government to end its practice of forced live organ harvesting or prisoners of conscience and release all illegally detained Falun Gong Practioners in China

The business of the meeting concluded at 2.00 p.m.

Signed:

**Councillor Mary Bohan
Cathaoirleach**

Signed:

**Sinead Flynn
Meetings Administrator**

Dated: 6th March 2017