

Minutes of Meeting of Monaghan County Council held in the Council Chamber, Mtek Building, Armagh Road, Monaghan on Monday 2nd March, 2015 at 10.00 a.m.

Chair: Cllr Pádraig McNally, Cathaoirleach

Present: Cllrs. Bannigan, Bennett, Campbell, Carthy, Conlon, Connolly, Coyle, Crowe, Gallagher, Keelan, Maxwell, McElvaney, B. McKenna, McPhillips, O'Hanlon, P. Treanor and S. Treanor.

Mr. E. Cummins, Chief Executive, Mr. A. King, Director of Services, Mr. J. Murray, Head of Finance, Mr. J. McKernan, A/Senior Engineer, Mr. D. McKernan, Senior Executive Engineer, Ms. F. Matthews, Senior Staff Officer, Mr. L. MacCinna, Executive Engineer, , and Ms. C. Thornton, Meetings Administrator.

Urgent Business:

The Cathaoirleach informed the meeting that two notices of urgent business had been submitted, as follows:

(i) Notice in the names of Cllrs Gallagher, Coyle, O'Hanlon, McNally and Connolly

That Monaghan County Council calls on the Minister of the Environment, Mr. Alan Kelly, TD, to immediately abolish its proposals to amalgamate the library services of Monaghan and Cavan.

The Meetings Administrator informed the meeting that there was a similar notice of motion on the agenda for the meeting (Item 19.7) and that in accordance with Standing Order 14.2.4 a notice of urgent business shall not be accepted if it relates to a notice of motion on the Agenda. The Cathaoirleach ruled the notice of urgent business out of order.

It was agreed that Cllr Connolly could move his Notice of Motion (Item 19.7 on agenda) before the end of the meeting.

(ii) Notice in the names of Cllrs Conlon, Maxwell, Gallagher and Connolly:

In an effort to replace the Direct Provision System of accommodation for asylum seekers with an alternative system that is both humane and reduces the financial burden on the taxpayer, as well as removing this provision from the realm of private business, that Monaghan County Council calls on the Minister Justice and Equality to

- Review in its entirety the Direct Provision System and to examine alternative forms of support and to examine alternative forms of support and accommodation which could be adopted which are more suitable for families and particularly children,
- And to establish in the interim an independent complaints mechanism and independent inspections of Direct Provision centres and give consideration to these being undertaken through the Health Information and Quality Authority (HIQA) or the Ombudsman for Children

Cllr S. Treanor stated that he was completely opposed to this motion and proceeded to outline his reasons why he would be voting against it.

The Cathaoirleach stated that the only matter to be decided at this point was whether or not to take the motion as urgent business or not.

A vote by show of hands on whether or not the motion would be taken as urgent business, resulted in 14 for 1 against.

The Cathaoirleach declared the motion carried and stated that he would deal with urgent business before the meeting concluded.

1. Confirmation of Minutes:

- (i) *On the proposal of Cllr. McKenna seconded by Cllr Maxwell, it was agreed that the minutes of Council meeting held on 2nd February, 2015, be confirmed.*

2. Correspondence.

The following correspondence was circulated with the Agenda:

- Letter from the Department of Transport and Sport confirming the Regional and Local Road Grant allocations for 2015.
- Letter from the Minister for Social Protection declining the Council's request for a meeting in relation to the re-location of the Public Services Card (PSC) office from Ballybay to Monaghan town.
- Letter of acknowledgement from the Minister for Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation regarding multi-national employers in Ireland.
- Letter from the Minister for Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation regarding the closure of the Bose facility in Carrickmacross.
- Letter from the Minister for Transport, Tourism and Sport refusing funding for flood relief works on the R190 – Ballybay/Cootehill Road.
- Letter from the Minister for Public Expenditure and Reform in relation to the Council's resolution requesting the exemption of all childcare facilities from commercial rates.
- Email from Minister Heather Humphreys, T.D., in relation to the closure of the PSC office in Ballybay.
- Letter of acknowledgement from the Office of Public Works in relation to the PSC office in Ballybay.
- Letter of acknowledgement from Cavan County Council regarding directional signage for Cavan Hospital.
- Resolution from Wicklow County Council calling for consultation with the National Association of Regional Game Councils in relation to any changes to the firearms licensing system.
- Resolution from Limerick City & County Council calling on the Minister for the Environment, Community and Local Government to review the declaration of 'off the road' vehicles.
- Resolution from Limerick City & County Council calling on the Minister for Justice to investigate the alleged movement of sex offenders from Northern Ireland to the Republic.

The following correspondence was circulated at the meeting:

- Letter from ICBAN seeking an additional representative from the Council to serve on the board of ICBAN Ltd.
- Letter of acknowledgement from the Minister for Health in relation to the proposed site for the new Primary Care Centre at Monaghan Hospital.
- Email from Minister Heather Humphreys, T.D., enclosing reply from the Minister for Agriculture regarding representations in relation to the poultry sector.
- Email from Christine Jones, Fermanagh and Omagh District Council, seeking nominations from Monaghan County Council to the Clones Erne East Partnership.
- Press release from Minister Heather Humphreys, T.D., announcing €2m funding approval to restore the Ulster Canal from Upper Lough Erne to Castle Saunderson.
- Letter of acknowledgement from the Minister for Communications, Energy and Natural Resources in relation to the Council's resolution regarding remarks made by him about the potential installation of a nuclear power plant in Ireland.
- Resolution from Offaly County Council condemning protests targeting the President of Ireland, Michael D. Higgins.
- Resolution from Donegal County Council confirming its support for the I.N.M.O. in its campaign to have the crisis in all A&E Hospital Departments resolved.

Proposals arising out of correspondence:

On the proposal of Cllr Coyle, seconded by Cllr O'Hanlon, it was agreed that Monaghan County Council expresses its outrage, disappointment, and abhorrence at the government decision to remove and close the Department of Social Protection Offices from Ballybay, inflicting an enormous economic blow to the town and expresses its total disappointment at the inaction of Fine Gael Government Oireachtas representatives for Co. Monaghan - Minister for the Arts, Heritage & the Gaeltacht, Heather Humphreys, TD and Sean Conlan, TD, on the issue, and makes an immediate plea to them as contracts have not yet been signed for the Monaghan location to seek a ministerial order to retain the offices in Ballybay.

On the proposal of Cllr Coyle, seconded by Cllr P. Treanor it was agreed that due to the great inconvenience and suffering inflicted on local residents, who have been marooned in their homes for periods of up to ten days, local hauliers, taxi businesses etc, are unable to operate, farmers unable to have milk and animal collections for similar periods, Monaghan County Council seek an immediate meeting with the Minister for Transport, Tourism and Sport, Paschal Donohoe, TD, to have a specific grant funding allocated for flooding alleviation work to be carried out on the R190, Ballybay-Cootehill Road (Dundalk – Cavan), as this is a major link route across the region.

Cllr Gallagher proposed, Cllr O'Hanlon seconded that this Council write to all political party leaders and ask them to address the issue of rates on commercial properties once and for all, also to adapt a more equitable system that is linked in some way to the size and profitability of the business. We would ask that the party leaders address this issue in their manifestos for next year's election.

A vote by show of hands resulted in 7 for 9 against. The Cathaoirleach declared the proposal defeated.

On the proposal of Cllr Gallagher, seconded by Cllr Coyle, it was agreed that this Council would liaise directly with our Council counterparts in Co. Cavan with a view to increasing the signage indicating the directions to Cavan General Hospital off the Cavan Town Bypass.

On the proposal of Cllr P. Treanor, seconded by Cllr McKenna, it was agreed that this Council seeks an urgent meeting with Minister Pascal Donohoe T.D., to seek an increased allocation for our regional and local roads.

On the proposal of Cllr P. Treanor, seconded by Cllr McKenna it was agreed that this Council appoints a third delegate from Monaghan County Council to the management board of ICBAN.

On the proposal of Cllr McElvaney, seconded by Cllr Conlon, it was agreed that Cllr Maxwell be appointed to the management board of ICBAN.

On the proposal of Cllr P. Treanor, seconded by Cllr McKenna it was agreed that Monaghan County Council adopts the motion from Donegal County Council in relation to the crisis in all Accident & Emergency Hospital departments.

Cllr McKenna proposed, Cllr Bennett seconded, that this Council write to the Minister of State, Simon Harries, TD, again requesting that the government recognise all childcare facilities as 'educational' and by extension exempting all childcare facilities from rates.

A vote by show of hands resulted in 13 for, 2 against, 1 abstention. The Cathaoirleach declared the motion defeated.

On the proposal of Cllr P. Treanor, seconded by Cllr Coyle it was agreed that the members of the Ballybay-Clones M.D. be nominated as the Council's representatives to the Clones-Erne East Partnership Committee.

On the proposal of Cllr P.J. O'Hanlon, seconded by Cllr Gallagher, it was agreed that this Council calls on the Minister for Agriculture, Simon Coveney, TD, to meet the CEO of Bord Bia, Nigel Renaghan, Chairman IFA National Poultry Committee and representatives of Monaghan County Council to resolve the serious issues with the labelling of poultry products.

On the proposal of Cllr McNally, seconded by Cllrs McElvaney and O'Hanlon it was agreed that this Council writes to Bus Eireann requesting that it contact Monaghan County Council in the first instance if they encounter major problems with local bus routes.

3. To adopt the Monaghan County Council Draft Corporate Plan 2015-2019:

Mr. A King Director of Services commenced the presentation stating that the Corporate Plan is the central feature of the Local Authority business framework. He said that under legislation the Plan is required to be produced every five years and will guide the direction, focus and priorities for the Council over that time. The Plan is also developed in accordance with Department guidelines and sets out the high level supporting strategies to be undertaken to deliver the agreed Strategic Objectives. Mr. King stated that the plan was linked with the Council's Annual Service Delivery and Operational Plans and will be monitored and measured by the Council's leadership strategy 'MonaghanStat' and the National Oversight and Audit Commission (NOAC). Finally, he said that the Corporate Plan should be linked to the Council's

statutory obligations, new roles and responsibilities, budgetary process and EU, National and Regional Plans.

Ms. F. Matthews, Senior Staff Officer, then gave an outline of the key elements of the Corporate Plan commencing with the heart of the document the Council's *Vision*. This was described as where Monaghan County Council would like to be or what it intends to become by 2019 - a Council supporting economic development, promoting local enterprise, a good communicator and a local authority in which the public continues to have confidence in.

The *Mission Statement* was described as focusing on the role of this Council, such as economic development, openness and transparency, what **Putting People First** is all about.

The *Core Values* of the Plan describe how the Council do their business, their principles, ethos and the culture of the organisation.

In relation to the development of the eight *Strategic Objectives* Ms. Matthews explained the establishment of the cross department group, the various workshops held in the different sections and the consultation process which helped to decide on what could be considered as the big areas the Council would and should involve themselves over the next 5 years. These strategic objectives are based on the Council's statutory obligations, their obligations under Putting People First, what budgets dictate and the influences on the external and internal environment. The objectives will be monitored through each section's Annual Service Delivery Plan and Performance Management Development Systems (PMDS) and in formal and informal communication and reporting systems as well as producing the Chief Executive's monthly report.

The members were advised that there are almost 70 *Supporting Strategies* listed in the Plan which have been developed in order to achieve the eight Strategic Objectives.

Details of other elements of the plan such as the *preparation and consultation process*, the *cross-cutting themes* and the *external and internal environment* were also highlighted. It was noted that the top six main priorities for the Council over the next 5 years arising from the online survey were listed in the plan.

The Performance Indicators listed in Appendix 4 had recently been revised by NOAC. The members were advised that the total number of indicators had been reduced but there were a couple of new ones which Local Authorities were being asked to report on in respect of 2015.

The members agreed with the recommendations from the CPG in relation to a couple of issues such as moving Strategic Objective number 8 to a more prominent position, now number 4. Also supporting strategy under this objective to read as follows:-

'Support the local community sector in developing local imitative ranging from community facilities to community enterprise'.

An additional supporting strategy was also created under Strategic Objective number 3 which read as follows:-

'Foster linkages with Cavan Monaghan ETB and other higher education institutions to develop courses and apprenticeships relevant to present and future industrial needs'.

Ms. Matthews then thanked all those who had been involved in and supported the production of the Corporate Plan and presented it to the members of the Council for their consideration and adoption.

Following the presentation, Mr. E. Cummins, Chief Executive and Mr. A. King, Director responded to queries from the members.

On the proposal of Cllr Conlon, seconded by Cllr McElvaney, it was agreed that the Council adopt the Draft Corporate Plan 2015-2019 in accordance with Section 134 of the Local Government Act, 2001 (as amended).

- 4. Part VIII of the Local Government (Planning & Development) Act** - To consider granting permission for proposed Seven Bedroom Single Storey Home for Individuals with Physical Disabilities at Drummond Otra, Carrickmacross (Ref.14/8006).

The members considered the report dated 23 February, 2015 from the Director of Planning Services, which had been circulated with the agenda for the meeting.

Mr. L. MacCinna, Executive Engineer Housing Section responded to queries from the members.

On the proposal of Cllr Carthy, seconded by Cllr O'Hanlon, it was agreed that the Council approve the granting of permission for the construction of a single storey seven bedroom home for individuals with physical disabilities and associated site works (Ref 14/8006) to comply with report dated 23rd February, 2015 and in accordance with Part VIII of the Local Government (Planning and Development) Regulations 2001.

Cllrs McNally and Carthy welcomed the development and hoped that the project would be moved to the construction stage as soon as possible.

- 5. To receive Report Under Section 15 of the Planning and Development Act 2000 on Progress Achieved in Securing the Objectives of the County Development Plan 2013-2019:**

Mr. Toirleach Gourley, Senior Executive Planner, explained to the Members that it was a legal obligation that they are given a report on the progress of achieving the objectives set out in the County Development Plan. He stated that this review is part of a cycle of reviews that take place every two years and added this review would be followed by a complete review of the Development Plan in 2017 in preparation for adoption of a new Development Plan in 2019. He advised the members of the Executive Summary enclosed within the Meeting Agenda documentation and of a more substantial document, which goes into detail in respect of achieving the objectives, and which had been emailed to them for them to read at their convenience. He explained that there are essentially objectives that have been achieved, objectives where their achievement is an ongoing process or is work in progress, objectives that are yet to be progressed, and objectives that may not be realised due to restrictions on funding. He listed a number of examples at various stages of achieving objectives by way of clarification.

Cllr Sean Conlon enquired about flood alleviation measures at Milltown. Cllr Gallagher raised concern at the delay of the Catchment Flood Risk Assessment Management as it was holding

up a strategic flood risk assessment of the County. T. Gourley stated that this was a matter for the Office of Works to answer.

Cllr Connolly raised the issue of need for a legal agreement for consent to provide visibility splays. Mr. Gourley explained that legal agreements were necessary to ensure that the person required to provide the visibility splays will have the necessary control over third party lands to carry out this required works, etc. He added that legal advice had been taken upon this requirement and that it was found to be necessary and appropriate. Cllr Connolly stated that no other local authority was taking this stance. Cllr Coyle stated that he had long discussions with the Irish Farmers Association (IFA) who had initially raised the matter during the preparation of the current Development Plan. He stated that the IFA could not provide any legal opinion to dismiss the one received by the Executive. Cllr McPhillips concurred with the assessment as did Cllr Maxwell and Cllr McKenna that legal agreements were necessary.

The Cathaoirleach requested that the Planning Section check with other planning authorities in the region and ascertain if they are requesting legal agreements. He also requested that the standards for visibility splays be ascertained in those planning authorities and a report brought back to Council.

On the proposal of Cllr Gallagher, seconded by Cllr O'Hanlon, it was agreed that that this Council calls on the Department and OPW to expedite the CFRAM Project in order that flooding issues in our county are addressed as a matter of urgency.

6. Management Report – February 2015

The members considered the Management Report for February which had been circulated with the agenda. Mr. E. Cummins, Chief Executive outlined the contents of the report in detail and responded to queries/comments from the members in relation to items contained therein.

Cllr Keelan proposed, Cllr P. Treanor seconded - Given that Monaghan County Council (under the direction of the DoAHG & The Minister), are currently in the process of adding hundreds of structures to the Council's Protected Structures list, we propose that this Council writes to Minister Heather Humphreys, TD, requesting that a proper funding scheme be put in place, given that the national fund available of €624,000 is an insufficient amount of funding, given the large number of structures that need to be maintained.

A vote by show of hands resulted in 16 for, nil against, 1 abstention. The Cathaoirleach declared the motion carried.

On the proposal of Cllr O'Hanlon, seconded by Cllr Gallagher, it was agreed that this Council calls on the Minister for Arts, Heritage and Gaeltacht to make sure that insurance is available for all heritage structures that are privately owned, at a fair and reasonable premium.

On the proposal of Cllr Conlon, seconded by Cllr Carthy, it was agreed that this Council request the Department of the Environment, Community & Local Government to create a newly funded co-ordinator post for the Public Participation Networks throughout each local authority, to enhance its potential for optimum outreach and success in building relations between local authorities and the communities they serve.

It was agreed that this motion would be circulated to each local authority in the country.

On the proposal of Cllr O’Hanlon, seconded by Cllr Gallagher it was agreed that this Council calls on the Minister for Jobs, Richard Bruton, to provide an up to date situation in relation to the Retail Strategy for the whole of the country; are there certain businesses we have too many of or do we need more of another type of business?

7. To consider Section 183 Notices –

(i) Disposal of land at Mucker, Inniskeen.

The members considered the report that had been circulated with the agenda.

Cllr Keelan proposed, Cllr Carthy seconded, that the Council approve the disposal of 5.795 acres of land at Mucker, Inniskeen in accordance with the terms of notice dated 19th February, 2015 under Section 183 of the Local Government Act, 2001.

A recorded vote was taken which resulted as follows:

For: Cllrs. Bannigan, Campbell, Carthy, Conlon, Coyle, Crowe, Gallagher, Keelan, B. McKenna, McNally, McPhillips, O’Hanlon and P. Treanor. **Total 13**

Against: Cllrs. Connolly, Maxwell and S. Treanor. **Total 3**

The Cathaoirleach declared the motion carried.

(ii) Disposal of land at Drumcrew, Castleblayney.

The members considered the report that had been circulated with the agenda.

On the proposal of Cllr Crowe, seconded by Cllr Campbell it was agreed that the Council approve the disposal of 0.083 hectares (0.205 acres) of land at Drumcrew, Castleblayney, in accordance with the terms of notice dated 12th February, 2015 under Section 183 of the Local Government Act, 2001.

8. Audit Committee:

This item was deferred to the April meeting.

9. To approve final membership of County Monaghan Joint Policing Committee.

This item was deferred to the April meeting.

10. To approve recommendations and minutes of Corporate Policy Group meeting held on 24 February, 2015

This item was deferred to the April meeting.

11. Seachtain na Gaeilge - Diospoireacht as Gaeilge.

Chuir an Comh. P Mac Thréinir, coiste Gaeilge, na baill ar an eolas faoi na himeachtaí éagsúla a eagrófar le linn Seachtain na Gaeilge idir 1–17 Márta 2015.

Cllr P. Treanor Cathaoirleach, Coiste Gaeilge informed the members of the various events being arranged to coincide with Seachtain na Gaeilge which runs from 1st to 17th March, 2015.

- Oíche comhrá agus ceol, Teach Mo, Sraid Ghlas Locha, Muineachán 13 Marta, 9.30 tn
A night of Music and Conversation, McManus's, Glaslough Street, Monaghan at 9.30 pm on 13 March.
- Seoladh Scéim Scoláireachta Gaeltachta Comhairle Chontae Muineacháin - Dáta deiridh - 20 Márta
Monaghan County Council Gaeltacht Scholarships Scheme – Closing date 20 March, 2015
<http://www.monaghan.ie/en/newsevents/name,11640,en.html>
- **Maidin Cultúr sa Músaem Chontae Mhuineacháin** – 10 and 11 Márta, 2015
Culture Mornings in Monaghan County Museum – 10 and 11 March, 2015
- **Comórtas na bhFuinneog** sna cúig bhaile sa chontae – Beal Atha Beithe, Carraig Mhacaire Rois, Baile na Lorgan, Cluain Eois agus Muineachán
Windows Competition in the five towns in the county – Ballybay, Carrickmacross, Castleblayney, Clones and Monaghan.
- Cuirfidh na leabharlainn taispeántais ar siúl chun ábhar Gaeilge atá le fál ar iasacht a chur chun cinn.
- The Libraries in the county will run displays promoting Irish materials to borrow in the libraries.
- **'Trath na gCeist with a Twist'** 6 Márta ag 9pm sa Óstan Creighton, Cluain Eois. (Gaelscoil Eois Coiste Tuismitheoiri)

D'aontaigh an Chomhairle scríobh chuig an Aire Heather Mac Unfraidh TD, ag lorg cead agus acmhainní Oifigeach Gaeilge lánaimseartha a fhostú. Ba é an Comh. P Mac Thréinir a mhol an rún agus chuidigh an Comh. Mac Cionaoith leis.

On the proposal of Cllr P. Treanor, seconded by Cllr McKenna, it was agreed that we write to Minister Heather Humphreys, T.D., seeking recognition and resources to employ a full time Irish Officer.

12. To receive reports from Members attending Conferences/Training events

This item was deferred to the April meeting.

13. Business submitted by Chief Executive.

This item was deferred to the April meeting.

14. Matters arising out of the minutes of Council meeting held on 2nd February, 2015

This item was deferred to the April meeting.

15. To receive update on North South Interconnector project

This item was deferred to the April meeting.

16. To receive update on Ulster Canal project

This item was deferred to the April meeting.

17. Presentation on ‘The Invasive Species Threat to Irish Waters’ – Joe Caffrey Inland Fisheries and Richard Caplice

The Cathaoirleach welcomed Joe Caffrey Inland Fisheries and Richard Caplice, Co. Monaghan Angling Association and he invited them to address the meeting.

Mr. Caffrey thanked the Council members for giving him the opportunity to speak to them. He stated that invasive species posed a very significant threat to Irish waters. He referred to Lough Muckno as a very special resource that had to be protected. He said that to keep Lough Muckno invasive species free, it must be managed and used responsibly by all stakeholders. He said that 77% of anglers surveyed thought the Irish angling product was either good or very good. But one of the problems they identified was the threat from invasive non-native species – eg high impact aquatic invertebrates and fish species and riparian and aquatic plant species such as giant hogweed, Japanese knotweed, the Zebra mussel and the Asian clam. He said that freshwater systems were very vulnerable because of their multiple transport pathways – anglers and boaters could be unwitting agents for spreading the problem. Most of the invasive plant species came in on fishing nets, protection gear or boats. He compared the threat of invasive species to the threat of foot and mouth disease coming into Ireland. He urged that compulsory disinfection procedures are put in place and strictly enforced.

Mr. Caplice stated that Lough Muckno was worth circa €3.5m to the local economy last year with a potential return of €5m in the next few years. He called for the introduction of bye laws regulating access onto Lough Muckno and for the enforcement of same.

A number of members complimented Mr. Caplice for the exceptional contribution he had made to the development of Lough Muckno into the major international fishing magnet it has become in recent years.

Following the presentation, Mr. Caffrey and Mr. Caplice responded to queries from the members.

Mr. E. Cummins, Chief Executive acknowledged the importance of fishing to the county and stated that the Council would provide whatever support it could.

The Cathaoirleach thanked both Mr. Caffrey and Mr. Caplice for a very informative presentation and assured them of the Council’s support.

18. Questions:

Cllr C. Carthy asked:

1. As envisaged by the County Council back in December 2014, has the planning process been completed for the Group Home for Women with Physical and Sensory difficulties in Carrickmacross?

Reply: A report on an application relating to the proposed development, made under section 179 of the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended), is due for consideration by the elected members at the March 2015 Council meeting. Acceptance by the members of the recommendation in the report that the development should proceed, will conclude the planning process relating to the proposed home.

2. Monaghan County Council confirmed at December's meeting that non-payment of water charges is a matter between occupiers and Irish Water – does this still include tenants in local authority housing or will the Council be obliged to threaten eviction to those tenants who refuse to pay?

Reply: The payment of bills to all utility companies is a matter between the tenant and the related company. Monaghan County Council have not been directed through legislation that eviction should occur as a result of non payment of water charges.

3. What is the update on the Monaghan Tourism strategy initiated recently by the Council?

Reply: The draft of the Monaghan County Council Tourism Strategy is currently being prepared. When completed it will be discussed by the Economic Development S.P.C. before consideration by the Corporate Policy Committee and County Council.

Cllr S. Conlon asked:

4. Due to the insecurity of accommodation that exists for Council housing applicants who are temporarily housed through the RAS scheme, will the Council Executive provide clarity on the entitlement of housing applicants remaining on the housing list as potential Council tenants and being considered for an allocation based on the established points system regarding years on the waiting list, and other relevant domestic conditions?

Reply: The housing options directly available to the Council include HAP, RAS and local authority owned accommodation. Certain applicants are satisfied in their accommodation in their RAS accommodation and it has to be acknowledged they do not wish to be considered for local authority owned accommodation. However individual households can seek to apply for transfer from their current RAS accommodation. They should formerly complete a transfer application form and the points allocated to their applications will be based on the timing points from the period they sought the transfer, except in the case of RAS applicants pre 2011 who will retain their points from the point at which they were eligible for inclusion on the housing waiting list . Other factors may be considered if they apply in individual circumstances due to changes from the time they were housed on the RAS accommodation (eg. overcrowding/medical conditions etc).

Cllr S. Conlon asked:

5. With the continuing cuts in road grants from central government combined with the reduction in recent years of outdoor Council staffing assigned to road repair duties, what measures are Council Executive considering that will ensure road surfaces throughout the County are maintained to safe standard for both vehicle and user and that dedicated funding allocations for this purpose will not impact negatively on the provision of other services?

Reply: Monaghan County Council is in the process of conducting a condition rating survey for the entire road network to determine its current structural condition. The survey will identify what improvement/remedial works are required and will allow for a determination of the best use of available resources and funding to be made by the Council.

6. With the failure of the fix my street initiative introduced by the government three years ago, what contact details are available for the public to register complaints on road surfaces?

Reply: If a member of the public has a complaint with regard to roads they can still use the Fix My Street application as it is still available and functional or alternatively they can email info@monaghancoco.ie or contact the Roads Section directly at 047 30597 or the relevant Municipal District.

7. With the provision and maintenance of drainage networks and gullies throughout the county road network now the responsibility of Irish Water, what assurances have Monaghan County Council received from Irish Water that will ensure our roads remain free from blocked gullies and associated flooded roads?

Reply: The maintenance of storm drainage networks remains the responsibility of Monaghan County Council and this service will be delivered through the Municipal District Offices.

Cllr R. Gallagher asked:

8. Can the Council give details on how many queries regarding the setting up of new businesses have been made to the Local Enterprise Office since its inception last June, how many received assistance through guidance, mentoring and /or grants and whether it was successful in assisting any women entrepreneurs?

Reply: From the LEOs inception in April 2014, 180 queries have been received and have been dealt with through signposting to relevant supports/agencies, directed to appropriate training courses, mentoring and grant application process. 434 participated on training and networking events, 44 have been assigned mentoring and 14 grant applications have been approved. 74 persons participated on the Monaghan Women in Business network events.

9. Can the Council provide the figures for tourism numbers of visitors to Monaghan in 2014, the places most visited and what plans are in place to increase visitor numbers?

Reply: Monaghan County Council does not maintain tourism visitor figures to the county. Failte Ireland maintain data on visitor numbers to the county in general.

10. Can the Council advise how many people are in arrears with Council loans and how many have had their loans restructured?

Reply: The number of loans in arrears is as follows:

between 1 and 2 months old	65
between 2 and 3 months old	16
between 3 and 6 months old	19
between 6 and 12 months old	18
between 12 and 24 months old	26
greater than 24 months old	24

No loans have been restructured.

Cllr N. Keelan asked:

11. In relation to the poor condition of many of the roads in the county, what is the total amount of funding received from the Department for the upgrading and maintenance of our local county and regional road network for 2015; how does this figure compare with 2010-2011 roads funding; what has happened the separate allocation that had always been given to the former Town Councils?

Reply: €7,152,894.00 was allocated from the Department of Transport for non-national roads for 2015. The allocation for non national roads to the County Council (excluding Town Councils) for 2010 was €12,393,499.00 and for 2011 €12,281,358.00. The DTTAS has indicated that the former Town Council Block Grant has been incorporated into other Non-National road grant categories.

12. How much funding has been collected through the motor vehicle tax in 2014 and in order to inform the public, what happens to the funding that is collected in the county?

Reply: Monaghan County Council collected €10,420,648 through the Motor Tax Office. A further €11,000,000 was paid through Motor Tax online. Money collected by the Motor Tax office is lodged to the Local Government Fund account.

13. How much funding has been collected through the Local Property Tax in 2014 and in order to inform the public, what happens to the funding that is collected in the county?

Reply: Monaghan County Council has no function in the collection of the LPT. Based on details received from the DECLG the amount of LPT due in Co. Monaghan is €3,918,800.

14. In the interest of road safety, will Monaghan County Council prepare and implement a hedgecutting/trimming plan across the county for 2015, given that the 2014 hedgecutting/trimming plan was not carried out in full; will the Council take more robust action against the small number of landowners across the county who consistently refuse to comply with a Hedge Cutting Notice served on them by this Council?

Reply: Monaghan County Council are in the process of identifying areas where hedgecutting/trimming is necessary and will be contacting landowners/occupiers of land with a view to carrying out remedial measures. The County Council will rigorously pursue any

landowners who fail to carry out the remedial works, which could lead to prosecution proceedings which carry a fine and/or imprisonment or both, as outlined in the Roads Act 1993 legislation.

15. In relation to staffing levels in the Council, how many people are employed by Monaghan County Council at present; how does this figure compare with 2010-2011 and also given the concerns I have in relation to our outdoor staffing levels, what are the comparisons with today's number and 2010-2011?

Reply: At 31st December 2014, there were 399 staff employed by Monaghan County Council compared to 447 at the 31st December 2010 and 438 at 31st December 2011.

20 Votes of sympathy/congratulations:

It was agreed that a vote of sympathy be extended to the following:

- Cllr David Maxwell on the death of his uncle Stefan Zelinski, RIP
- Martin Shannon, Journalist on the death of his sister Mary Millar, RIP
- The family of Marie Smyth, RIP, late of Ballybay.

It was agreed that a vote of congratulations be extended to the following:

- Aogán Ó Fearghail on his inauguration as Uachtarán Chumann Lúthchleas Gael and that he be invited to address a future meeting of the Council.
- Latton Social Services on their work on the Balti Bus Rural Transport Initiative
- Pdraig Smith, Latton on his appointment as Co-ordinator of the new Rural Transport Service
- Brendan Buckley former Station Officer, on his retirement from Monaghan Fire Service.

21. Conferences/Training:

On the proposal of Cllr Maxwell, seconded by Cllr Coyle, it was agreed that the Council be represented at the following Conferences/Training events by the members listed:

Promoting Authority	Subject/Theme	Venue	Dates	Members Selected
AILG	Second Annual Conference	Nuremore Hotel, Carrickmacross	12-13 th March	Cllr Seamus Coyle Cllr Pdraig McNally Cllr PJ O'Hanlon Cllr Hugh McElvaney
ACE Management & Training	Domestic Water Charges, Preparation & Practicalities	Four Seasons Hotel, Carlingford, Co. Louth	20-22 nd March	Cllr Seamus Coyle

Urgent Business:

Notice in the names of Cllrs Conlon, Maxwell, Gallagher and Connolly:

Cllr Conlon proposed, Cllr Maxwell seconded

In an effort to replace the Direct Provision System of accommodation for asylum seekers with an alternative system that is both humane and reduces the financial burden on the taxpayer, as well as removing this provision from the realm of private business, that Monaghan County Council calls on the Minister Justice and Equality to

- *Review in its entirety the Direct Provision System and to examine alternative forms of support and to examine alternative forms of support and accommodation which could be adopted which are more suitable for families and particularly children,*
- *And to establish in the interim an independent complaints mechanism and independent inspections of Direct Provision centres and give consideration to these being undertaken through the Health Information and Quality Authority (HIQA) or the Ombudsman for Children*

In moving the motion Cllr Conlon said that in dealing with the problem of international refugees the Director Provision system had been created and accommodation duly provided. A considerable number of contracts were signed up by private companies for the provision of facilities to house people seeking asylum which had been a huge cost to the taxpayer. He said he was calling for an end to this Direct Provision system. Less than a thousand people had applied for asylum in Ireland last year and the need to have so many facilities had diminished. It was time to end these contracts.

Cllrs Maxwell, Gallagher and Connolly all spoke in favour of the motion, as did Cllrs Carthy Keelan, Coyle, P. Treanor, B. McKenna and the Cathaoirleach.

Cllr S. Treanor strongly voiced his opposition to the proposal before the meeting.

A recorded vote was taken on Cllr Conlon's Urgent Business proposal which resulted as follows:

For: Cllrs. Campbell, Carthy, Conlon, Connolly, Coyle, Crowe, Gallagher, Keelan, Maxwell, B. McKenna, McNally, O'Hanlon, and P. Treanor. **Total 13**

Against: Cllr S. Treanor. **Against 1**

Abstentions: Nil

The Cathaoirleach declared the motion carried.

Notice of Motion 19(7):

Cllr Connolly proposed, Cllr Gallagher seconded:

That Monaghan County Council calls on the Minister of the Environment, Mr. Alan Kelly, TD, to immediately abolish its proposals to amalgamate the library services of Monaghan and Cavan.

In moving the motion Cllr Connolly stated that there were currently 6/7 jobs in the library headquarters and that great use was being made of the five library branches in the county. He feared that the rationalisation might lead to the HQ effectively leaving the county. He stated that the library service brought a level of education to children and that in some cases it was the only access people had to the internet or broadband.

Cllr Gallagher seconded the motion and stated that if Cavan were to be the lead authority, Monaghan would merely be a partner. All decisions in relation to funding, etc would be made by the lead authority.

A number of members spoke in favour of the proposal.

Mr. A. King, Director of Services advised the meeting that the members were referring to a draft report which proposed to reform and improve the library service. It was proposed that the management unit for library services should relate to a population of 100,000. Under this proposal, library services in Cavan and Monaghan and there would be a similar arrangement between Sligo, Leitrim and Roscommon. He outlined the main changes that would take place if a shared service between the two counties is agreed at national level –

- One County Librarian post to cover both counties
- One Library Headquarters located in either Cavan or Monaghan
- One county would be the lead authority operating the library service under a Service Level Agreement for the other authority.

He stated that it was envisaged that libraries would have a bigger role in community engagement, learning supports and health and well-being. The service would be run through a service level agreement between the partner and the lead authority. There is no proposal to close any libraries.

The Cathaoirleach put the motion to the meeting and it was agreed unanimously.

The meeting then concluded.