

Minutes of Adjourned September meeting of Monaghan County Council held in the Mtek Building, Armagh Road, Monaghan on Monday 17th September, 2012, at 10.00 am.

Chair: Cllr H. McElvaney, Mayor.

Present: Cllrs Bannigan, Carthy, Carville, Conlon, Connolly, Crowe, Gallagher, Keelan, Maxwell, McElvaney, B. McKenna, McNally, McPhillips, Murray, O'Brien, O'Hanlon, P. Treanor and S. Treanor.

Mr. D. Fallon, A/County Manager, Mr. D. Treanor, Director of Service Mr. K. Duffy, Executive Engineer, Ms. N. Woods, SEO Housing and Ms. C. Thornton, Meetings Administrator.

Apologies: Mr. P. Clifford and Mr. A. King, Directors of Service.

Lagan Brick dispute:

Cllr Carthy advised the members that the dispute at Lagan Brick, Kingscourt had been resolved the previous week and that the presentation which had been scheduled for that meeting would not be going ahead.

Cllr Carthy proposed that the Council congratulate and commend the Lagan Brick employees on concluding the dispute which had been ongoing at the Kingscourt Plant since December 2011 and that the Council wish them success in the future. He also paid tribute to all the Councillors and Dail Deputies that had assisted in bringing the dispute to a conclusion. Cllr Keelan seconded the proposal which was agreed by the Council.

On the proposal of Cllr Connolly, seconded by Cllr Coyle it was agreed that the Council write to Mr. Richard Bruton, T.D., Minister for Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation requesting that a task force be established to examine the possibility of finding alternative employment/ industry for the workers of Lagan Brick, Kingscourt who have been made redundant.

8. Business submitted by County Manager:

Council Landfill at Scotch Corner:

The Mayor, Cllr McElvaney, declared an interest and withdrew from the meeting room in advance of this item being discussed. Cllr N. Keelan, Deputy Mayor assumed the Chair.

Cllr Bannigan proposed, Cllr McPhillips seconded that the discussion in relation to the Council landfill be held 'in committee'.

Cllr O'Hanlon proposed, Cllr McNally seconded that the discussion be held in public session.

A vote by show of hands on Cllr Bannigan's proposal resulted in 8 for 3 against. The Chair declared the motion carried and that the debate would take place 'in committee'.

The Acting County Manager David Fallon outlined how evolving national policies, increased recycling rates, increases in the landfill levy, more stringent EPA requirements, the opening of the Indaver thermal treatment plant, and the economic situation are all having an impact on the ability of the Council to attract sustainable volumes of waste into Scotch Corner. He stated that recent years have seen a significant reduction in the number of licensed landfill facilities in the country and as of 2012 there are now less than 20 such landfills in operation nationally. Monaghan County Council has been operating the landfill Scotch Corner since 1991 but the last few years have seen a considerable reduction in the volume of waste being land-filled at the facility.

Mr. Kieran Duffy, Executive Engineer, gave a powerpoint presentation to the members and explained that the requirement to move away from land-filling to more sustainable methods of waste management is in line with national policy and EU policy as further outlined by the recent Government policy document entitled "A Resource Opportunity" issued in July 2012 by Phil Hogan, T.D., Minister for the Environment, Community and Local Government, once again re-enforcing the requirement to move away from land-filling.

He explained that the first regional waste management plan was introduced in 2001 and the targets outlined in this original plan relating to the management of waste were that within a 15 year period, 43% of waste generated in the region was to be recycled, 39% was to be treated in an energy recovery plant, and 18% was to be recycled. He further expanded that the North East region which comprises of the counties of Monaghan, Meath, Louth and Cavan is effectively the only region in the country to essentially have achieved these targets as it is the only waste region in the country to have an operational thermal treatment plant - the Indaver thermal plant at Carranstown, Co. Meath.

Mr. Duffy also outlined how the recent increase in the landfill levy to €65/tonne, more stringent EPA licence requirements on the type of waste that can be land-filled, and the fact that less waste was being generated because of the economic situation all had made it very difficult for the council to attract waste contractors to the Scotch Corner facility. He outlined that it was very unlikely that any new landfill capacity would be developed at Scotch Corner and that once the remaining landfill capacity on site had been filled no further waste would be accepted at the facility.

A number of scenarios relating to the future of the landfill and possibly leading to the eventual closure of the facility were discussed. Acting Director of Services, Damien Treanor stated that Monaghan Council had recently successfully tendered to accept repatriated waste from Northern Ireland which would help secure the short to medium term future of the facility.

The Council also discussed the possibility of developing an Integrated Constructed Wetland (ICW) on the site of the old landfill site at Scotch Corner to treat landfill run-off or leachate in an environmental and sustainable manner. Mr. Duffy explained

that one of the major costs associated with the landfill site was leachate management but that the development of an ICW had the potential to realise huge savings for Monaghan County Council. Before such a project could progress, Part VIII planning approval and subsequent EPA approval for such a facility would be required. The Councillors agreed to progress an Environmental Impact Statement for the development of an ICW on site.

Mr. Treanor stated that all scenarios relating to the future of the Scotch Corner landfill facility as presented in the business plan for the facility planned for the eventual closure of the facility.

Mr. Fallon, Mr. Treanor and Mr. Duffy responded to queries put forward by the Members.

It was agreed that the Council accept the recommendations contained in the Landfill Business Plan. It was further agreed that the Landfill sub-committee would meet regularly to monitor the progress of the business plan.

On the proposal of Cllr Conlon, seconded by Cllr Murray it was agreed that the Council seek from the Department of the Environment, Community and Local Government, the necessary funds required to carry out an Environmental Impact Statement at the site of the proposed Integrated Constructed Wetlands at Scotch Corner, Co. Monaghan. This figure of approximately €100,000 could be sourced from the considerable landfill levy fees generated on site.

It was agreed that the meeting revert to public session.

The Members agreed that a detailed statement would be issued to the press.

Cllr McElvaney re-entered the meeting room and assumed the Chair. He thanked the Deputy Mayor for chairing the meeting in his absence.

Meeting of Joint Committee on the Implementation of the Good Friday Agreement in relation to the development of the N2/A5/N14 route:

The Acting County Manager advised the Council that the Mayor and himself had attended a meeting with representatives from Donegal County Council, Strabane, Omagh and Derry City Councils and the Joint Committee on the Implementation of the Good Friday Agreement. The Mayor had delivered a presentation on behalf of the Council expressing support for the development of a number of major infrastructural projects in the region, in particular, the development of the N2/A5/N14 route. He circulated a copy of the Mayor's statement in relation to the development of this essential strategic route.

The Mayor stated that an excellent presentation had been made to the Joint Committee, who appeared to be very supportive. He regretted that there had been one dissenting voice that was opposed to the project going ahead. A short discussion followed to which a number of members contributed and expressed their support for the project.

Cllr McNally proposed, Cllr Coyle seconded that Deputy Sean Conlan be invited to a future Council meeting to explain to the Council the reason for his objections to the project.

A vote by show of hands on Cllr McNally's proposal resulted in 14 for, Nil against and 4 abstentions. The Mayor declared the motion carried.

Date for CPG meeting:

It was agreed that a meeting of the Corporate Policy Group would be held on Tuesday 25th September, 2012 at 9.00 am in the Conference Room, The Glen, Monaghan.

7. Proposed EirGrid 440kv Interconnector

Cllr Bannigan advised that the court case being taken by the Monaghan Anti Pylon Committee, in relation to the recoupment of the costs incurred by community groups attending the oral hearing, is at an advanced stage in the High Court.

12. Notices of Motion:

It was agreed that Notices of Motion 12(1) and (4) would be taken together

Cllr P. McNally proposed, Cllr Keelan seconded

1. That this Council calls on the Minister for Environment, Mr. Phil Hogan, T.D., to put in place a grant aid scheme for all those expected to upgrade their septic tanks as a result of the new septic tank regulations.

Cllr P. Connolly proposed, Cllr B. McKenna seconded

4. Following the recent passing of legalisation governing septic tanks and the potential costs involved arising from remedial works to defective septic tanks that Monaghan County Council calls on the Minister for the Environment to ensure that a full grant aid package is put in place to enable owners comply with the legalisation and upgrade their septic tanks.

A short debate took place on both motions during which Cllr McNally called for the Minister to introduce a 50% grant aid package while Cllr Connolly expressed the view that the grant aid package should be of the nature of 100% on the grounds that people in urban areas, in the main, do not have to pay for sewerage facilities. The members agreed that the Minister should be requested to put in place a grant aid package of 70% for those who have to carry out remedial works to their septic tank/percolation system.

The Mayor put the motions as amended - to provide for a grant package of 70% being sought – to the meeting and they were agreed unanimously.

Cllr P. McNally proposed, Cllr Carthy seconded

2. That this Council calls on the Minister to immediately introduce a new Tenant Purchase Scheme to allow tenants to purchase their Local Authority homes at the present reduced costs.

In moving the motion, Cllr McNally referred to the Tenant Purchase Scheme currently in place which represented an excellent opportunity for tenants to buy out their rented dwelling at a greatly reduced price. He expressed his disappointment at the poor take up of the scheme. He thought this was due to the strict conditions attached to the scheme and was critical of the fact that social welfare was not taken into account when determining applicants income. Cllrs Carthy, Connolly, O’Hanlon and Crowe all spoke in favour of the motion.

It was agreed that consideration of the remaining Notices of Motion would be deferred to the October meeting.

Votes of sympathy/congratulations:

It was agreed that a vote of sympathy be extended to the Spence family on the death of Noel, Graham and Nevin in a tragic accident on the family farm near Hillsborough, Co Down.

It was agreed that a vote of congratulations be extended to the Carrickmacross Tidy Towns Committee on winning a Gold Medal in the National Tidy Towns Competition 2012 – Category D.

The meeting then concluded.

Signed: _____
Meara Meetings Administrator

Date: _____