

Minutes of Meeting of Monaghan County Council held in the Council Chamber, Mtek Building, Monaghan on Monday 1st September, 2014 at 2.00 p.m.

Chair: Cllr Pdraig 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. P. Clifford and Mr. A. King, Director of Services, Mr. J. Murray, Head of Finance, Mr. A. Hughes, Senior Planner, Mr. T. Gourley, Senior Executive Planner and Ms. C. Thornton, Meetings Administrator.

At the outset, Cllr McNally proposed that the Council extend a vote of congratulations to the Donegal Senior and Minor Football teams on their victories over Dublin and reach the All Ireland Football Finals.

On the proposal of Cllr McElvaney, seconded by Cllr B. McKenna it was agreed that the sympathy of the Council be extended to Cllr Aidan Campbell on the death of his father-in-law Hugh McCluskey, RIP, late of Smithboro.

On the proposal of Cllr B. McKenna, seconded by Cllr S. Treanor it was agreed that the sympathy of the Council be extended to Cllr Connolly on the death of his cousin, Marian Donnelly, RIP.

On the proposal of Cllr Bennett, seconded by Cllr B. McKenna, it was agreed that the sympathy of the Council be extended to Cllr Conlon on the death of his uncle Patsy McCaughey, RIP.

On the proposal of Cllr O'Hanlon, seconded by Cllr Gallagher it was agreed that the sympathy of the Council be extended to the Cathaoirleach on the death of his sister in law, Dolores Byrne, RIP.

On the proposal of Cllr Conlon, seconded by Cllr B. McKenna, it was agreed that the sympathy of the Council be extended to Cllr Carthy on the death of his uncle, John Murray RIP.

On the proposal of Cllr McNally, seconded by Cllr B. McKenna, it was agreed that the sympathy of the Council be extended to Dermot McCague, EHO on the death of his mother Bridie, RIP.

On the proposal of Cllr O'Hanlon, seconded by Cllr McNally it was agreed that the sympathy of the Council be extended to Mrs. Kathleen Reynolds and her family on the death of her husband Albert, former Taoiseach.

On the proposal of Cllr Coyle, seconded by Cllr O'Hanlon it was agreed that the sympathy of the Council be extended to Michael Duffy, Council employee on the death of his sister Geraldine Monaghan.

The Chief Executive associated himself and the staff with all votes of sympathy.

It was agreed that the meeting would adjourn for five minutes as a mark of respect.

Cllr Maxwell raised the matter of the Council agenda and back up documentation being issued electronically to the members. He stated that this was not acceptable as the members were not advised of this in advance. He further stated that most of the areas in the county, apart from the towns, did not have sufficient broadband coverage to allow for the downloading of the documents. The Council agenda should continue to be issued in hard copy format. Cllrs Conlon, Connolly, Coyle, B. McKenna and McNally concurred with the sentiments expressed by Cllr Maxwell in relation to broadband.

Replying to Cllr Maxwell, Mr. Cummins, Chief Executive stated that he acknowledged the concerns of the members, especially those with poor broadband in their areas. He had discussed the matter with the Party Whips sometime ago. He stated that avoiding the necessity of printing out documentation was an important part of sustainability. He asked the members to try and familiarise themselves with the new system and that whatever training they required would be provided.

On the proposal of Cllr Maxwell, seconded by Cllr Conlon, it was agreed that any member who requests a hard copy of the monthly agenda is issued one as has been the case up to this point.

1. Confirmation of Minutes

(i) On the proposal of Cllr McElvaney, seconded by Cllr Coyle, it was agreed that the minutes of the Council meeting held on 8th July, 2014, be confirmed.

2. Correspondence.

The following correspondence was circulated with the agenda:

- Letter of acknowledgement from the Minister for Finance in relation to the Council's resolution regarding the VAT rate on bottled water.
- Letter of acknowledgement from the Minister for Transport regarding lorry compliance checks.
- Letter from the Department of Social Protection in relation to the criteria for the Farm Assist Scheme.
- Letter from Sean Conlan TD confirming he had raised the valuation of childcare facilities with the Minister for Public Expenditure and Reform.
- Letter from Brendan Smith, TD confirming he had raised the valuation of childcare facilities with the Minister for Public Expenditure and Reform.
- Letter from Irish Water indicating their inability to attend Council meetings and advising of their intention to hold information sessions on a regional basis for elected members.
- Resolution from Ballybay-Clones M.D. in relation to Irish Water and the hardness of water in the Scotstown/Smithboro areas and brown coloured water in the Ballybay Area.
- Resolution from Ballybay-Clones M.D. calling for the establishment of free Wi-Fi in Clones Town.
- Press release from Omagh District Council in relation to the A5 dual carriageway project.
- Letter from Aogán Ó Fearghail, Uachtarán Tofa, Cumann Lúthchleas Gael, thanking the Council for its letter of congratulations on his election as Uachtarán Tofa.

- Letter from Armagh City and District Council expressing sympathy to the Council on the death of former Councillor Owen Bannigan, RIP.
- Resolution from Donegal County Council expressing its solidarity with the Palestinian people and condemning the atrocities in Gaza.
- Resolution from South Dublin County Council calling for the release of a 17 year old Irish citizen, Ibrahim Halawi, who is being detained in Egypt.
- Resolution from Kerry County Council rejecting elements of the Housing Miscellaneous Provisions Bill 2014 which would potentially remove up to 70% of those most in need from the housing list.
- Resolution from Kerry County Council in relation to decision on a planning application for a development of a playground at Castlegregory, Co. Kerry.

The following correspondence was circulated at the meeting:

- Letter from the Chairperson of the National Poultry Committee seeking funding of €25million over the next five years in order to be able to upgrade facilities to meet environmental regulations.
- Email from Minister Heather Humphreys in relation to the North South Interconnector project.
- Email from Minister Heather Humphreys in relation to the valuation of childcare facilities
- Letter from the Minister for Public Expenditure and Reform outlining the position in relation to the Valuation Amendment No 2 Bill 2012 and advising that there are no plans to grant exemptions to childcare facilities.

Proposals arising out of correspondence:

On the proposal of Cllrs McKenna and McNally, seconded by Cllr Maxwell, it was agreed that this Council supports the IFA request that €25million (i.e. €5 million per annum) is allocated from the Rural Development Plan 2014 – 2020 to the poultry sector to ensure that poultry growers are able to upgrade their facilities to meet increasing Department of Agriculture environmental regulations on the poultry sector.

On the proposal of Cllr Bennett, seconded by Cllr P. Treanor, it was agreed that Monaghan County Council expresses solidarity towards the people of Gaza.

On the proposal of Cllr McKenna, seconded by Cllr Bennett, it was agreed that the Council write again to the Minister for Public Expenditure & Reform requesting that he include childcare facilities in the list of exemptions in the Valuation (Amendment) (No. 2) Bill 2012 which is currently progressing through the Oireachtas. We are requesting that childcare facilities are included in the list of exemptions under Schedule 4 of the Act.

It was agreed that the motion would be circulated to the T.D.'s for the constituency

On the proposal of Cllr Coyle, seconded by Cllr Gallagher, it was agreed that all childcare facilities and educational facilities are exempt from rates as is the position with all primary and secondary schools.

On the proposal of Cllr Connolly, seconded by Cllr S. Treanor, it was agreed that no new rates are introduced on childcare facilities until the Valuation (Amendment) (No. 2) Bill 2012 has passed all stages in the House of the Oireachtas and that we review the application of full commercial rates on childcare premises.

On the proposal of Cllr P. Treanor, seconded by Cllr Bennett, it was agreed that this Council supports the resolution from the Ballybay – Clones Municipal District in relation to free Wi-fi in Clones as a pilot project scheme for County Monaghan.

On the proposal of Cllr Maxwell, seconded by Cllr Conlon, it was agreed to write to the Secretary of the Ulster Council of the GAA thanking them for the complimentary tickets issued to the Council members for the Ulster Final.

On the proposal of Cllr McPhillips, seconded by Cllr Campbell, it was agreed that Monaghan County Council requests the Minister with responsibility for Small Business, Gerald Nash T.D. to meet with a delegation from the Council to discuss can be done to assist small businesses particularly around rates discounts and rates incentives.

On the proposal of Cllr Coyle, seconded by Cllr Gallagher, it was agreed that the criteria for the Farm Assist Scheme return to pre Budget 2012 criteria as farm income, particularly in the beef sector, and in farming generally, has reduced significantly. This payment is hugely important to family farms. The Council also calls for the Rural Social Scheme payments to be accordingly increased as very valuable work is being done in all areas of County Monaghan.

On the proposal of Cllr Conlon, seconded by Cllr Maxwell, it was agreed that the Council adopt the resolution from South Dublin County Council, calling on the Minister for Foreign Affairs to ensure that Ibrahim Halawa, an Irish Citizen aged 17 years, who was arrested during his summer holidays in Egypt in 2013 and continues to be detained there, be allowed basic civil and human rights including that he be given access to his lawyer and be given the right to a proper court hearing or that he be released forthwith into the care of his family.

On the proposal of Cllr Conlon, seconded by Cllr McKenna, it was agreed that Monaghan County Council requests the Department of Transport to release the estimated €1.5million required to complete the design process for the proposed realignment of the N2 connecting to the proposed realigned A5. This is required to re-define the current 400m route corridor to under 100m, which will, in turn, free up a substantial tract of land for potential development through the North Monaghan area.

On the proposal of Cllr Connolly, seconded by Cllr S. Treanor, it was agreed that the letter in relation to lorry height, previously sent to the Minister for Transport be sent to Minister Frances Fitzgerald.

On the proposal of Cllr Bennett, seconded by Cllr P. Treanor, it was agreed that this Council write to Irish Water requesting that steps are taken by them to reduce the hardness of water to residents in the Scotstown/Smithboro areas thereby reducing the need and cost of replacing electrical equipment. Can Irish Water also investigate the reason for brown coloured water that is supplied to the people of Ballybay as all residents of Monaghan should be supplied with good quality water.

3. To consider revisions to the Monaghan Local Authorities Development Contributions Scheme 2013-2019.

Mr. P. Clifford, Director of Services, referred to the revised Development Contributions Scheme which had been circulated with the agenda. He stated that the only changes to the Scheme are to take account of the revised local government structure and the transfer of responsibility for water and waste water services to Irish Water. The revisions remove all

references to development contributions for water and waste water services, and change the existing allocation from 15% of development contributions collected for Community, Recreation and Amenity facilities to each electoral area, to 20% being allocated to each Municipal District. The remaining 40% of contributions will continue to be allocated to a county wide project or projects.

On the proposal of Cllr B. McKenna, seconded by Cllr R. Gallagher, it was agreed to that the amendments to the Development Contribution Scheme 2013 – 2019 be adopted and that the Council commences the public consultation process on the proposed amendments to the Development Contribution Scheme 2013-2019.

4. To approve the appointment of nominees to the Local Community Development Committee (LCDC) in accordance with Section 128C of the LG Reform Act 2014.

Mr. P. Clifford, Director of Services referred to the establishment of the LCDC and circulated a list of the nominations already received for membership of this committee. He stated that in accordance with section 128C of the Local Government Reform Act 2014 that the Council must approve the appointments to the LCDC.

On the proposal of Cllr Coyle, seconded by Cllr Maxwell, it was agreed that in accordance with section 128C of the Local Government Reform Act 2014, the Council approve the membership of the Local Community Development Committee, as follows:

Name	Statutory / Non Statutory	Sector Represented
Eugene Cummins	Statutory 1	Chief Executive, Monaghan County Council
Cllr. Brian McKenna	Statutory 2	Elected Member
Cllr. Seamus Coyle	Statutory 3	Elected Member
Cllr. David Maxwell	Statutory 4	Elected Member
John McEnteggart	Statutory 5	Head of Local Enterprise Office
John Kearney	Statutory 6	Cavan Monaghan Education and Training Board CEO
Jim Manning	Statutory 7	Department of Social Protection
Rose McCaffrey	Statutory 8	Health Service Executive Cavan/Monaghan Area Manager
Gabriel O'Connell	Non Statutory 1	Monaghan Integrated Development
Breege Lenihan	Non Statutory 2	C&V Interests
Noel Carney	Non Statutory 3	C & V Interests
Packie Kelly	Non Statutory 4	Social Inclusion Interests
Robert Wilson	Non Statutory 5	Social Inclusion Interests
Emer Brennan	Non Statutory 6	Environmental Interests
Brian Treanor	Non Statutory 7	Farming/Agriculture interests
To be confirmed	Non Statutory 8	Business/Employer interests
Denis Sheridan	Non Statutory 9	SIPTU Irish Congress of Trade Unions

5. To adopt the Draft Scheme for the Strategic Policy Committees 2014-2019

Mr. A. King, Director of Services referred to the Draft Scheme for the Strategic Policy Committees 2014-2019, which had been circulated. He outlined the main provisions of the draft scheme, the proposed structure of the committees and the breakdown between Councillor and Sectoral representation as well as details of the nomination process. He responded to queries from the members in relation to the draft scheme.

On the proposal of Cllr McElvaney, seconded by Cllr Maxwell it was agreed that the Council adopt the draft scheme for the Strategic Policy Committees, It was further agreed that the draft scheme be placed on public display for a period of one month and that submissions be invited from the public.

6. To approve the appointment of three external members to the Council's Audit Committee.

Mr. A. King, Director gave an overview of the legislation relative to the establishment of an Audit Committee within the Council. He circulated a summary paper which outlined the role and function of the committee. The Councillor representatives – Cllr S. Conlon and Cllr C. McPhillips – had already been appointed at the annual meeting on 23rd June 2014. He stated that in accordance with the legislation the external members of the Audit Committee shall -

- Consist of not less than 3 external members
- Not have more than 2 serving or retired elected members,
- Have 2 or more persons having knowledge or experience in finance, audit or accounting.
- Endeavour to have equitable balance between men and women.
- Be appointed for the maximum duration of the Local Authority that appointed it.

In accordance with the foregoing, the following persons were being put forward for appointment to the Audit Committee –

Desmond O'Connor – BFS Degree

- Qualified Financial Advisor
- 40 Years experience in Banking with T.S.B.

Fern Ross – Masters in Business Studies

- Owner/Manager Effiste Ltd.
- Specialises in Business Advice, Efficient Systems, Training & Mentoring

Dermot McCrystal

- Member of Institute of Chartered Accountants
- Registered Auditor
- Operating own accounting business for 15 years

On the proposal of Cllr Maxwell, seconded by Cllr Conlon, it was agreed that Desmond O'Connor, Fern Ross and Dermot McCrystal be appointed as the external members to sit on the Council's Audit Committee and that fees be paid as follows – a maximum of €2,414 (Chairperson) and €1,710 (ordinary external member).

It was also agreed to write to the outgoing members and express the Council's gratitude for their service on the Audit Committee over the previous term.

7. Local Property Tax – to fix date for Special Council meeting.

In accordance with Circular Fin 08/2014 (copy of which had been circulated) it was agreed that a Special meeting of the Council would be held on 24th September, 2014 at 11.30 am to consider setting a local adjustment factor for the Local Property Tax.

8. Memorandum of Understanding between Monaghan County Council and Armagh City and District Council - To nominate four members of the Council to attend meetings.

Mr. P. Clifford, Director outlined the background to the proposed Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between Monaghan and Armagh Councils and the work that has been undertaken to date. He stated that a further meeting is scheduled for 2nd September and he suggested that one member from each political grouping attend the meeting on behalf of the Council. It was agreed that Cllrs Conlon, S. Treanor, Maxwell and Coyle would represent the Council at the meeting.

9. Corporate Policy Group

(a) To approve recommendations from CPG meeting held on 25th August, 2014

National Shows Association - Cllr Campbell referred to the recommendation to allocate funding of €1,000 to the National Shows Association towards the hosting of the AGM of the Association in Monaghan in November 2014. He proposed that the amount of funding be increased to €1,500. Cllr Crowe seconded the proposal which was agreed by the Council.

AILG Constitution - *On the proposal of Cllr McElvaney, seconded by Cllr Maxwell it was agreed that Monaghan County Council does not support an amendment to Paragraph 3 of the AILG Constitution under the heading of "Membership".*

It was agreed that the recommendations from the Corporate Policy Group meeting held on 25th August, 2014, as amended above, be approved.

(b) To adopt minutes of CPG meeting held on 25th August.

On the proposal of Cllr P. Treanor, seconded by Cllr McNally it was agreed that the minutes of the Corporate Policy Group meeting held on 25th August 2014, be approved.

10. To receive reports from Members attending Conferences

The Members noted the reports from Cllrs. Bannigan, Bennett, Conlon, Connolly, Crowe, Keelan, Maxwell and B. McKenna in relation to their attendance at the following conferences:

- AILG Induction Training, Tullamore, Co. Offaly.

- Branding in Political Elections, Rosscarbery, Co. Cork
- Political Communications, Ennistymon, Co. Clare.
- Crime and its Impact, Killarney, Co. Kerry
- Tourism and Heritage, Ennistymon, Co. Clare.

11. Business submitted by Chief Executive.

Mr. E. Cummins, Chief Executive informed the members that a revised budget in the sum of €1,293,980 had been approved for the Respond Housing Association Group Home for Physical and Sensory Disabilities at the Convent Lands, Carrickmacross.

It was agreed that the Council write to Respond asking it to expedite the project so that the Group Home will be available as quickly as possible.

12. Matters arising out of the minutes of Council meeting held on 8th July, 2014

This item was not dealt with.

13. North South Interconnector - To receive presentation from EirGrid:

The following correspondence was circulated in relation to this item

- Letters of acknowledgement from Brendan Smith, T.D., enclosing copies of replies from Alex White T.D. Minister for Communications, Energy and Natural Resources and from An Taoiseach, Enda Kenny, T.D.
- Letter of acknowledgement from the Committee of Public Accounts
- Letter of acknowledgement from An Taoiseach
- Letter of acknowledgement from Alex White T.D.
- Email from Heather Humphrey, T.D., Minister for Arts, Heritage and An Gaeltacht

The Cathaoirleach welcomed the following officials from EirGrid - John Fitzgerald, Director of Grid Development; Aidan Geoghegan, Senior Project Manager; Shane Brennan, Senior Project Engineer and David Martin, Communications Specialist.

He also welcomed observers from the Monaghan Anti Pylon Committee – Nigel Hillis, Ciara Marron and Margaret Marron.

The Cathaoirleach invited the EirGrid officials to address the meeting.

Mr. John Fitzgerald, on behalf of Eirgrid, expressed sympathy to the family and Council colleagues of former Councillor Owen Bannigan who died suddenly last May.

Mr. Fitzgerald and Mr. Geoghegan, then gave a detailed presentation to the Council during which they outlined the following:

- An overview of the Project;
- An outline of the contents of the Preferred Project Solution Report;
- The progression to proposed final line design;
- The designation of the overall project as a Project of Common Interest;

- The pre-application process for a Project of Common Interest that commenced on 2nd July 2014
- The decision of the Independent Expert Panel
- The Government policy statement on Strategic Importance of Transmission and other energy infrastructure and support for associated community gain.
- EirGrid's approach to community gain in terms of the Local Fund and the Proximity Allowance;
- EirGrid's intention to finalise the planning application which will be submitted to An Bord Pleanála late this year or early next year.

Following the presentation, Mr. Fitzgerald and Mr. Geoghegan responded to queries from the elected members.

The Cathaoirleach thanked the EirGrid officials for their presentation, who then withdrew from the meeting, as did the observers from the Monaghan Anti-Pylon Committee.

Proposals:

On the proposal of Cllr Keelan, seconded by Cllr Crowe, it was agreed that this Council write to the Independent Expert Panel, requesting that the information submitted by Eirgrid to the Committee, be furnished to this Council and made public so citizens can see how the I.E.P. reached their opinion that the work done to date on the North-South Interconnector was compatible with the methodologies now being employed on the Grid West & Grid South projects.

On the proposal of Cllr Keelan, seconded by Cllr Crowe, it was agreed that this Council write to Minister Alex White, T.D.; An Taoiseach, Mr. Enda Kenny, T.D.; Our Constituency T.D.'s and Senators and Eirgrid in relation to the North South Interconnector and seeking a cost benefit analysis of overgrounding v undergrounding taking all issues into account: land evaluation, property, environmental, tourism, social, economy, etc.

On the proposal of Cllr Keelan, seconded by Cllr Carthy, it was agreed that Monaghan County Council write to the Minister for Communications, Energy and Natural Resources, Mr. Alex White, T.D., requesting that the people of this county and other counties affected by the proposed North-South Interconnector be given equal treatment and parity of esteem, in terms of a route specific line identified through the road network as is the case in the Grid West project and will possibly be the case in the Grid Link project which is under consideration at present. This motion to be sent to An Taoiseach, Mr. Enda Kenny, to our constituency T.D.s' and Senators and to EirGrid.

Cllr Coyle proposed, Cllr O'Hanlon seconded that Monaghan County Council do not participate in the distribution of any of the so called 'community gain' fund due to the health, tourism, environmental, amenity damage to the communities of County Monaghan by the proposed 400KV North/South Interconnector being overgrounded by Eirgrid.

A vote by show of hands on Cllr Coyle's proposal resulted in 11 for 0 against, 3 abstentions. The Cathaoirleach declared the proposal carried.

On the proposal of Cllr Maxwell, seconded by Cllr Campbell, it was agreed that this Council seeks a meeting with the Minister for Energy, Alex White, and An Taoiseach to raise the issue of the overgrounding for the North South Interconnector.

14. Questions:

Cllr P. Connolly asked:

1. To ask for an update in relation to the six unfinished houses at Cnoc na Greine, Tydavnet.

Reply: Grant Thornton Receivers for the developer has advised the Council that they have agreed a sale for units 7-12 in the Cnoc Na Greine development in Tydavnet Village. Details of the closing date for the sale have also been requested for our records. Monaghan County Council had issued a Derelict Site Notice on the receivers in March 2014. Any further action in relation to the Derelict Site notice has been suspended pending confirmation of the sale.

2. What plans have Monaghan County Council to provide plastic bottle recycling facilities in all our towns and villages?

Reply: Whilst there is some plastic bottle recycling facilities at some of the bottle banks Monaghan County Council currently have no plans to expand this to all bring bank facilities in the County.

3. To ask Monaghan County Council in relation to the "Unfinished Housing Developments" report which we received on 2nd Dec 2013

- (a) What progress has taken place to date?
- (b) What is the position in relation to bond expiry dates?
- (c) Has state funding been requested/received to try and alleviate any of the unfinished developments?
- (d) Have any enforcement notices or derelict site notices been issued?
- (e) Have any Site Resolution Plans been drawn up yet?

Reply: Progress to date this year has centred around the preparation of a funding application under the Special Resolution Fund (SRF) administered by the Department of the Environment, Community and Local Government (DoECLG). Funding of approximately €202,000 has been awarded for four sites in Monaghan under the SRF awarded by the DoECLG. These funds will assist with the completion of these four sites to Taking in Charge standard. The four sites awarded funding are;

- The Ferns, Scotstown
- Mullan Village, Emyvale
- Ascail Rois , Carrickmacross
- Rock River View Rockcorry

The planning section has been liaising with the relevant developers and receivers to advance the works under the Special Resolution Fund. The Council is currently seeking quotations for the survey of the storm and foul networks within these developments and aims to commence works on site once the relevant surveys are complete.

In addition, eight developments have been removed from the Unfinished Housing List due to effective resolution of the sites. These are;

- Ardveagh, Ballybay
- Wylies Hill, Ballybay
- Tower Court, Clones

- Lios a Ghoirtin, Clones
- Mullach Glas, Monaghan
- Drumbear Wood, Monaghan
- Knockroe, Monaghan
- Tyleadon Heights, Monaghan

The planning section continues to work with developers, receivers, etc to try and advance site resolution plans where viable on the remaining twenty nine unfinished developments.

Bond expiry dates are continually monitored and are either claimed before the expiry date, or extended by agreement with the banks/insurance companies for a further period to allow the development to be completed to Taking in Charge stage.

For certain unfinished developments, assessments have been prepared on the likely costs to complete the development. These costings are forwarded to the Council's solicitor to assist with the pursuit of certain bond claims.

Derelict Site Notices have been issued in respect of the following five developments this year;

- Killycard Manor, Bree, Castleblayney
- Candlefort, Inniskeen.
- Knockcarrick, Annayalla
- Cnoc Na Greine , Tydavnet
- Sruth An Iuir, Oram.

The planning section continues to liaise with the relevant individuals to advance matters on these sites. In certain instances when a Derelict Site Notice does not result in demolition/site clearance it can serve as an impetus for discussion between relevant stakeholders.

Cllr C. Carthy asked:

4. Can the Council update the latest situation on the Group Home for women with Physical and Sensory disabilities at Drummond Otra, Carrickmacross?

Reply: "The Capital Assistance Scheme funding allocation in the amount of €900,000 approved by the Department in April 2013 was not sufficient to allow the 6-bedroom Group Home For People with Sensory/Physical Disabilities to proceed. The Council requested that Respond! prepare alternative designs and cost plans for consideration. Following a series of meetings and correspondence over a 12 month period between the Council, Respond! Housing Association, the Department and the H.S.E., agreement was eventually reached on a design for a 7-bedroom Group Home which represents better value for money than the original proposal. The Council submitted the revised proposal for the 7-bedroom Group Home to the Department in May 2014 and received a letter from the Department in June 2014 seeking a letter of support from the H.S.E. and a letter from H.I.Q.A. regarding the suitability of the proposed design.

The HSE Letter of Support was received via Respond HA on the 30th July 2014.

The issue of confirmation by HIQA of the suitability of the building cannot be provided. HIQA informed RESPOND! that they will only provide official correspondence regarding the

property, after it is built, as HIQA is about the quality of care in total, not just the building itself. The H.S.E. will be responsible for the quality of care in the Group Home when it has been completed. The H.S.E. has been involved in the design of the home and Respond! has complied with the H.S.E. brief for same.

Monaghan County Council examined the proposed design with regard to the HIQA National Standards for Residential Services for Children and Adults with Disabilities January 2013 and found no compliance issues. A letter was issued from Monaghan County Council to the Department on the 1st August 2014 recommending acceptance and approval of the project, confirming that the proposed Group Home does comply with HIQA and HSE requirements.

Monaghan County Council received notification by email from the Department on Thursday 27th August 2014 that a revised CAS budget of €1,293,980 has been approved. Their letter detailing the itemized budget will be issued in the post. Monaghan County Council has advised RESPOND! HA of the revised budget allocation and have requested that they proceed with the Tender process and submit their revised programme at their earliest convenience."

5. Can the Council confirm if the commercial rates paid by businesses in Carrickmacross will be reduced in line with the rest of the county in Budget 2015?

Reply: There will be no change in the rates charge for 2015 compared to 2014 for businesses in the former Town Council areas of Carrickmacross, Castleblayney, Clones and Monaghan. Rates for 2015 will be calculated in accordance with Department of the Environment Community and Local Government Circular Fin 06/2014 "Guidance on section 29 - concerning harmonisation of rates through a Base Year Adjustment (BYA)". This circular states_ "in 2015 the BYA is to be calculated as the difference between the Annual Rate on Valuation adopted for the former rating authority area in 2014 and that which is adopted by the new authority in 2015."

"The effect therefore of the BYA in every case will be to neutralise any increase or decrease in rates due in 2015 that would otherwise occur as a result of the rate struck by the members for the amalgamated authority as a whole i.e. ratepayers will pay no more or no less rates in 2015 than they did in 2014."

ClIr C. Bennett asked:

6. (a) Can Monaghan County Council please outline their reasons behind the addition of fluoride to water supplies?

Reply: Fluoride is added to Public Water Supply schemes in County Monaghan as it's a directive from the HSE.

- (b) Does Monaghan County Council have any future plans to stop the fluoridation of water?

Reply: Monaghan County Council don't have any future plans to stop the fluoridation of drinking water unless advised by the HSE.

(c) Can Monaghan Council provide the general public with an estimation of the cost of fluoridation to water supplies in the County Monaghan Area?

Reply: Monaghan County Council spend 103k per year on the Supply of Fluoride, and the Operation and Maintenance of equipment involved. All of this expenditure is recoupable from the HSE.

(d) Can Monaghan Council inform the general public with the quantity of fluoride added to their water supplies?

Reply: Monaghan County Council add 0.6 – 0.8ppm. PPM means parts per million and is equivalent to milligrams per litre. This dose rate is deemed optimal for the protection of oral health in all age groups.

7. Can Monaghan County Council please guarantee the completion of roads previously on the roads programme in the same timely manner, even though they are in New Municipal Districts?

Reply: It is intended to carry out the Roads Programme as agreed with the members at the Road Area Meetings last February.

8. Can Monaghan County Council please state how many Local Improvement Scheme applications are presently submitted and what are the intentions for these? Can Monaghan County provide the general public information on the Community Improvement Scheme which has been highly successful in other counties?

Reply: There are 197 applications awaiting funding under the LIS Programme. There is currently no funding available for LIS Schemes.

In relation to the Community Involvement Schemes, Monaghan Co. Council advertised the Community Involvement Scheme on its website and in the local newspaper. Two applications were received relating to private roads and were therefore ineligible under the terms of the Scheme.

Cllr R. Gallagher asked:

9. Could the Council, in conjunction with the NRA, the Road Safety Authority, the Gardai and any other relevant bodies, initiate an investigation and collate information to ascertain
- (a) How many road accidents have occurred between 2010 – 2014 on the Monaghan stretch of the N2
 - (b) The reasons behind so many road accidents and fatalities
 - (c) Develop a strategy with a view to a course of action or actions to address the issue.

Reply: (a) Monaghan Co. Co. continue to liaise with the NRA, and the Gardai in relation to road safety. From a review of the RSA accident data covering all roads in Co. Monaghan, 15 fatal collisions occurred between 2010 and 2014 on the N2.

(b) A number of factors contribute to accidents and according to the Road Safety Strategy statistically 87% of all accidents result from driver error. In recent accidents on the N2 most appear to involve head on collisions. The exact circumstances of an accident involving a fatality is not available until completion of legal proceedings or a Coroners' report which could take two or more years.

(c) The long term strategy is to advance plans for the development of a dual carriageway subject to funding and NRA approval.

Monaghan County Council is in discussion with the NRA to examine what mitigating measures could be put in place in the short to medium term to address the risk of the occurrence of this type of collision.

10. What progress has been made with regard to the upgrading of roundabouts on the N2 through the use of funds under the Public Enhancement Scheme announced earlier this year?

Reply: Monaghan County Council identified the following roundabouts for landscaping under the Dept. Environment, Community and Local Government's Public Area Enhancement Scheme:

- 1) Castleblayney Southern Roundabout**
- 2) Clontibret Roundabout**
- 3) Monaghan Roundabout @ Four Seasons.**

The Castleblayney Southern Roundabout will be landscaped under the Killycard to Tullyvin Roads Contract (Contract Awarded). Consequently, the Municipal District, in consultation with the Environment Section have decided to divert the original 'Southern Roundabout' allocation to carry out restoration and repair works to the entrance gates to Lough Muckno in Market Square, Castleblayney. The temporary construction safety barrier fencing around the Courthouse building will also be replaced with palladine fencing. Both projects will significantly improve the visual appearance of the Market Square area.

Designs and specification for the Clontibret Roundabout and the Monaghan Roundabout are currently being drawn up and the council plans to go to tender in September 2014.

11. Does the Council have a policy with regard to local authority playgrounds and children with disabilities?

Reply: The Council endeavours to ensure that all playgrounds are accessible to children with disabilities and has provided some items of accessible play equipment in most recently provided playgrounds. The Council's Disability Access Officer Bernie Bradley can be contacted with regard to any specific concerns regarding access. Contact details Phone: 047 73727, email: bbradley@monaghancoco.ie

ClIr P.J. O'Hanlon asked:

12. Would Monaghan County Council check with Irish Water and find out if there is any water going through lead pipes in the county?

Reply: Monaghan County Council have a very small percentage of lead services throughout the county however an information leaflet was sent to all customers advising them of procedures prior to the use of water.

Monaghan County Council are preparing an ANB (Asset Needs Brief) this year which will be submitted to Irish Water for approval for lead pipe replacement. Irish Water have committed E80-100million for lead pipe replacement over the next 10 years.

13. In relation to closing the N2 for 10 days for works i.e. cutting grass and other general maintenance, can the Council carry out this work in a shorter period of time i.e. 5 days as this is far too long of a period for the main road to Derry and Donegal to be closed?

Reply: These works are carried out by private contractors who provide a programme of work prior to commencement and the road closure is tailored to suit. Working longer hours is possible, however, this would incur additional costs. The Council will review the operation with a view to shortening the period of the closure if possible in the future.

Cllr N. Keelan asked:

14. Will the Chief Executive make a statement in relation to the County Council's hedge cutting policy; Given the extensive hedge cutting programme the Council has undertaken to date and also given the importance of hedge cutting in terms of road safety, why is it that much of this work remains incomplete, especially at some of the county's most dangerous junctions, while mindful of the responsibility that landowners have to keep their own hedges trimmed and in safe condition for road users?

Reply: Monaghan County Council is bound to comply with the Wildlife Act which prohibits hedgecutting between the end of February and end of August each year. Priority is given, based on available resources to address and prioritise areas that pose the most risk to road users. Responsibility for the maintenance of hedges along public roads rests with the owner/occupier of land.

An advertisement is placed in the local newspaper twice a year advising landowners and occupiers of land of their responsibilities under section 70 of the Roads Act 1993 to take all necessary steps to ensure that hedges/trees or structures do not pose a danger to the public. Notices are served on individual landowners/occupiers as necessary.

If there is an area of particular concern it should be raised with the particular Municipal District.

15. What plans has Monaghan County Council to save money around the cost of energy such as the use of LEDs in our public lighting system; will the Council appoint an energy officer as is the case in other counties that will oversee how energy is used throughout the county in our buildings etc?

Reply: Under the National Energy Efficiency action plan all public bodies are committed to improving their energy efficiency by 33% by 2020. To achieve this target Monaghan County Council has signed a Partnership agreement with SEI. The agreement gives the Council free access to SEI expertise who will assist in the assessing of all areas of potential saving, developing an annual Energy Management Action Plans and overseeing their implementation. Energy management falls under the remit of the Directorate of Governance, Corporate Services and Environment and is being overseen by Alan Hall SEE.

16. (a) Will the Council give a report in relation to septic tank inspections that have taken place to date; how many have been carried out, how many have passed/failed etc?

Reply: Number of inspections to date in Co. Monaghan: 39
Number of failures: 14
Notices have been served on each of these 14 householders.
They are shortly due for review.
5 of the clients have already had works carried out as specified to remedy the faults.

(b) Is there any procedure in place whereby a homeowner can request an inspection of a tank that is obviously causing an environmental hazard and if the tank fails, could the homeowner avail of the Grant Aid towards upgrading of same?

Reply: Under the Regulations for the inspection of Domestic Waste Water Treatment Systems, a homeowner *cannot* request an inspection. Grant aid is applicable only to homeowners that have been inspected and failed on certain criteria.

17. Given that Monaghan County Council has seen a reduction in over 25% in terms of staffing levels over recent years and given the huge range of services that are provided by the Local Authority, will the Chief Executive make a statement on this issue and the Council's ability to deliver a service to the people with such reduced staff numbers and in particular the reduced number of our very important outdoor staff which would be a concern in terms of the Council's ability to maintain our road network?

Reply: The Chief Executive is satisfied that the reduction in staff has not impacted on the delivery of services, including the maintenance of the road network. More recently, a major review of the organisation was carried out to reflect the economic reality, the migration of some services to other agencies, such as Irish Water, the centralisation of other services such as Housing and shared services with other local authorities.

Some months ago I explained that the needs of the organisation, the people we serve, the stakeholders that depend on us and the ratepayers/tax payers who pay our salaries, must take priority and be serviced in an efficient and effective manner. In order to be efficient and effective our organisation must embrace best practice, cost effective processes and a partnership approach with the private sector who are an important stakeholder and sometimes can deliver services more cost effectively. As our focus shifts to community and economic development, salary and wage costs must be balanced with the overall needs of our communities and small and medium enterprises. Maintaining staff numbers at historic levels is neither feasible nor necessary.

18. In relation to the Council's Rental Accommodation Scheme (R.A.S.), if a person is in a (R.A.S) house is that person still retained on the Local Authority Housing List; can a person be transferred from one RAS house to another if the current accommodation is deemed to be in a poor state of maintenance, hard to heat or other difficulties etc?

Reply: Under the Housing (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 2009 social housing support includes RAS. Where RAS is provided to an applicant they are deemed to have been adequately housed and their housing needs addressed. Consequently the individuals are not included on the housing list. If they seek a move from the accommodation provided it would be through inclusion if qualified, onto the transfer list.

Cllr B. McKenna asked:

19. When will works re-commence on the N2 realignment at Coolkill East as there is a major risk of a fatality at this location with pedestrians who use the stretch that has not been realigned?

Reply: It is envisaged that work on the section of road between phase 1 and phase 2 of the N2 Monaghan to Emyvale road at Coolkill East will commence within the next two to three weeks.

20. Will this Council initiate further discussion with the NRA in relation to the provision of additional and appropriate traffic calming measures on the northerly approach road to Emyvale?

Reply: Monaghan County Council will communicate with the NRA Road Safety engineer with a view to examining the feasibility of safety measures at this location.

16. Votes of Congratulations:

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

- *Latton O'Rahilly GFC on winning the U-12 double in the U-12 finals in Castleblayney recently.*
- *Monaghan County U-16 Football Development Squad and the Management Team, on winning the Buncrana Cup for the first time in the county's history.*
- *To the Donegal Senior and Minor Football teams on their victories over Dublin wishing both teams good luck in the All Ireland Football Finals.*

It was agreed that a Civic Reception would be hosted for the Cavan Monaghan Development Soccer Squad that won the Macron/Galway Cup recently. It was agreed that the Civic Reception would be held at 7pm on Monday 6th October and that the October Council meeting would commence at 2pm to facilitate this.

17. Conferences/Training:

On the proposal of Cllr Maxwell, seconded by Cllr McElvaney, it was agreed that the Council approve the attendance of all members at the AILG Training Module on Finance to be held in the Nuremore Hotel, Carrickmacross on Tuesday 9th September, 2014.

The meeting concluded at 6.30 p.m.