

Minutes of Meeting of Monaghan County Council held in the Council Chamber, Mtek Building, Armagh Road, Monaghan on Monday 12 June, 2017 at 10.00 a.m.

Chair: Cllr P.J. O’Hanlon, Cathaoirleach

Present: Cllrs. Aughey, Bennett, Campbell, Carthy, Conlon, Connolly, Coyle, Crowe, Gilliland, Keelan, Maxwell, McElvaney, McNally, P. Treanor and S. Treanor.

Mr. E. O’Sullivan, Chief Executive, Mr. P. Clifford and Mr. A. King, Directors of Services, Mr. J. Murray, Head of Finance, Ms. P. Monahan, A/Director of Service, Mr. A. Hughes, Senior Planner, and Ms. C. Thornton, Meetings Administrator.

Apology: Cllr McKenna.

Canada Day:

The members of the Council and the Canada Day Committee attended for a photograph to create awareness of the 2017 Canada Day Celebrations planned for July 1. Following the photograph, the Cathaoirleach welcomed all present, including four visitors from Prince Edward Island, Cheryl, Patricia, John and Gerard. He stated that the Chief Executive and himself had visited PEI in May and the welcome they had been given was second to none. He said Canada was a very special place for them – Ireland had gone through a tough time economically in recent years and the Canadian Government and people had opened their doors to many Irish young people who could not find employment here because of the recession.

Cllr Sean Conlon, Chair of the Canada Day Committee thanked the Cathaoirleach and members for allowing the launch to take place prior to the Council meeting that morning. Cllr Conlon stated that international interest in the second Canada Day festival had been prolific and the event had grown considerably since it was initiated last year. He thanked local business people for their support and he welcomed that sponsorship by Air Canada. He stated that Alison Curtis from Today FM, who is from Canada would be covering the event as an ‘outside Broadcast’.

The members were addressed by Ms. Blaithe O’Donnell, a representative from Air Canada, who is providing sponsorship funding for the event. She stated that Air Canada was delighted to become involved with the festival. In acknowledging the links between Canada and Monaghan she stated that these were not just cultural and family links but there were strong business links as well. She noted that Combilift were part of a recent IDA/Enterprise Ireland trade mission to Ottawa.

A number of members spoke on the matter and complimented the Canada Day committee on their plans for the event, as did the Chief Executive, Mr. O’Sullivan.

Cllr Conlon informed the meeting that the formal launch would take place in the Market House, Monaghan on the 14th June and everyone was welcome to attend.

Cllr O’Hanlon, thanked all involved in the Canada Day Festival 2017 and wished the event every success.

Resignation of Cllr Ciara McPhillips:

The Cathaoirleach informed the members that he had received a letter from Cllr Ciara McPhillips, notifying him of her intention to resign from the membership of the Council with immediate effect.

He then proceeded to read Cllr McPhillips letter in full, which explained that her decision to resign was not a decision that she had reached lightly and without considering the many people who may feel let down by her decision. She had been fortunate to be able to manage her professional career alongside her work as an elected representative but unfortunately, as her career and her life progresses, she no longer could do this and she was unwilling to do either job by halves.

Ms. McPhillips thanked the members of the Council, past and present for their unfailing professionalism and support. She also thanked her party colleagues, past and present, Minister Humphreys and former Deputy Seymour Crawford for their encouragement and guidance during her term as an elected member, and expressed thanks to the Chief Executive, Management Team and Staff of the Council. She also expressed thanks to her fiancé and her family and extended family for all their support.

She referred to the great honour it had been for her to work for and with the people of the former Clones Electoral area and more recently the Ballybay Clones Municipal District.

Cllr O'Hanlon expressed his shock at Cllr McPhillips decision to resign. He knew that it would not have been an easy decision for her and that she would have thought long and hard about it. He said she would be a great loss to the Council and he wished her every success in her future career.

Cllr Maxwell wished Cllr McPhillips well in the future. He said she represented the people of the Ballybay-Clones M.D. with true professionalism. He acknowledged that it wasn't an easy decision for her, expressing the view that a lot of work goes into the job of a councillor – there is a lot of commitment and personal time involved which places a strain on work and family life. Cllrs Campbell and Gilliland joined in wishing their former party colleague every success in the future as did all the other Council members who each spoke in turn about Cllr McPhillips. A number of members expressed concern about the time pressures and the demands now faced by local councillors following the abolition of the Town Councils in 2014, when the number of members reduced from 65 to 18 in Co. Monaghan.

The Chief Executive joined in the good wishes to Cllr McPhillips. He referred to Cllr McPhillips as a hard working, capable and deeply committed elected member who demonstrated the highest standards and was not prepared to compromise those standards. He wished her every success in her career and expressed the view that she may re-enter local politics at some stage in the future.

1. Confirmation of Minutes

(i) Minutes of Council meeting held on 8th May, 2017

On the proposal of Cllr Maxwell, seconded by Cllr P. Treanor it was agreed that the minutes of the Council meeting held on the 8th May, 2017, be confirmed.

(i) Minutes of adjourned Council meeting held on 23rd May, 2017

On the proposal of Cllr P. Treanor seconded by Cllr Coyle it was agreed that the minutes of the adjourned Council meeting held on the 23rd May, 2017, be confirmed.

2. Correspondence.

The following correspondence was circulated with the agenda for the meeting:

- Letter from Shane Ross, Minister for Transport Tourism and Sport concerning funding for Public Lighting.
- Letter from Shane Ross, Minister for Transport Tourism and Sport regarding funding for Phase 3 of the N2 Monaghan to Emyvale Road Realignment Scheme.
- Letter from Denis O’Leary, Executive Officer, Department of Social Protection regarding the Community Employment scheme.
- Acknowledgement from the Office of Minister for Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation in response to Council letter requesting that quarterly reports on IDA site visits and/or FDI enquires to County Monaghan are circulated to Councillors when they are made available.
- Letter from Minister Heather Humphreys regarding letter sent to Michael Creed, TD.
- Letter sent to Minister Humphreys from Michael Creed, TD regarding Glas Payments.
- Circular letter PL 2/2017 regarding Sustainable Rural Housing Guidelines for Planning Authorities 2005 – Local Needs Criteria in Development Plans.
- Acknowledgement from Martin Dunne, Director National Ambulance Service.
- Email and Report from Andrew Ogle, North Eastern Regional Drug & Alcohol Task Force.
- Thank you letter from Seán Haughey, TD in response to the Council’s vote of sympathy on the recent death of his mother.

The following additional correspondence was circulated at the meeting:

- Letter from Transport Infrastructure Ireland regarding meeting to discuss the inclusion of the N2 Clontibret to the Northern Ireland border Road Scheme in the capital investment plan.
- Thank you letter from Ambassador Robin Barnett, British Embassy, Dublin in reply to the Council’s vote of sympathy on the recent terrorist atrocity in Manchester

Proposals arising out of correspondence:

On the proposal of Cllr Connolly, seconded by Cllr McElvaney, it was agreed that in view of the fact that the Minister for Social Protection has signalled his intention to review the rules governing, the participation of older people on CE schemes that Monaghan County Council calls on the Minister to increase the proposed places from 7% to 20% for each schemes overall budgeted places for participants up to State pension age.

On the proposal of Cllr P. Treanor, seconded by Cllr Bennett, it was agreed that the Council writes to the Minister for Social Protection asking him to reverse his decision not to reverse the telephone allowance and the reduction of ESB units to older people.

On the proposal of Cllr Conlon, seconded by Cllr Carthy, it was agreed that this Council responds to the letter from the National Ambulance Service acknowledging as stated “the complexity of some of the questions, may take some time to answer” however we also remind the NAS the original correspondence seeking answered was sent to them in January, six months ago.

On the proposal of Cllr Bennett, seconded by Cllr McElvaney, it was agreed that Monaghan County Council writes again to Minister Shane Ross TD asking him to review his latest decision

to not introduce a specific grant for public lighting as public lighting is a necessity for health and safety.

On the proposal of Cllr Coyle, seconded by Cllr McElvaney it was agreed that CPG place on the agenda for their next meeting with the Oireachtas the serious lack of public lighting in the Ballybay - Clones MD - current public lighting waiting list cost is €600,000.

3. Planning:

(i) To consider proposed Variation No. 4 of Monaghan County Development Plan 2013-19 incorporating the development plans for Monaghan, Castleblayney, Carrickmacross, Clones and Ballybay – vacant sites/Urban Regeneration and Housing Act 2015

The members noted the report circulated in relation to the proposed Variation No. 4 of the Monaghan County Development Plan 2013-2019. Mr. A. Hughes, Senior Planner gave an overview of the main objectives of the proposed Variation and responded to queries from the elected members.

On the proposal of Cllr Maxwell, seconded by Cllr McElvaney, it was agreed that the proposed Variation No 4 of the Monaghan County Development Plan 2013-2019 incorporating the development plans for Monaghan, Castleblayney, Carrickmacross, Clones and Ballybay – vacant sites/Urban Regeneration and Housing Act 2015, be advertised publicly and submissions/comments invited from the general public.

(ii) To consider proposed Variation No.5 of Monaghan County Development Plan 2013-19 to incorporate Policy RHP14 (Unfinished Housing in Rural Areas Under Strong Urban Influence)

The members noted the report circulated in relation to the proposed Variation No. 5 of the Monaghan County Development Plan 2013-2019. Mr. A. Hughes, Senior Planner gave an overview of the main objectives of the proposed Variation and responded to queries from the elected members.

On the proposal of Cllr Crowe, seconded by Cllr McNally, it was agreed that the proposed Variation No.5 of the Monaghan County Development Plan 2013-19 to incorporate Policy RHP14 (Unfinished Housing in Rural Areas Under Strong Urban Influence), be advertised publicly and submissions/comments invited from the general public.

(iii) Update on Review of County Development Plan 2019 – 2025

Ms. L. Nulty, Executive Planner gave the members an update to the members on the progress being made on the review of the County Development Plan. She stated that in total, 65 submissions were received during the pre-draft public consultation period. The Chief Executive's report is now being prepared which will summarise the issues raised in the submissions and at the public workshops. As per the statutory timescales set out in the Planning and Development Act, the Chief Executives Report will be issued to the elected members for their consideration on 28th June 2016. The process of engagement and discussion with the elected members will continue at party meetings which will be arranged during July

to discuss the CE Report prior to the members issuing direction to the Chief Executive regarding the preparation of the draft development plan.

On the proposal of Cllr McNally, seconded by Cllr Coyle, it was agreed that this Council immediately seeks a meeting with Department officials in its Planning Section to discuss ways of extending our zoned lands, as what is there presently in many cases will not be developed or sold to provide much needed housing.

4. To consider Annual Financial Statement 2016

The members noted the Annual Financial Statement for 2016 which had been circulated with the agenda for the meeting. Mr. J. Murray, Head of Finance responded to queries from the members.

On the proposal of Cllr Connolly, seconded by Cllr Gilliland, it was agreed to note the Draft Annual Financial Statement (AFS 2016) and to approve over-expenditures and transfers to Capital Account, as per schedules submitted to the Members, as follows:

<u>Over Expenditure</u>		Expenditure (Over)/Under	Income Over/(Under)	Net Position
Division		Estimates 2016 €	Estimates 2016 €	2016 €
B	Roads Transportation & Safety	-5,680,525	5,697,089	16,564
D	Development Management	-530,872	504,921	-25,951
E	Environmental Services	-624,598	523,097	-101,501
F	Recreation & Amenity	-255,984	124,387	-131,597
H	Miscellaneous Services	-1,121,992	1,938,417	816,425

Transfer to Capital Account

	Transfer Amount	Budget Provision	Difference
Machinery Account Surplus	251,358	0	-251,358
Municipal District Allocations (unspent)	266,694	300,000	33,306
Loan Repayment Reserve	488,065	472,418	-15,647

Provisions for Transfer to Capital (included in Budget 2016)

Town Councils Capital Provisions	127,576	127,576	0
Disability Initiatives	10,000	10,000	0
Co. Development Fund	75,000	75,000	0
Local Elections	30,000	30,000	0
Members Gratuity Scheme	100,000	100,000	0
Fire Service Gratuities	150,000	150,000	0

Civil Defence General	2,000	2,000	0
Civil Defence Buildings	5,000	5,000	0
Libraries - Provision for Capital Balances	40,000	40,000	0
Flexi Time System	15,000	15,000	0
Computing - Provision for Capital Balance	100,000	100,000	0

5. To fill casual vacancy on Cavan/Monaghan Education and Training Board arising from the resignation of Cllr Ciara McPhillips.

The members noted the letter from Cavan/Monaghan Education and Training Board requesting the Council to fill the casual vacancy on the board arising from the resignation of Cllr Ciara McPhillips. A copy of Section 37 of the Education and Training Boards Act 2013 was also circulated.

On the proposal of Cllr Maxwell, seconded by Cllr Gilliland, it was agreed that Cllr Aidan Campbell be elected to fill the casual vacancy on Cavan/Monaghan Education and Training Board arising from the resignation of Cllr. Ciara McPhillips.

6. To consider Section 85 Agreement to undertake works on the Ulster Canal Greenway in partnership with Waterways Ireland ABC Council and EBR Ltd.

Mr. P. Clifford, Director of Service referred to the report which had been circulated in relation to Monaghan County Council entering into a Section 85 Agreement with Armagh, Banbridge and Craigavon District Council and Waterway Ireland to construct a 22km cycleway funded under the INTERREG VA programme. The report also recommended that the Council enter into a further agreement with Armagh, Banbridge and Craigavon District Council, Fermanagh/Omagh District Council, Cavan County Council and Waterways Ireland to investigate the development of further greenways with a view towards extending the current and proposed Ulster Canal Greenway.

On the proposal of Cllr P. Treanor, seconded by Cllr Campbell it was agreed that Monaghan County Council enter into a Section 85 Agreement with Armagh, Banbridge and Craigavon District Council and Waterways Ireland to construct a 22km cycleway funded under the INTERREG VA programme.

On the proposal of Cllr P. Treanor, seconded by Cllr Campbell it was agreed that Monaghan County Council enter into a Section 85 agreement with Armagh, Banbridge and Craigavon District Council, Fermanagh/Omagh District Council, Cavan County Council and Waterways Ireland to investigate the development of further greenways with a view towards extending the current and proposed Ulster Canal Greenway.

7. Monaghan County Council Draft Road Traffic Special Speed Limits Regional & Local Roads Co. of Monaghan Bye-Laws No. 1 2017

Mr. P. McGuinness, Senior Executive Engineer Roads, gave a presentation to the members on the proposed changes to the Draft Road Traffic Special Speed Limits Bye Laws No. 1 2017. He responded to queries from the members in relation to aspects of the draft bye laws.

On the proposal of Cllr Aughey, seconded by Cllr Maxwell, it was agreed that the Draft Road Traffic Special Speed Limits Regional and Local Roads County of Monaghan Bye-Laws No. 1 2017, be adopted, as presented.

8. To approve minutes and recommendations from CPG meeting held on 16th May, 2017

The members noted the minutes of the CPG meeting held on the 16th May, 2017.

On the proposal of Cllr Maxwell, seconded by Cllr P. Treanor it was agreed that the Council discuss 'in committee' matters relating to the allocation of the IPB dividend.

Following a short discussion it was agreed on the proposal of Cllr P. Treanor, seconded by Cllr Carthy that the meeting return to public session.

On the proposal of Cllr Maxwell, seconded by Cllr McNally it was agreed that the minutes of the CPG meetings held on 16th May, 2017 and the recommendations contained therein be approved.

9. To approve Museum Policy Documents

The members noted the contents of the following Museum Policy documents which had been circulated and which were necessary to achieve Accreditation under the Museum Standards Programme for Ireland:

- (a) Care of Collection Strategy & Implementation Plan
- (b) Education Policy & Implementation Plan.

On the proposal of Cllr Maxwell, seconded by Cllr Connolly it was agreed that the Council approve the Museum Policy Documents as circulated.

10. To confirm date for July Council meeting

It was agreed that, as recommended by the CPG, that the July meeting of the Council would be held on Monday 10th July, 2017 commencing at 10.00 a.m.

11. To receive Management Report – May 2017

The members noted the Management Report for the month of May which had been circulated with the agenda. The Chief Executive responded to a number of queries from the members in relation to the report.

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

The members noted the reports from Cllrs Carthy, Connolly, Coyle, Keelan, McKenna, McNally, O'Hanlon and P. Treanor in relation to their attendance at the following conferences/training events:

- LAMA Spring Conference, Gormanstown, Co. Meath
- Brexit & The Border Corridor Seminar, Enniskillen, Co. Fermanagh
- AILG Module 2, Westport, Co. Mayo
- AILG Training, Co. Waterford
- AILG Training, Ennis, Co. Clare
- Development Plan meeting, Magherafelt, Co. Derry
- Building & Maintaining Relationships, Co. Armagh

13. Business submitted by the Chief Executive.

Mr E. O’Sullivan, Chief Executive informed the members of the following matters:

Seanad Committee: The Chief Executive informed the members that the Cathaoirleach and himself, along with Chief Executives and Mayors/Cathaoirligh from ten local authorities along the border corridor attended the Seanad Select Committee with responsibility for Brexit on the 7th June. The purpose of the meeting was to update the Committee on the implications of Brexit on the border corridor. He stated that the Cllr O’Hanlon had delivered the opening speech on behalf of the delegation and had spoken very well. A key outcome was that a request had been sent to An Taoiseach seeking a meeting to discuss this important matter.

Latlorcan Development: The Chief Executive confirmed that the Council had completed the acquisition of 17 houses and 20 acres of land at Latlorcan Glen, Monaghan Town. The Council intended to provide a further forty social housing units on part of the lands as soon as possible. An assessment will be undertaken on the 17 houses acquired to establish what works are required to complete them.

In response to comments from members regarding queries from residents at this location, Mr. O’Sullivan stated that consultation would be undertaken with residents at all stages of the process.

14. Matters arising out of the minutes of Council meeting held on 8th & 23rd May, 2017.

Matters arising out of the minutes of the Council meeting held on 8th & 23rd May 2017 were responded to by the relevant officials.

15. To receive update on North South Interconnector project.

The members noted the following correspondence which had been circulated with the agenda:

- Email from Minister Denis Naughten confirming that Minister Naughten had met with TDs/Senators on the 16th May in relation to the North/South Interconnector.
- Email from Minister Denis Naughten, T.D., declining the Council’s request for a meeting with him to discuss the Terms of Reference for the project.
- Letter from the Office of the Minister for Housing, Planning, Community and Local Government in relation to North/South Interconnector.

As agreed at the adjourned May meeting on the 23rd June, a meeting would be held on 19th June, 2017 at 10.30 a.m., between the Oireachtas members for the constituency and the members of the Council in relation to the Terms of Reference for the North/South Interconnector.

On the proposal of Cllr Keelan, seconded by Cllr Crowe, it was agreed that this Council invite representatives from the Monaghan Anti Pylon Committee (MAPC) to attend the meeting on Monday 19th June between elected members and the Oireachtas members in relation to the North South interconnector.

16. To receive update on the Ulster Canal project.

In response to a comment from Cllr P. Treanor that the Interagency Group on the Ulster Canal should be re-established, the Chief Executive suggested that the Council should await the formation of a new Executive in Northern Ireland before pursuing this matter.

Cllr Connolly proposed, Cllr S. Treanor seconded that in relation to the Ulster Canal that Monaghan County Council seeks funding to open a stretch of Canal as a water feature to compliment the 4.5km greenway in Monaghan Town.

The Chief Executive stated that the Council had made a submission to have the Ulster Canal project included in the mid-term review of the national Capital Investment Plan. He was of the view that the Council should await the outcome of that review.

Cllr Connolly agreed to defer the proposal for the time being.

17. To receive update on Brexit.

There was no discussion on this item.

18. To receive presentation John O’Sullivan, Commissioner of Valuation

The Cathaoirleach welcomed John O’Sullivan, Commissioner of Valuation and invited him to address the members.

Mr. O’Sullivan thanked the Council members for the opportunity to address them. He then gave a comprehensive presentation on the programme of re-valuation that was being undertaken by the Valuation Office across the country. He explained that the role of the Valuation Office was to decide on the rateable valuation of individual properties. A multiplier figure was then applied to the valuation to determine the annual rates bill for the property. He stated that all properties were rateable unless they were specifically exempt eg domestic properties and agricultural lands. Under the revaluation process the Valuation Office will determine the net annual value of the property – not what it would sell for but what it would rent for on the open market. In County Monaghan he expected that this process would commence in September and that it should be concluded in late 2019. He said that the process is intended to achieve equity and uniformity – there would be people who would benefit from the process and some who would not.

Revaluation work had been completed in the four Dublin local authorities, Limerick and Waterford and the vast majority of ratepayers were happy with the revaluation. He explained that ratepayers who were not happy could make representations online and they would be asked to supply other evidence for the Valuation Office to consider.

Following his presentation Mr. O'Sullivan responded to queries from the elected members.

The Cathaoirleach and the Head of Finance both thanked Mr. O'Sullivan for his presentation.

19. Questions:

Clr P. Connolly asked:

1. In view of the recent European Court of Justice ruling regarding "locals only" rule for-one off housing in rural areas and the fact that the Department of Housing have indicated that they are revising their rural housing guidelines to comply with EU rules on Freedom of Movement what plans have Monaghan County Council to have this stipulation removed from the County Development plan?

Reply: The Department of Housing, Planning, Community and Local Government, through Circular letter PL 2/2017, has advised that the existing guidelines relating to rural housing should remain in place pending a review by the LGMA LUTS Committee, and the publication of the National Planning Framework. Circular letter PL 2/2017 has been included in the correspondence with the agenda for reference.

Clr C. Carthy asked:

2. Have works been completed in the Derryleege/Descart area of Magheracloone regarding the supply of ground water to Kingscourt, Co. Cavan and, if so, will MCC be requesting Cavan Co Council to carry out a resurfacing of the road where piping was laid?

Reply: The Carrickmacross-Castleblayney Municipal District will carry out an inspection on the roads in question and if remedial works are required a meeting will be sought with Cavan County Council.

3. How many valid applications/responses has Monaghan County Council received from their recent advertisements requesting property and land to buy in the County?

Reply: Monaghan County Council is currently assessing the 10 responses received to the recent advertisement for land and houses. The response to the advertisements was satisfactory and, by advertising, this also allows the Council to target the purchase of individual houses advertised on the open market throughout the County.

4. How many privately owned houses has MCC purchased since January 2017 and how does the figure compare to the quantity of house purchases from Jan-Dec 2016?

**Reply: The number of houses purchased in 2016 is 46.
The number of house purchases agreed to date in 2017 is 12.**

Cllr C. Carthy asked (contd):

5. How many Council/housing association tenants are currently on the Housing Transfer List in Co. Monaghan and how many of these are on the list more than 4 years?

Reply: There are currently 77 Council /Housing Association Tenants on the Housing Transfer list. Of this number, 27 tenants have been on the Housing Transfer List for more than 4 years.

Cllr R. Aughey asked:

6. Can the Council

- (a) State how many lifebuoys or other lifesaving equipment has had to be replaced or repaired across the county over the past three years?

Reply: Four buoys were replaced last year, with sections of rope being replaced on a number of other units. Additional Buoys were provided around Lough Muckno following a risk assessment.

- (b) Does the Council audit the condition of said equipment?

Reply: Inspections are carried out during the summer months from May to September.

7. Can the Council erect village name signs on the approach roads to Annyalla?

Reply: The Municipal District will investigate the need for standard village signs at the approach roads to the village.

Cllr A. Campbell asked:

8. What is the current status for the construction of the New Fire Station in Castleblayney?

Reply: Castleblayney is scheduled in the Fire Service Capital Programme for 2019 and work is ongoing to expedite the delivery of this project. The Project Team assigned for the delivery of Castleblayney Fire Station are now meeting regularly and working to develop all required documentation so that once confirmation of funding is received from the National Directorate for Fire & Emergency Management, the project can proceed to the planning and tender stage.

Cllr J. Crowe asked:

9. In regards to the 4 old people's dwellings in Oliver Plunkett Park Castleblayney that are vacant, "when is it proposed to refurbish and allocate them"?

Reply: Monaghan County Council is currently preparing the contract documents & maps for the renovation of 4no vacant and semi-derelict Old Peoples Dwellings located at Oliver Plunkett Park, Drumillard, Castleblayney. The dwellings became

vacant and semi-derelict due to subsidence. The proposed refurbishment works will be advertised in June 2017 via www.etenders.ie and refurbishment works will be completed by Q1 2018.

The proposed renovation works are as follows;

- Repair/replacement of chimney, ground floor and internal walls
- New roof, felt, lath, tiling and ridge caps
- New uPVC fascia, soffit, guttering
- New windows and doors
- New electrics & plumbing
- New sewerage and drainage pipes
- New kitchen & bathroom (level access shower)
- New heating system
- Painting, flooring and tiling
- External works including accessibility improvements, fencing and landscaping

Cllr J. Crowe asked:

10. Has Monaghan County Council completed planning permission to build the proposed eight houses in Bree Castleblayney, If so when is it expected for the contractor to commence building these houses?

Reply: The Part 8 application (Planning Permission) for 8 houses at Bree, Castleblayney has been approved. The programme requires the tender documents and Detailed Cost Plan to be ready by the end of June 2017 following which the documents and Detailed Cost Plan have to be submitted to the Department for approval to go to tender. It is envisaged that approval to go to tender will be granted shortly thereafter allowing the invitation to tender to be advertised in July 2017. Allowing for the Construction Industry Federation holiday period and Department approval to commence construction commencement will be in late Q3 or early Q4 of 2017.

11. Are there any Voluntary Housing Agencies expressing interest to build social housing in Castleblayney?

Reply: Significant Voluntary/Approved Housing Bodies such as Respond!, Tuath, Cluid and Oaklee as well as some smaller Voluntary Housing Bodies are currently active in County Monaghan and are interested in providing social housing in the larger towns such as Castleblayney. In March 2017 Tuath Housing Association received conditional approval for the provision of 32 houses under the Social Housing Current Expenditure Programme. If the conditions are fulfilled and if contracts are agreed the construction of 32 houses will be funded through the Capital Advance Leasing Facility whereby a combination of a Capital advance and leasing arrangement allow the Approved Housing Body to purchase the houses and provide them as social housing for applicants from Monaghan County Council's housing waiting list. Monaghan County Council is currently awaiting an update from Tuath regarding this project.

12. When is expected that the revamp of the Castleblayney Wastewater Treatment plant will take place and has the necessary funding been put in place?

Reply: This Query has been forwarded to Irish Water for a response.

ClIr B. McKenna asked:

13. Can the Council please confirm if and when will the tender documentation be advertised to contractors for the realignment works on the N2 from Corracrin to Emyvale village

(a) What will the timescale be for return of tenders

Reply: The Tender documentation for the appointment of Contractors for the N2-Phase 3 Monaghan [Corracrin to Emyvale] Road improvement Scheme are expected to be advertised in Quarter 4 2017. The overall tender process (advertising period, assessment, report and award) is expected to take three months.

(b) When is it expected that works would commence?

Reply: The Construction works are expected to commence in Quarter 1 2018.

ClIr N. Keelan asked:

14. How many applications have been received to-date by this Council in relation to the 'Repair & Leasing Scheme' and if the Council could give a brief explanation of how the scheme functions, which may be of interest to those who own vacant property and want to bring it back into residential use again?

Reply: Five applications for the Repair & Leasing Scheme have been received to date. The Repair & Leasing Scheme has now been made available nationally and is open for applications. The application form and Frequently Asked Questions can be found on Monaghan County Council's website www.monaghan.ie under "Housing", "Repair and Leasing Scheme".

The purpose of the initiative is to restore suitable properties to the required standard for private rented properties and to then provide them as social housing. The Local Authority or AHB will agree with a property owner the specific works and associated costs (not more than €40,000 including furniture and VAT) on a case by case basis having regard to the condition of the property. Not all properties will require significant works to bring them up to standard. As the property owner is paying for these repairs through and offset against rental income, it is in the interests of the property owner that repair costs are not excessive however a reasonably high standard of insulation will be required to "future proof" any property that is to be leased.

The benefits of the long-term lease arrangement to the property owner are (1) Guaranteed Rent (2) Avoiding loss of rent during vacant periods (3) No dealing with tenants and day to day maintenance (4) No need to collect rent or find new tenants (5) No advertising costs. The owner retains responsibility for the structural insurance, structural maintenance and repair. The owner will retain responsibility for the payment of management fees, where applicable, and is responsible for payment of Local Property Tax and NPPR. The property will then be allocated to family/household on Social Housing Waiting list via the Scheme of Lettings Priorities. Properties will not be available to RAS, HAP or private tenants.

The property must be vacant for at least 12 months prior to submission to the Local Authority - proof of vacancy will be required; there has to be a social housing demand

for the property; the property has to be assessed as being viable to provide social housing. If the property meets the required standards, it will be inspected by the L.A. or AHB staff who will identify the works that are required to bring the house up to the required standard. If the owner wishes to enter into a lease arrangement to make the property available for social housing with the local authority or AHB the following conditions will apply:

The minimum lease term is 10 years, 15 years or 20 years depending on the cost of the upgrade works; the lease payment will be based on (1) The general terms of social leasing which is set at 80% (85% for apartments) of the current market rental rates in the property location; (2) a further adjustment to the lease payment to offset the cost of the repair/upgrade work until the cost of the work has been repaid. Properties must be in good structural condition and will be subject to inspection. Properties must be compliant with the Housing (Standards for Rented Houses Regulations 2008. BER Certificates will be required for all properties. Property owners will also be required to prove ownership of the house and tax compliance. There are 2 options for the completion of the necessary works: (1) Property owner arranges a contractor or (2) Local Authority/AHB engages a contractor. If the cost of repairs is less than or equal to €10,000 the minimum duration of lease is 10 years and the offset to be cleared by year 8; if the cost of repairs is greater than €10,000 and less than €20,000 the minimum duration of lease is 15 years with offset to be cleared by year 12; if cost of repairs is in excess of €20,000 the minimum duration of lease is 20 years with offset to be clear by year 15.

Once a lease agreement is signed the Local Authority/AHB becomes the landlord and not the owner. Should the owner require the property back before the end of lease term, there will be a clawback clause included in lease agreement to ensure the value of the works already paid for by the Local Authority/AHB is repaid. Should the owner wish to sell the property during the term, he or she can on the condition that the lease agreement is transferred to the new owner and the Local Authority/AHB are notified in advance.

Applications for the Repair & Leasing Scheme should be submitted to the address below:

Repair & Leasing Scheme Housing Section, Monaghan County Council, The Glen, Monaghan.

ClIr N. Keelan asked:

15. How many Council housing loans have been approved in the last 2 years; how many applications have been refused in the last 2 years; how many Council housing loans are on our books at present and how many loans are in arrears at present?

Reply: There were 19 loan applications received in the last two years. Of this number, 8 applications have been approved, 5 have been refused and 6 are pending decision. There are currently 76 loans in arrears from a total of 204.

16. Given that this Council is spending €360,000 per annum of tax-payers money on rented premises which, in my view, is not in the public interest, what action is being taken to address this situation?

Reply: The Council is very conscious of the high spend on rented office premises and is considering options available to address this serious problem.

Cllr N. Keelan asked:

17. What is the up-to-date position in relation to the upgrading of the Dundalk to Cavan regional road via Carrickmacross and Shercock town given the poor state of this important link road, especially the section from Carrickmacross to Shercock?

Reply: The Dundalk to Cavan section of the East/West Dundalk to Sligo Project has been completed to preliminary design stage. There is currently no funding available to progress the scheme through the remaining stages of Detailed Design, Statutory Procedures/Land Acquisition, Procurement/Tender Award and Construction. The existing road can be improved using the RI grants but works to the R178 are not programmed in the current 2017 programme.

18. In relation to Planning and a recent European Court ruling re Local Needs Criteria, will the Chief Executive make a statement on this issue and what impact this will have on those seeking Planning in the current local needs areas in Co. Monaghan?

Reply: The Department of Housing, Planning, Community and Local Government, through Circular letter PL 2/2017, has advised that the existing guidelines relating to rural housing should remain in place pending a review by the LGMA LUTS Committee, and the publication of the National Planning Framework. Circular letter PL 2/2017 has been included in the correspondence with the agenda for reference.

20. Notices of Motion:

Cllr C. Carthy proposed, Cllr Crowe seconded and it was agreed:

1. *Monaghan County Council calls on the Minister for Housing, Planning and Local Government to increase the income limits for Social housing in Co. Monaghan (Band 3).*

Cllr Aughey proposed, Coyle seconded,

2. *Given the National crisis in housing provision it is agreed that Monaghan County Council will receive a monthly update on the implementation of 'Rebuilding Ireland the Action Plan on Housing and Homelessness' and how it is being delivered in our Council area.*

The Chief Executive stated that the Council is delivering on the Rebuilding Ireland programme. A package in excess of €35m, including the Latlorcan Glen development, is being delivered in Co. Monaghan. He stated that reference to the delivery of the social housing programme is included in the monthly Management Report to Council and this would continue in the future.

A vote by show of hands on the proposal resulted in 11 for 0 against and 1 abstention. The Cathaoirleach declared the proposal carried.

Cllr McNally proposed, Cllr O'Hanlon seconded and it was agreed

3. *Given the National crisis in housing provision it is agreed that Monaghan County Council will ensure that it has the specialist and technical posts and where there are vacancies urgent priority will be given to employ and recruit these specialised staff to give the critical attention required to deliver and implement 'Rebuilding Ireland the Action Plan on Housing and Homelessness' in our Council area.*

19. Votes of sympathy/congratulations.

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

- The Kelly family, Dooskey, Smithboro, Council employees Sean Kelly and Martin Gallagher on the death of Seamus Kelly, RIP, retired Machinery Yard Supervisor.
- Cathal Flynn, Council employee on the death of Brian Ray, Newbliss, RIP
- Ciaran Trant, Council employee on the death of his father, John (Barney) Trant RIP
- The British Ambassador to Ireland on the terrible atrocity in London recently.

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

- Rev Dr. Gerard W. Clinton on his ordination and installation to the congregations of the Presbyterian church of First and Second Ballybay, Rockcorry and Drumkeen parishes.
- Aaron Mulligan, Latton, on his selection to the Ireland International U-16 UEFA Development Team.
- St Mary's BNS on celebrating the 150th Anniversary of its foundation.
- Monaghan Town Team on being nominated to the prestigious Utrecht European Award.

20. Conferences/Training

On the proposal of Cllr Campbell proposed, seconded by Cllr Maxwell it was agreed that the Council be represented at the following conferences by the members listed.

Promoting Authority	Subject/Theme	Venue	Dates	Members Selected
AILG	'Rating Powers Reform and Revaluations	The Great Northern Hotel, Bundoran, Co. Donegal	15 th June 2017	Cllr. D. Maxwell Cllr. S. Gilliland

The meeting then concluded.

Signed: _____
Cathaoirleach

Meetings Administrator

Date: _____
