

Minutes of Meeting of Monaghan County Council held in the Concra Wood Golf & Country Club, Castleblayney, Co Monaghan on Monday 7th January, 2019 at 11.00 a.m.

Chair: Cllr D. Maxwell, Cathaoirleach

Present: Cllrs. Aughey, Bennett, Campbell, Carthy, Conlon, Connolly, Coyle, Crowe, Gilliland, Keelan, McElvaney, McKenna, McNally, O’Hanlon, P. Treanor and S. Treanor, R. Truell.

Mr. E. O’Sullivan, Chief Executive, Mr. A. King, Mr. P. Clifford and Ms. P. Monahan, Directors of Services, Mr. J. Murray, Head of Finance, Mr. F. McEntee, Senior Engineer, Mr. A. Hughes, Senior Planner, Mr. T. Gourley, Senior Executive Planner, and Ms. C. Thornton, Meetings Administrator.

Magheraclone Subsidence:

The Cathaoirleach stated he had received a notice of urgent business from the Sinn Fein members, as follows:

The Sinn Féin members, on foot of recent developments in Magheraclone around the mine collapse and road closures, call on Monaghan County Council to suspend standing orders and allow for the motion, which was put before the members in November, to be voted on again today.

That motion read:

1. *In light of the collapse of part of the old gypsum mines in Magheraclone in late September, Monaghan County Council calls:*

- *For the Minister for Communications, Climate Action and Environment to immediately establish an independent investigation into the cause(s) of the mine collapse and to put in place measures that will prevent something like this happening in the future*
- *For the Minister of State for Natural Resources, Community Affairs and Digital Development to immediately set up a review of all old mines in Magheraclone in order to establish the exact layout and extent of them, including their access tunnels.*

We also call on the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA):

- *To evaluate the ground water in the area in and around the mines to determine if the underground water supply is safe for those who well their water*
- *To determine if the storage of water in underground mines is a safe practice or harmful to the ground water supply*

The Cathaoirleach ruled that as the motion had been dealt with by the Council at the November 2018 meeting, it could not be dealt with at this meeting in accordance with Standing Orders 19.3, 19.4 and 25.1. Cllr Carthy accepted the Cathaoirleach’s ruling.

The Cathaoirleach stated that, given the importance of this matter he proposed to allow a short period so that the members could get an update. He then asked the Chief Executive to give an report to the members on the current situation at Magheraclone.

The Chief Executive gave the following report to the members:

On the afternoon of 19 December 2018, Monaghan County Council was notified by Gyproc (Ireland) Ltd that a crown hole was discovered 35 metres west of LP4900. The Chief Executive and Senior Engineer Roads visited the site on the evening of 19 December and spoke to the Department of Communications, Climate Action and Environment (DCCAE) seeking confirmation that LP4900 road was stable and safe for public use.

Following a meeting on the morning of 20 December between Gyproc Ireland Ltd and SRK Consulting Ltd, the DCCAE was advised of the ground conditions pertaining to the crownhole. Then, in consultation with the DCCAE and Gyproc (Ireland) Ltd., Monaghan County Council took the decision to close the LP4900 road as a precautionary measure and to facilitate site investigation work by the mining company.

Monaghan County Council issued a Notice of Emergency Closure, in accordance with Section 75 of the Roads Act 1993 & Article 12 of the Roads Regulations 1994, and closed the LP4900 road at 3.30pm on 20 December 2018.

A drilling rig mobilised by Gyproc (Ireland) Ltd to carry out core drilling in the area remains onsite.

A meeting was held in Carrickmacross on 3 January 2019 between DCCAE officials and representatives from Gyproc (Ireland) Ltd. Wardell Armstrong and Monaghan County Council were also in attendance.

During the meeting, nine additional core drilling locations were identified as part of the investigation to determine the stability of the LP4900. SRK Consulting Ltd was instructed to evaluate the site investigation works and complete a report on the crownhole and ground conditions along the LP4900 to DCCAE by 10 January 2019. All parties agreed to meet again on 15 January 2019, following completion of the core drills to analyse the results.

Monaghan County Council has continued its Emergency Closure Order on the LP4900 pending the outcome of the geotechnical investigations.

Following the report, the Chief Executive and Mr. F. McEntee, Senior Engineer responded to queries from the members.

The Cathaoirleach confirmed that the Department, Gyproc, MD members and Council officials and would meet with the residents group and he would liaise with the Chair of the group to arrange a suitable date and time.

Urgent Business:

The Cathaoirleach informed the members that he had received a notice of urgent business in the name of Cllr Connolly, as follows:

That in view of the crisis situation which exists in Annalee View Respite Centre Cootehill since September 2018 whereby access to Respite services is not available to those who normally avail of this service and in view of the fact that there is 2.5 year waiting list to get any form of respite care in this centre that Monaghan County Council calls on the HSE Dublin NE and Mr Finian McGrath TD, Minister with special responsibility for disabilities, to take immediate

steps to resolve this current crisis and ensure that respite beds are provided to those in need and to ensure adequate funding for a suitable premises is put in place as matter of urgency.

On the proposal of Cllr O'Hanlon, seconded by Cllr McKenna it was agreed to go 'In Committee' to discuss whether to accept the motion submitted as urgent business.

It was unanimously agreed to take the motion of urgent business at the end of the meeting.

On the proposal of Cllr Coyle, seconded by Cllr P. Treanor, it was agreed that the Council revert to public session.

1. Confirmation of Minutes

(i) Minutes of Council meeting held on 4th December, 2018

Cllr Keelan requested that the minutes of the Council meeting held on 4th December 2018 would be amended as the answer to questions 10 and 12 were the same and this should be corrected. This was agreed by the members.

On the proposal of Cllr Coyle, seconded by Cllr Treanor, it was agreed that the minutes of the Council meeting held on the 4th December 2018, as amended above, be confirmed.

(ii) Minutes of Special Council meeting re: County Development Plan.

On the proposal Cllr Bennett, seconded by Cllr McKenna it was agreed that the minutes of the Special Council meeting re: County Development Plan held on the 4th December 2018, be confirmed.

2. Correspondence.

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

- Letter from the Office of the Minister for Housing, Planning and Local Government, Mr Eoghan Murphy, T.D, regarding water hardness.
- Letter from the Minister for Health, Mr. Simon Harris T.D, regarding medical card services.
- Email from the Office of the Minister for Health, Mr. Simon Harris T.D, regarding Medical Reports needed for a driving licence.
- Email from Senator Robbie Gallagher regarding Monaghan Minor Injuries Unit.
- Letter from the Office of Standards in Public Office Commission regarding notification of Annual Declaration, Local Government Act 2001 (the 2001 Act")
- Resolution from Donegal County Council regarding the First Dáil Éireann.
- Resolution from Donegal County Council regarding Support for the Irish Language Act in Northern Ireland.
- Resolution from Kerry County Council regarding American citizenship.
- Resolution from the Municipal District of Ballybay-Clones regarding Public Lighting.
- Resolution from Roscommon County Council regarding Home Help Hours and Home Care Packages.

Proposals arising out of correspondence:

On the proposal of Cllr Coyle, seconded by Cllr O’Hanlon, it was agreed that Monaghan County Council demands an immediate meeting with the Minister for Transport Tourism and Sport Shane Ross TD and his department to seek additional funding for Public Lighting Schemes in County Monaghan, in the interest of all pedestrians, motorists etc.

On the proposal of Cllr P. Treanor, seconded by Cllr Bennett, it was agreed that we reissue our motion relating to medical reports for over 70’s drivers to the Minister for Health, clarifying that this relates to medical card cover.

On the proposal of Cllr P. Treanor, seconded by Cllr Bennett, it was agreed that Monaghan County Council supports the motion from Donegal County Council in relation to Acht Na Gaeilge.

On the proposal of Cllr P. Treanor, seconded by Cllr Bennett, it was agreed that Monaghan County Council supports the motion from Ballybay/Clones MD in relation to Public Lighting Schemes in County Monaghan.

On the proposal of Cllr Coyle, seconded by Cllr O’Hanlon, it was agreed that in view of the crisis in A&E at Cavan hospital and Our Lady of Lourdes Hospital Drogheda, Monaghan County Council demand of the Minister for Health Simon Harris TD and the HSE the immediate extension of opening hours of the Minor injuries unit in Monaghan General Hospital each day and to 7 days per week. As members using the facilities have increased with the recent HSE survey showing more than 90% satisfaction rating from services users. Also, this Council invites Mill Monaghan management to do a presentation to the February meeting of Monaghan County Council of the services available at the facility.

On the proposal of Cllr Coyle, seconded by Cllr P. Treanor, it was agreed that Monaghan County Council adopt the motion from Roscommon County Council re: home help hours and Home care packages and forwards it to Simon Harris.

On the proposal of Cllr Bennett, seconded by Cllr P. Treanor, it was agreed that we in Monaghan County Council rewrite to Mr Eoghan Murphy TD Minister for Housing, Planning and Local Government requesting that the same funding made available to Group Water Schemes is also available to Households serviced by public water supplies.

On the proposal of Cllr McKenna, seconded by Cllr Conlon, it was agreed that we write again to Minister for Health Simon Harris TD requesting a response to the issues raised at our meeting back in June.

Cllr Bennett proposed, Cllr McKenna seconded that this Council writes to Minister Michael Ring TD requesting that CLÁR funding be extended to all outstanding rural areas in County Monaghan.

3. Part To receive Audited AFS and Audit Report on the Accounts of Monaghan County Council for year ended 31 December 2017.

This item was deferred to the February Council meeting.

4. To consider Section 183 Notices:

The members noted the reports circulated in relation to the following proposed disposals.

(i) Disposal of property, Mall Rd, Monaghan

On the proposal of Cllr Connolly, seconded by Cllr S. Treanor, it was agreed that the Council approve the disposal of 0.018 acres (74m²), in the townland of Tirkeenan, (Mall Road) Monaghan in accordance with the terms of notice dated 10th December, 2018 under Section 183 of the Local Government Act 2001.

(ii) Disposal of property, former Castleblayney Town Council Offices

On the proposal of Cllr Campbell, seconded by Cllr Crowe, it was agreed that the Council approve the disposal of the former Castleblayney Town Council offices, West Street, Castleblayney in accordance with the terms of notice dated 10th December, 2018 under Section 183 of the Local Government Act 2001.

(iii) Disposal of land at Oriel Way, Monaghan

On the proposal of Cllr Conlon, seconded by Cllr Connolly, it was agreed that the Council approve the disposal of 0.16 hectares at Oriel Way, Killyconnigan, Monaghan, in accordance with the terms of notice dated 10 December, 2018 under Section 183 of the Local Government Act 2001.

5. To receive Report on the Capital Programme 2019-2021

The Chief Executive referred to the Capital Programme 2019 – 2021 which had been circulated to all Council members in advance of the Statutory Budget meeting on 20th November 2018. He explained that the report was prepared in accordance with the requirements of Section 135 of the Local Government Act 2001. He stated that the list of projects was dependent on funding being available and projects could change over the lifetime of the Programme.

On the proposal of Cllr Gilliland, seconded by Cllr Maxwell it was agreed that the Capital Programme 2019 – 2021 be noted.

6. To receive comments on NWRA Draft Regional Social and Economic Strategy (RSES)

Mr. T. Gourley, Senior Executive Planner gave a presentation to the members on the NWRA Draft Regional Social and Economic Strategy (RSES). During the course of his presentation he provided a brief overview of the strategy and the main objectives contained within it outlining the following points:

1. The Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy (RSES) is a legislative requirement of Planning & Development Act – ‘second tier’ policy document.

2. The RSES is a long-term strategic planning and economic framework for the development of the whole of Northern and Western Regional Assembly area for between 12 and 20 years.
3. The strategy supports the implementation of the National Planning Framework and Government economic policies and objectives.
4. The Planning & Development Act requires core strategy of development plan to be consistent with RSES taking account of regional population targets.
5. The Draft Strategy is currently out for public consultation. The deadline for the receipt of submissions from the public is 5pm on the 8th February 2019.

Mr. Gourley stated that the Council's response on the Draft RSES would be prepared for consideration by the members at the February Council meeting. Members could put forward comments for inclusion in that submission.

Cllr O'Hanlon proposed, Cllr McNally seconded that we lobby for County Monaghan to become part of the Eastern and Midland Region like County Louth did in the past.

It was agreed that consideration of the motion would be deferred to the February meeting.

On the proposal of Cllr Maxwell, seconded by Cllr Crowe, it was agreed that the undergrounding of the Interconnector is part of the NWRA Draft Regional Social and Economic strategy.

7. To receive the MCC Review of NOAC Service Indicators for 2017

Mr A. King, Director of Services, gave a brief overview of the Report which had been circulated. He explained that the report prepared by Monaghan County Council sets out to compare the Council's performance in 2017 with the highest and lowest performers nationally; against similar size counties (Level 5 counties); against similar indicators in previous years (where applicable) and on the basis of these to establish targets for the following year.

During a discussion on this item, Ms. P. Monahan responded to a number of queries in relation to the roads indicator particularly regarding the condition of the local and regional roads in the county.

It was agreed that the Council's review of the NOAC Service Indicators for 2017 be noted.

8. To adopt the MCC Draft Inclusive Playgrounds Policy

Mr. P. Clifford, Director, gave a brief report to the members on the Inclusive Playgrounds Policy which had been circulated. The Policy has been developed following a public consultation process regarding the redevelopment of Ballybay Town Park playground. The consultation supported local parents of children with disabilities in raising their concerns and issues. The consultation highlighted the need for accessible, integrated play environments for *everyone* in the county. He responded to queries from the elected members.

On the proposal of Cllr P. Treanor, seconded by Cllr Maxwell it was agreed that the Draft Monaghan County Council Inclusive Playgrounds Policy be adopted.

On the proposal of Cllr Conlon, seconded by Cllr Carthy, it was agreed that following the local authority elections scheduled for May 2019, that this Council re-establishes the Disability Steering Committee, to include advocates representing the disability sector along with Council members and staff as previously constituted.

9. To consider the Homelessness Strategy

The members noted the Draft Homelessness Action Plan 2018-2020 and acknowledged the workshop delivered by Housing staff earlier that morning.

Cllr Connolly proposed, Cllr Gilliland seconded, that Monaghan County Council adopts the Homelessness Action Plan 2018-2020.

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

On the proposal of Cllr Campbell, seconded by Cllr Gilliland, it was agreed that the Council discuss a sensitive housing matter in Committee. Following conclusion of the short discussion, it was agreed on the proposal of Cllr Campbell, seconded by Cllr Gilliland that the meeting return to public session.

Cllr Bennett proposed, Cllr Keelan seconded, that a dedicated 24/7 phone line be made available in County Monaghan to help address emergency homelessness situations.

It was agreed that this motion would be referred to the Housing SPC for consideration.

10. To consider recommendations and minutes from Corporate Policy Group

Arising out of the minutes of the Corporate Policy Group meeting held on 18th December, 2018, *Cllr Carthy proposed, Cllr Keelan seconded that the Council invite Mrs. Lucia O'Farrell to make a presentation to the Council at the February meeting.*

Cllr Gilliland proposed, Cllr Coyle seconded – that the Council discuss this proposal, in Committee. This was agreed.

Following a discussion on Cllr Carthy's proposal, it was agreed on the proposal of Cllr Gilliland, seconded by Cllr Coyle that the meeting return to public session.

Cllr McNally proposed an amendment to Cllr Carthy's proposal – that Mrs. O'Farrell's presentation would be made in Committee. A vote by show of hands resulted in 9 for 8 against. The Cathaoirleach declared the amended motion carried.

On the proposal of Cllr McKenna, seconded by Cllr Maxwell, it was agreed that the Council approve the minutes of the Corporate Policy Group meeting held on 18 December 2018 and the recommendations contained therein.

11. To receive the Management Report – December 2018:

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

On the proposal of Cllr Conlon, seconded by Cllr Bennett, it was agreed that this Council seeks of Oaklee Trust – approved housing authority partnered with Monaghan County Council to immediately undertake extensive repairs work to the roof of Rowantree Court that has been leaking and causing damage over the past 8 years.

Cllr Conlon proposed that the Canadian Ambassador be invited to address the Council before the conclusion of his term in office and his return to Canada. Cllr Maxwell seconded the proposal which was agreed.

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

The members noted the reports from Cllrs. Carthy, Conlon, Connolly, Crowe, McKenna, O’Hanlon & P. Treanor in relation to their attendance at the following conferences/training events:

- AILG - GDPR, Co Cavan
- AILG Training, Co Kildare
- EU Cohesion Policy, Co Cork
- AILG Training, Co Sligo
- Annual Training Seminar, Hillgrove, Monaghan
- LAMA – Autumn Seminar, Co Kerry
- Let’s Talk Tourism, Co Kerry

13. Business submitted by the Chief Executive.

The Chief Executive informed the members, as follows:

Revaluation of County Monaghan: The Valuation Office has requested an opportunity to make a presentation, in committee, to the members on this process. The date suggested was the March Council meeting. It was agreed that the presentation would take place, in committee, at 2.30 pm on Monday 4th March, 2019.

Commemoration of 1st Dail: A commemoration ceremony to mark the centenary of the first meeting of Dail Eireann was being organised for Monday 21st January, 2019. All members and Oireachtas members were invited to attend and further details would be circulated in advance of the event.

14. Matters arising out of the minutes of Council meeting held on 4th December, 2018

Matters arising out of the minutes of Council meeting held on 4th December 2018 were responded to by the relevant officials.

15. To receive update on North South Interconnector project.

On the proposal of Cllr Coyle, seconded by Cllr O'Hanlon, it was agreed that Monaghan County Council demands that local Minister Heather Humphreys TD arranges an immediate meeting with Minister for Communications Climate Action and Environment Richard Bruton TD to discuss the North-South 400KV interconnector, and the absolute determination of the communities for its undergrounding.

16. Update on N2 National Primary Road Schemes

Ms. P. Monahan, Director of Services updated the members in relation to this matter. She stated that a Project Liaison Officer had been appointed and work had already commenced on the Monaghan office for the Consultants appointed to the schemes. A planning workshop had been held between Jacobs Engineering and Monaghan County Council project teams. It was anticipated that a decision on the preferred route selection would be completed by Q4 2020.

17. To receive update on the Ulster Canal project.

There was no discussion on this item.

18. To receive presentation from Home for Life regarding 'A guide to the Mortgage to Rent Scheme'

The Cathaoirleach welcomed Paul Cunningham and Stephen Curtis from Home for Life and invited them to make a presentation to the Council members. M/s Cunningham and Curtis then made a presentation during which they outlined the following:

- Mortgage to Rent is a Government Scheme that aims to keep distressed mortgage holders in their current homes, mortgage debt free. These are homeowners who are at most acute risk of losing their homes through loan sales or Court processes as MTR is focussed on homeowners who are unable and are unlikely to be able to make their mortgage payments.
- Under Mortgage to Rent the Homeowner surrenders ownership of their Home, has their mortgage debt written off and become tenants of their Local Authority.
- Homeowner pays an affordable income based rent to the Local Authority "Differential Rent".
- Local authorities have a key role in the MTR scheme.
 - Tenants are provided with a Local Authority lease
 - Local authority receives and collect the differential rent
 - Conduct annual and periodic rent reviews
 - Will be contacted if issues arise with the property. (But not responsible for upgrade works or repairs to the property.
 - Local Authorities decide if Housing need exist and will only a Current Tenant Only Lease be offered or will the Local Authority seek a full long term lease.
 - Local authority housing officials act often as a point of information for those in mortgage arrears and facing housing difficulties.
- A total of 4,221 cases have been submitted for processing to date. 386 cases actually completed to date at Q3 2018. Additional 912 are actively being progressed. Many cases declined are now eligible because of changes to eligibility criteria around reasonable housing need and property Value

Following the presentation M/s Cunningham and Curtis responded to queries from the elected members. The Cathaoirleach thanked them for an informative presentation and they withdrew from the meeting.

Cllr Gilliland referred to a recent meeting in Dublin with Minister Damien English TD, and members of the Housing SPC at which they highlighted the current income thresholds in this county for the Housing Assistance Payment and requested the Minister to review them.

On the proposal of Cllr Gilliland, seconded by Cllrs Truell and Campbell it was agreed that Monaghan County Council promotes, where possible and advertises the Mortgage to Rent Scheme in light of the recent €23 million investment by Government to secure 5000 plus units; also, in light of the new stream lined process that is now adopted and to advertise that there is a route back to ownership of the property.

19. Questions:

Cllr C. Carthy asked:

1. Has Monaghan County Council's road section completed its review of costs accrued relating to the Mine Collapse in Magheracloone (September 2018) and has a request for funding been made to the insurers of the mining company?

Reply: Cost codes were established upon event occurrence. Direct costs have been collated and mining company have been advised that we will be seeking full recovery of same. Indirect costs are being appraised presently particularly in consideration of the diversion road surfaces. Once all costs have been finalised, redress seeking full recovery of costs will be pursued.

2. Would Monaghan County Council consider introducing a grant scheme for small businesses to implement technical upgrades to their businesses (i.e. introduction of Debit/Credit card payment systems, website design etc) to help smaller businesses compete with online sales and multi-national companies?

Reply: Monaghan Local Enterprise Office provides support to small businesses. To assist small business in meeting the challenges of the business world, the LEO Monaghan provides a wide range of training supports which are tailored to meet specific business requirements. LEO Monaghan offers a spring and autumn schedule of courses every year which include a broad range of one day workshops, seminars, evening courses and more comprehensive management development programmes. Examples of courses available include: - Start Your Own Business (SYOB), Sales & Marketing, Computerised Accounts, Taxation & VAT for Small Business, Costing & Pricing, Social Media for Small Business, Business Planning and How To Tender Successfully etc. A full schedule of current and upcoming programmes can be viewed the LEO website – www.localenterprise.ie/monaghan.

Since the initial downgrade of Monaghan Hospital to 'minor injuries', what motions have been submitted to Monaghan County Council from members (both supported and rejected) relating to the issues?

Reply: It is understood that Monaghan Hospital was taken off call for acute hospital services in 2009. An electronic search will be undertaken by Corporate Services, as far as is practical, of all agendas issued since that time and the results will be forwarded to the Councillor.

Cllr C. Carthy asked (contd):

3. What level of response has MCC received in its advertised request for purchasing land in the county and has this council considered seeking the purchase of 'Strategic Residential Reserve' land for future use?

Reply: Each year Monaghan County Council advertises for suitable land for housing and at present is in the process of dealing with and acquiring properties and sites under derelict sites legislation, for example, Monaghan County Council has received preliminary funding approval in the amount of €4million for the provision of 21 new homes on six derelict sites acquired in Clones.

In response to the expression of interest advertisements for properties suitable for social housing purposes Monaghan County Council has received a reasonable number of enquiries from property owners interested in selling houses and/or land to Monaghan County Council. In 2018 approximately 40 individual houses have been considered of which 15 purchases are proceeding.

Several landowners and Developers have expressed an interest in selling land and/or completed houses to Monaghan County Council under turnkey proposals on land zoned for proposed residential development. Each proposal is considered on its own merits and assessed. Monaghan County Council expects to receive further proposals from interested Landowners and Developers in the coming months and, subject to Department funding, hopes to proceed with further new build projects if suitable and feasible.

Monaghan County Council examines potential sites arising and has made offers for suitable land that is zoned for current development and has considered and, where appropriate, has acquired land zoned "Strategic Residential Reserve" for future use.

Cllr R. Aughey asked:

4. In light of the current Housing crisis what is the proportion of people who refuse allocations and what are the reasons given?

Reply: There were 192 offers of allocations in 2018 with 42 refusals by individual households. In total that relates to a 22% refusal rate.

Of the refusals made 11 were deemed to be reasonable refusals and these were mainly based on a) medical reasons that had not been highlighted on their application form thereby leading to the house offer not being suitable b) specific work related reasons.

Of the remaining 31 refusals these were deemed unreasonable refusals and included the following reasons

- **Applicants only wanted a house and would not take an apartment**
- **House was too close to the road**
- **Electricity pole was too close to the house**
- **Allegations that there was Anti Social Behaviour in the area**
- **House did not have enough bathrooms**
- **House not large enough/current private rented accommodation bigger than house being offered**
- **Have decided they do not want to move to the area of choice anymore**
- **Happy where they are living**
- **Only want a bungalow in the countryside**
- **Back yard is too small and want a detached house not semi detached**
- **Don't get along with the people in the area**

Cllr R. Aughey asked:

5. Can Monaghan County Council investigate the feasibility of the Choice Based Letting Scheme as a method to ease the pressure on Housing in County Monaghan?

Reply: Choice Based Letting (CBL) Scheme is a method that can be used for the allocation of council properties and offers choice and involvement for approved housing and transfer applicants in selecting a new home. A 'suitable' council property is one that matches the applicant's approved housing needs.

A form of CBL is used by the Housing Authority where the housing authority are finding it difficult in letting a property in a certain area – either due to lack of appropriate applicants on the waiting list or lack of interest as demonstrated as by several refusals. This involves contacting applicants who are either living in the surrounding areas, but have not indicated that specific town/village, and are "suitable" for the housing unit; and in addition, advertising in various outlets – libraries/website – for expressions of interest from applicants. Having regard to the average turnaround of 9.52 weeks for casual vacancies across the county which is third lowest in the country it is not considered necessary to implement the CBL model across the full allocations process. It will be reviewed on an ongoing basis as to its need.

6. Can Monaghan County Council investigate the implementation of a Rapid Waste Clean Up Team to deal with illegal waste activity in County Monaghan?

Reply: Monaghan County Council's has an Environmental Enforcement Policy, which contains the following objective:

In carrying out its investigations, Monaghan County Council will ensure that resources are diverted to the areas of greatest risk. The following are the indicative timetables for having initial investigations completed based on risk.

Category A, High Risk (1-3 days)	Immediate risk of environmental pollution.
Category B, Medium Risk(1-7 days)	Medium risk of environmental pollution.
Category C, Low Risk (1-14 days)	Low risk of environmental pollution.

In most instances the Environmental Patrol Warden is in a position to remove waste and dispose of it within the 3 day time frame.

Where larger amounts of waste are discovered, or the waste is deposited on private lands, Monaghan County Council must follow set legislative procedures before waste is removed. In 2018 Monaghan County Council received funding of €42,000 to deal with illegally dumped waste, utilising both Municipal Staff and a private contractor, 8 large sites were cleaned up and remediated.

In 2019 Environmental Services will continue to avail of Anti-Dumping Initiative funding for targeted clean ups and more proactive anti-dumping projects like the mattress amnesty which was very successful in 2018.

7. Can Monaghan County Council clarify the most up to date policy on the Vacant Site Levy in County Monaghan?

Reply: The Urban Regeneration and Housing Act 2015 came into effect on 28th July 2015 to make provision with respect to land in areas in which housing is required, and in areas which are in need of renewal to prevent it lying idle or remaining vacant, to establish a register of vacant sites in those areas, and to provide for a vacant sites levy.

On foot of this, variation no. 4 of the Monaghan County Development Plan 2013 - 2019 was adopted at the October 2017 Council meeting, setting out the policy changes to allow for the implementation of the Vacant Sites Levy in accordance with the provisions of the Urban Regeneration and Housing Act, 2015. This policy remains extant and has been carried through into the draft Monaghan County Development Plan 2019 – 2025.

8. Can Monaghan County Council liaise with Tipperary County Council and other associated stakeholders in their Renewable Energy projects, creation of a low carbon eco system and investigate whether a similar scheme can be facilitated in County Monaghan?

Reply: Monaghan County Council works closely with a large range of stakeholders including Tipperary Energy Agency to progress energy efficiency and reduction projects. The Council will liaise with Tipperary to explore the proposal.

Cllr N. Keelan asked:

9. Given the very significant funding that this Council sets aside annually in relation to the various housing improvement grant aid available for those citizens with a disability, including housing aid for older people, is it expected that this match funding will be reduced by the department in the time ahead?

Reply: Monaghan County Council have not yet received their allocation of funding for housing grants for 2019. There have been verbal indications that the Department may use different criteria in determining the allocations per county but no confirmation/ correspondence has been received in this regard. It is therefore not possible to determine the implications of the changes for County Monaghan without a detailed outline of the changes. The Budget provision that the Council made in respect of its contribution to the overall cost of the scheme for 2019 remains the same as previous years at €300,000.

10. Given that Ireland is the second worst performing country out of 28 European counties in terms of climate change targets etc, what actions / leadership has and will this Council take in the time ahead at local level to help combat the very important issue of climate change?

Reply: In terms of Climate Change Mitigation Monaghan County Council is continually striving to reduce its carbon footprint and reliance on fossil fuels. In 2018 the Corporate Assets Energy section availed of the Better Energy Communities Grants to progress projects that will help Monaghan County Council achieve its energy reduction target of 33% by 2020. Works under the scheme included LED lighting and heating efficiency upgrades to various council buildings and the installation of PV panels at the landfill site and Monaghan fire station among other works. Similar projects are envisaged for 2019. In 2019 Monaghan County Council will also be preparing a local Climate Change Adaptation Strategy the aim of which be to help the Council prepare and adapt to the impacts of Climate change.

Guidelines to assist local authorities to prepare local adaptation strategies were issued by the Department of Communications Climate Action and Environment in December.

Cllr R. Aughey asked (contd):

11. In welcoming the signing of the contract for the design and upgrade to the N2 Ardee to Castleblayney, what is the timeline for the completion of this work, is it expected that the existing roadway will be upgraded or complete re-alignment or a combination of both, what is the expected timeline for the commencement of works on this project?

Reply: The Consultant is appointed to provide engineering consultancy services through Phases 0/1 to 4 of the TII Project Management Process. This includes scheme concept and feasibility studies which will consider road way alignment options. In turn this will lead to a designed route selection, an environmental evaluation and the statutory process. Phase 0/1 to 4 have been scheduled to complete within four years.

12. In the interest of road safety what is the up to-date position in relation to the provision of a 60km speed limit adjacent to the bus stop on the access ramp to the N2 in Carrickmacross. I note the response to my question in June 2018 which suggested that this issue would be resolved by now?

Reply: County speed limit reviews continue with the TII on a pre-determined time line and once completed by February 2019, the speed limit applications will be submitted for adoption. Referencing the bus-stop adjacent to the Dundalk Road and N2 Carrickmacross Bypass, a survey of speed patterns was conducted in September. Based on the recently reported findings, the TII Consultant concurs that a speed limit of 60/km/hr is deemed more appropriate for this location.

13. What is the up to-date position in relation to the upgrading and proposed improvement works to be carried out at the very dangerous Tullyvaragh junction on the N2?

Reply: Design and contract documents are being prepared for tender issue Q1 2019. However, the tender Issue timeframe is subject to land owner agreements which has entered final stage.

16. Notices of Motion:

Cllr Carthy proposed, Cllr Bennett seconded

1. Monaghan County Council calls on the Minister for Health and the HSE to provide funding for the drug, Kuvan (by BioMarin), to sufferers of the rare metabolic disorder, PKU (Phenylketonuria). As with similar drugs for rare conditions, the HSE have rejected the call to provide this medication based on cost-efficiency grounds but this council requests that this decision be reversed.

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

Cllr Carthy requested that the motion be circulated to all local authorities. This was agreed.

17. Votes of sympathy/congratulations.

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

- Martin Duffy, Council employee on the death of his father Martin RIP
- David Hamill, Council employee on the death of his father James Hamill, RIP
- Brian and Fiona McCarron, Council employees on the death of Brian's father Brian (Senior) RIP
- Sharon Finnegan and Matthew Lambe Council employees on the death of Sharon's father Pat Finnegan, RIP.
- Peggy McKenna on the death of her husband Peter RIP, an uncle of Council employee in the North Monaghan area.

18. Conferences/Training

On the proposal of Cllr McNally, seconded by Cllr Maxwell, it was agreed that the Council be represented at the following conferences/training events by the members listed.

Promoting Authority	Subject/Theme	Venue	Dates	Members Selected
AILG	'Draft Regional Spatial & Economic Strategies'	Hodson Bay Hotel, Athlone	17 th January 2019	Cllr. R. Truell Cllr. B. McKenna Cllr. C. Carthy Cllr. S. Conlon Cllr. J. Crowe Cllr. PJ O'Hanlon Cllr. S. Coyle Cllr. P. Connolly Cllr. D. Maxwell
Celtic Conferences	'Understanding the Asylum Process in Ireland'	O'Donovan's Hotel, Clonakilty, Co. Cork	18 th – 20 th Jan.	Cllr. P. Connolly Cllr. P. McNally Cllr. S. Coyle
Celtic Conferences	'Retirement Entitlements & Taxation Benefits for Councillors'	The Clonakilty Hotel, Clonakilty, Co. Cork	25 th – 27 th Jan.	Cllr. S. Gilliland Cllr. R. Truell Cllr. D. Maxwell

Urgent Business

Cllr Connolly proposed, Cllr B. McKenna seconded

That in view of the crisis situation which exists in Annalee View Respite Centre Cootehill since September 2018 whereby access to Respite services is not available to those who normally avail of this service and in view of the fact that there is 2.5 year waiting list to get any form of respite care in this centre that Monaghan County Council calls on the HSE Dublin NE and Mr Finian McGrath TD, Minister with special responsibility for disabilities, to take immediate

steps to resolve this current crisis and ensure that respite beds are provided to those in need and to ensure adequate funding for a suitable premises is put in place as matter of urgency.

Following a short debate on the motion, the Cathaoirleach put it to the meeting and it was agreed unanimously.

The meeting then concluded.

Signed: _____
Cathaoirleach

Meetings Administrator

Date: _____
