

Minutes of Meeting of Monaghan County Council held in the Council Chamber, Mtek Building, Monaghan, on Monday 2nd March, 2020 at 10.00 a.m.

Chair: Cllr S. Coyle, Cathaoirleach

Present: Cllrs. Aughey, Bennett, Campbell, Carthy, Conlon, Connolly, Gilliland, Keelan, Kerr-Conlon, Maxwell, McCooey, McElvaney, McKenna, O’Hanlon, P. Treanor, S. Treanor and R. Truell.

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

1. Confirmation of Minutes

(i) Minutes of Council meeting held on 3rd February, 2020

On the proposal of Cllr Maxwell, seconded by Cllr McElvaney it was agreed that the minutes of the Council meeting held on the 3rd February, 2020, be confirmed.

2. Correspondence.

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

- Letter from the Office of the Minister for Justice & Equality, Mr. Charlie Flanagan, TD regarding post-mortem examination arrangements.
- Letter from the Office of the Minister for Health, Mr. Simon Harris, TD regarding efforts by the National Ambulance Services Representative Association in their efforts to have the Trade Union representation rights recognised on behalf of the Psychiatric Nurses Association.
- Letter from the Office of the Minister for Justice & Equality, Mr. Charlie Flanagan, TD regarding appropriate staffing and resources being in place ahead of Brexit.
- Letter from the Office of the Minister for Agriculture, Food and the Marine, Mr. Michael Creed, TD regarding a meeting with officials to discuss the TB situation in the county.
- Email from the Office of the Minister for Communications, Climate Action and Environment, Mr. Richard Bruton, TD regarding the banning of all non-recyclable materials used in food/drinks packaging.
- Letter from Dr. Martin J. Watters, Coroner regarding cover for post-mortems.
- Resolution from Kerry County Council regarding people objecting to planning that are not from the area.
- Resolution from Donegal County Council regarding reduction of new water connection costs.
- Letter from Pamela Arthurs, East Border Region regarding the approval of the EBR Charter and Protocols documents.

The following additional correspondence was also circulated:

- Letter from the Office of the Minister for Transport, Tourism & Sport, Mr. Shane Ross, TD regarding funding for regional and local roads in Co. Monaghan.
- Update on proposal to locate Childcare Facility at Knockaconny.

Proposals arising out of correspondence:

On the proposal of Cllr Connolly, seconded by Cllr S. Treanor it was agreed that Monaghan County Council writes to the person in charge of the Post Mortem Services in the HSE, requesting a meeting regarding the delivery of week-end post mortem services for Co Monaghan.

On the proposal of Cllr Connolly, seconded by Cllr S. Treanor, it was agreed that the Council supports the motion from Kerry County Council in relation to people objection to planning permission who are not from the area – they should be 10km from the proposed development

On the proposal of Cllr Campbell seconded by Cllr O’Hanlon, it was agreed that Monaghan County Council approve the East Border Region Charter and Protocols and sign the Declaration of Commitment to declare our joint commitment to continue to work together to address the issues arising from the Ireland/Northern Ireland border in order to protect and improve the prosperity of the citizens of the Region and the public and private services that they can access.

On the proposal of Cllr P. Treanor, seconded by Cllr Keelan it was agreed that Monaghan County Council supports the motion from Donegal County Council in relation to ‘New Water Connections’.

It was further agreed that Monaghan County Council also writes to the Irish Water Regulator requesting a review and reduction of cost involved for new connections.

Cllr Bennett proposed, Cllr Conlon seconded that we call on this Council to implement the new Policy for filling potholes. Roads are presently in a very bad state of disrepair and need urgent attention.

A vote by show of hands on Cllr Bennetts proposal resulted in 6 for 8 against and 4 abstentions. The Cathaoirleach declared the proposal defeated.

On the proposal of Cllr O’Hanlon, seconded by Cllrs McCooey and Aughey, it was agreed that Brexit is included as a fixed item on the Council agenda as and from next month.

3. To consider Report on Investigation by the Standards in Public Office Commission of alleged contraventions of the Ethics in Public Office Act 1995 and 2001, and Part 15 of the Local Government Act 2001

The Cathaoirleach referred to the Report on an Investigation by the Standards in Public Office Commission (SIPO) of alleged contraventions of the Ethics in Public Office Act, 1995 and Part 15 of the Local Government Act 2001 by Cllr McElvaney. He stated that the main report had been circulated to each member. The appendices which contained copies of statements, transcripts of hearings and other documents were available to view on the SIPO website <https://www.sipo.ie/reports-and-publications/investigation-reports/>

A brief discussion took place during which Cllrs McKenna, P. Treanor and O’Hanlon and the Chief Executive commented. During the discussion, the following proposal was put forward:

Cllr McKenna proposed, Cllr P. Treanor seconded that we write to the Minister for Local Government requesting that powers are given to S.I.P.O to penalise those involved in the breach of Ethics in Local Government in carrying out the role as a local councillor.

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

4. To receive the Draft Corporate Plan 2020 - 2024

Mr. C. Flynn, A/Director of Services referred to the Draft Corporate Plan 2020-2024, which had been circulated with the agenda. He stated that the Draft Corporate Plan is the Council's strategic framework for the term of the current Council and has been prepared in accordance with the provisions of the Local Government Act 2001 as amended by the Local Government Reform Act 214. In developing the Corporate Goals and Objectives in the Plan, the Council has taken into account the range of national, regional and European policies and plans which are relevant to the Council's activities. The process for the development of this plan involved meaningful and widespread consultation with stakeholders both internal and external resulting in 333 responses from Monaghan residents providing opinions and views.

There have been significant changes in the Council's operating environment since the adoption of the previous Plan. The new Plan takes account of those changes and has been prepared on the basis of an organisational wide strategic approach encompassing the various Council activities. It also takes account of the various policies and objectives set out in the Council's other plans and strategies. There will be a clear link between the Goals and Objectives of the Corporate Plan and the Annual Service Delivery Plan, the budgetary process, the Performance Management Development System, the internal and Local Government Audit Systems and the monthly Management Reports. Climate Action and Human Rights principles have been enshrined in the Goals and Objectives of the Plan.

Mr. Flynn then responded to queries from the elected members, many of whom complimented the staff on the preparation of the Draft Plan.

The Cathaoirleach and Chief Executive thanked Cathal, Mary and all the staff involved in the preparation of the Draft Plan.

On the proposal of Cllr Gilliland, seconded by Cllr McCooey, it was agreed that the Draft Corporate Plan for the period 2020-2024 be adopted.

On the proposal of Cllr Conlon, seconded by Cllr Carthy, it was agreed that Cllr Conlon's proposal from the February monthly meeting referring to the quarterly inspections of our urban streetscapes and built environment is brought to the attention of the Housing and Disability Steering group for consideration and report at a future meeting.

5. To receive the MCC Draft Annual Service Delivery Plan 2020

Mr. C. Flynn, A/Director of Services, outlined the main elements of the Annual Service Delivery Plan (ASDP) for 2020, which had been circulated with the agenda for the meeting. He stated that the plan, which had been prepared in accordance with the Local Government Reform Act, 2014 and in conjunction with the Draft Corporate Plan 2020-2024, identifies the services that the Council intends to provide to the public in the year ahead. He further stated that the Plan, which reflected the provisions of Budget 2020, sets out the objectives and priorities for each department; the strategies for achieving those objectives and the priorities and performance standards intended to be met.

Mr. Flynn then responded to queries from the elected members.

On the proposal of Cllr Coyle, seconded by Cllr Campbell, it was agreed that the Draft Annual Service Delivery Plan for the year 2020 be adopted.

6. To receive Audit Committee Annual report for 2019

The members noted the Audit Committee Annual Report for 2019 which had been circulated with the agenda.

7. Diospoireacht as Gaeilge

Thug Cllr Pat Treanor tuarisc ar na h-imeachtaí a chuir an Coiste Gaeilge ar siúl i rith 2019, ina measc bhí scéim scolaireachtaí Gaeltachta, céilí sráide in mBaile Muineachán agus imeacht le haghaidh Óiche Chultúir. I measc na bpleananna do 2020 tá -

1. 3 chruinniú den Choiste.
2. Leanúint leis an an scéim bhliantúil scoláireachta do mhic léinn dara leibhéal a théann ar chúrsaí Gaeltachta i rith an tsamhraidh. Beidh bronnadh na scoláireachtaí ar siúl ar an 11ú lá de Mí Márta. Fáilte roimh chách.
3. Scéim deontais nua chun tacaíocht a thabhairt don Phobail le linn Seachtain na Gaeilge.
4. Tacaíocht d'imeachtaí Gaeilge i rith na bliana, Óiche Cultúr ina measc.
5. Tacaíocht do Campaí Spraoí i Muineachán.
6. Leanúint le ranganna Gaeilge don fhoireann agus do baill tofa.

Cllr Pat Treanor gave a report of the events put on by the Coiste Gaeilge during 2019, including the Gaeltacht Scholarship scheme, a Street Céilí in Monaghan Town and an event for Culture Night. Plans for 2020 include -

1. 3 meetings of the Coiste.
2. Continuation of the annual Gaeltacht Scholarship Programme for second level students attending Gaeltacht courses during summer months. The presentation evening will take place on the 11th of March.
3. A new grant scheme to support communities during Seachtain na Gaeilge.
4. Support for Irish language events during the year such as Culture Night.
5. Continued support for Campaí Spraoí in Monaghan.
6. Continuation of Irish Language Classes for elected members and staff.

8. To consider recommendations and minutes from Corporate Policy Group meeting held on 25th February, 2020.

The members noted the minutes of the Corporate Policy Group meeting held on 25th February, 2020 which had been circulated.

On the proposal of Cllr Keelan, seconded by Cllr P. Treanor, it was agreed that the minutes of the Corporate Policy Group meeting held on 25th February, 2020 and the recommendations contained therein be approved.

9. To receive Management Report - February 2020

The members noted the Management Report for the month of February which had been circulated with the agenda.

The Chief Executive and Directors of Services responded to queries from the elected members.

On the proposal of Cllr O’Hanlon, seconded by Cllrs McCooey and Aughey it was agreed that Monaghan County Council calls on acting Minister Michael Ring to instruct the Department to make available funding for Lane improvement Scheme that has already been committed to by the Minister.

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

The members noted the report from Cllr Connolly, in relation to his attendance at the following conference/training event:

- Celtic Conferences – First-time Home Buyers Incentives, Co. Louth

11. Business submitted by the Chief Executive.

The Chief Executive informed the members of the following:

12. To fix date for a Special Meeting of the Council to discuss recommendation from the Office Accommodation Working Group

It was agreed that a Special Meeting of the Council to discuss the recommendation from the Office Accommodation Working Group would be held on 25th March 2020.

The recommendation from the Office Accommodation Working Group is that this meeting would be held in Committee for the purpose of discussing sensitive information. This recommendation was agreed. It was noted that any decision to progress the offices project would be taken in public session at a full Council meeting.

It was further agreed that the Meetings Administrator would make contact with Department of Agriculture to see if officials could attend on Wednesday 25th March 2020 in advance of the Special meeting to discuss the TB situation in Co. Monaghan.

13. Matters arising out of the minutes of Council meeting held on 3rd February, 2020

Matters arising out of the minutes of the Council meeting held on 3rd February, 2020 were responded to by the relevant officials.

On the proposal of Cllr Carthy, seconded by Cllr O'Hanlon, it was agreed that Monaghan County Council calls on the HSE to confirm reasons for delay in opening the group home for persons with physical and sensory difficulties in Carrickmacross and to detail their plans to overcome the obstacles preventing its opening after building has lain idle for 3 years.

14. Update on N2 National Primary Road Schemes

Ms. P. Monahan updated the members in relation to N2 schemes. She stated that the Council was on target with the public consultation phase. The Project Team is still in place and she would encourage any members of the public affected by the schemes to make contact with the team. The schemes are subject to the Public Spending Code and the next phase of the process will be to ensure compliance with the Code.

15. To receive update on North South Interconnector project

The members noted the following correspondence:

- Emails from Brendan Smith, T.D. regarding the over-grounding of transmission cables for the proposed North-South Interconnector.
- Email from Matt Carthy, T.D. regarding the development of the North-South Interconnector underground technology.

On the proposal of Cllr Keelan, seconded by Cllr P. Treanor, it was agreed that this Council notes its disappointment at the lack of response from the Fine Gael Party Re the Undergrounding of the North South Interconnector. That this Council calls again on the Minister Heather Humphreys T.D to respond to this Council outlining the Party position/policy on this issue.

16. To receive update on the Ulster Canal project.

The members noted the email from Waterways Ireland confirming they would make a presentation to the Council members on 8th June 2020.

17. Questions:

Cllr C. Carthy asked:

1. Has there been any further correspondence received by MCC in relation to the Carrickmacross Group Home (when it is expected to be opened, reasons for the delay etc)?

Reply: The HSE has no further update on the progress of opening the Carrickmacross Group Home, the matter was referred to Senior Management in the HSE and they have not yet, confirmed any opening date.

2. Has the executive carried out any discussions with Electric Ireland to request a minimum of 1no. EV (electric vehicle) Charging points in each of Co. Monaghan towns and large villages?

Reply: Monaghan County Council has had discussions with “Ecars” (a subsidiary of ESBn) and other bodies to progress the roll out of EV Charging points in the county. At present Ecars provides EV charging in; Clones, Carrickmacross, Castleblayney and Monaghan Town.

3. Has there been any future Housing Development earmarked in this county to provide specific Older Persons accommodation, similar to the North-East project in Dundalk?

Reply: Monaghan County Council has recently completed accessible purpose-built housing for older persons in two developments; four single storey houses at Bree in Castleblayney and six at Latlorcan in Monaghan Town. In addition, Monaghan County Council has commenced the construction of 24 homes in Clones town centre, 10 of which will be accessible, and purpose built for older persons and a further four accessible houses are planned for the proposed Lui na Greine social housing development in Scotstown. Monaghan County Council in conjunction with Approved Housing Bodies is providing a further sixteen accessible purpose-built sheltered houses for older persons at Liseggerton in Clones (Oaklee Housing) and it is intended that twelve apartments will be constructed at Drummond Radhairc in Carrickmacross (North & East Housing Association). Monaghan County Council is currently investigating the possibility of providing additional accessible/sheltered accommodation for older persons in Monaghan Town, Castleblayney and Ballybay. Some of the “specific Older Persons accommodation” provided to date in County Monaghan and noted above is similar to accommodation provided in the “Great Northern Haven” in Dundalk in that it is highly accessible, well-insulated accommodation that is readily adaptable to meet the changing needs of people as they get older. The purpose-built sheltered houses at Liseggerton in Clones are being provided in conjunction with Oaklee Housing and will be suitable for Older Persons and for people with disabilities and are readily adaptable to meet the changing needs of people as they get older in a similar manner to the “Great Northern Haven”. The possibility of providing additional accessible/sheltered accommodation for older persons continues to be a high priority for Monaghan County Council and all opportunities to provide accommodation of this type are being pursued.

Cllr S. Conlon asked:

4. In our role as the contracting authority for the construction of the €14m Monaghan Peace Campus, are social clauses, that will encourage the employment of long term job seekers, been factored into the contract performance conditions?

Reply: Monaghan County Council have included a variety of social clauses in the Peace Campus Contract, including provisions in relation to employment / labour law, health and safety etc. There are, however, no provisions placing an obligation on the successful bidder to recruit long term job seekers.

Substantial planning, market consultation and stakeholder engagement is required before the use of employment of long term job seekers clauses can be considered. There are additional risks to Monaghan County Council in terms of ensuring

- the clauses are not discriminatory,
- value for money is not adversely affected,

- **additional costs are not placed on domestic or smaller suppliers (SMEs) relative to other potential suppliers,**
- **the targeted benefit is capable of being measured and monitored during the execution of the contract.**

Failure to comply could result in legal challenges from unsuccessful tenderers or the European Commission.

5. In relation to the Heritage Cluster Co-Operation Project that aims to identify a number of key heritage sites for development and improving accessibility, along with access to LEADER funding, have any sites been selected in County Monaghan?

Reply: As Lead Partner in this project, Monaghan County Council Tourism unit has appointed Abarta Heritage to undertake a Phase I feasibility study to assess 3 sites in Co Monaghan which were selected in consultation with the Heritage Section. These sites are: Rossmore Forest, Drumerril Rock Art site and The Black Pig's Dyke at Scotshouse. It is anticipated that the report will be completed by end March

Cllr N. Keelan asked:

6. What is the up to-date position in relation to the provision of WiFi facilities throughout our county including village areas such as Corduff / Donaghmoyne / Lisdoonan / Inniskeen etc?

Reply: Two initiatives are in place to expand the extent of wifi and public wifi on offer through Monaghan County Council- Broadband Connection Points and Wifi4EU. Under the National broadband Plan, broadband services will be provided to thirteen Broadband Connection Points which are located in areas where high speed broadband is not currently available. This will facilitate internal and external wifi in all of these locations. Site surveys have been completed on most of these locations and Service level agreements are due to be signed this week, 6 March. Some installations will take place within the next three months, with the majority to be completed by the end of 2020.

With the Wifi4EU initiative, broadband and wifi services will be installed in public spaces and community buildings for a three year period. Proposals for this scheme have been completed and community applications have been evaluated. It is expected that this project will go to tender in the next two months, with plans for installation in the latter part of Summer 2020.

7. How much rent is Monaghan county council paying per annum for office accommodation and other facilities what plans have the council to end this practice which is not in the best interest of the taxpayer can these rents be reviewed or is the council locked into upward only rent reviews?

Reply: The Council spends €257,000 per annum on the rental of office space. Monaghan County Council are not locked into upward rent reviews. Rents are reviewed annually.

8. What plans have Monaghan county council in the time ahead to build social and affordable housing throughout our village areas where a clear need has been established including the village of Inniskeen /Donaghmoyne / Lisdoonan etc?

Reply: Where a clear need has been established in any settlements Monaghan County Council will investigate all opportunities for the provision of social housing accommodation. Currently there are 28 households who have identified Inniskeen as a choice in their social housing application.

9. How many households throughout county Monaghan are availing of the housing assistance payment scheme (HAP) approximately how much is this scheme costing the taxpayer annually?

Reply: There are currently 561 HAP supported tenancies in County Monaghan. Landlord payments per month are €286,433.88 and the total monthly differential rent payable by families/individuals in a HAP supported tenancy is €126,777.73, thereby leaving a shortfall of €159,656.15 per month = €1,915,873.80 per annum.

10. In relation to road safety what is the up to-date position regarding the upgrading and improvements to be carried out at the very dangerous Tullyvaragh junction on the N2 what plans if any have this council in conjunction with the TII to carry out improvement works at other dangerous junctions along the N2 in the time ahead?

Reply: Monaghan County Council are currently preparing to go to CPO for land in order to progress the N2 Tullyvaragh Realignment.

Cllr P. Treanor asked:

11. How many applicants sought Social Housing support in each of the last 5 years - 2015, 2016, 2017, 2018 and 2019?

Reply: 2015 - 95; 2016 – 157; 2017 – 209; 2018 – 231; 2019 – 306

- (a) How many of these applicants were unsuccessful/didn't fit the criteria?

This information is not collated

- (b) What were the top 3 reasons for rejecting applications?

Reply: Income Limit Exceeded; Incomplete Information; Residency Status Unconfirmed

- (c) How many Social Housing applicants are on the waiting longer than, (a) 5 years, and (b) 10 years?

Total of 1199 currently on Waiting List

- **91 on List for 10+ years (23 Offers of Housing Refused)**
- **249 on List for 5+ years**
- **859 on List Less than 5 Years**

The following should also be noted in relation to above figures: -

- **Of the 91 on List over 10 Years, 64 of these are in receipt of Social Housing Support (i.e. RAS – 39; HAP – 14; Rent Supplement – 10; AHB – 1:) and a further 20 reside with family/friends.**
- **Of the 249 on List over 5 Years and Less than 10 Years, 157 are in receipt of Social Housing Support (i.e. RAS, HAP, Rent Supplement) and a further 35 reside with family/friends.**
- **Of the 859 on List for 5 Years and Under, 413 of these are in receipt of Social Housing Support (i.e. RAS, HAP, Rent Supplement) and a further 145 reside with family/friends.**

18. Notices of Motion:

Cllr C. Cathy proposed, Cllr Keelan seconded

1. Monaghan County Council calls on the Minister for Communications, Climate Action and the Environment and Minister for Housing, Planning and Local Government, to:
 - Ensure all future social/public housing to have energy saving features including heating, solar panels, rain water retention etc
 - Introduce state run fitting of PV solar panels to warehouses and large scale industrial units which will supply power to the grid until the value of that power covers the cost of installation; then panels and electricity be given to owners of those businesses to reduce their consumption of fossil-fuel power.

We also ask that this motion be circulated to all other local authorities in the state.

Following a short discussion, the Cathaoirleach put the proposal to the meeting and it was agreed unanimously.

19. Votes of Sympathy/ Congratulations

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

- *Miriam McMahon Council employee, on the death of her father Eamonn Quinn, RIP.*
- *Rose & Tommy McMahon, and Mrs. Roslyn McMahon Carrickmacross on the death of Shane McMahon RIP*

It was agreed that a vote of congratulations be extended to the players, team management, school Principal, staff, parents and clubs of Ballybay Community College team on winning the Ulster Vocational Schools U19 title and best wishes in the All Ireland final.

20. Conferences/Training

On the proposal of Cllr McKenna, seconded by Cllr Bennett, 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	Climate Action – Solving Global Challenges through Local Leadership	Longford Arms Hotel, Longford	4 th & 5 th March 2020	Cllr David Maxwell Cllr Sean Gilliland Cllr Richard Truell Cllr Aidan Campbell Cllr Paudge Connolly Cllr Séamus Coyle Cllr Seán Conlon Cllr Brian McKenna

Celtic Conferences	Tourism Technology & Competitive Strategies	O'Donovan's Hotel, Clonakilty, Co. Cork	27 th -29 th March 2020	CLlr Sean Gilliland CLlr Aidan Campbell
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The meeting then concluded.

Signed: _____
Cathaoirleach

Meetings Administrator

Date: _____
