

Minutes of Meeting of Monaghan County Council held in the Garage Theatre, Armagh Road, Monaghan, on Monday 7th December, 2020 at 11.00 a.m.

Chair: Cllr C. Carthy, Cathaoirleach

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

Mr. E. O'Sullivan, Chief Executive, Mr. J. Murray, Head of Finance, Mr. P. Clifford, A. King, Ms. P. Monahan, Directors of Services, Mr. Cathal Flynn, A/Director of Services, Mr. T. Gourley, Senior Executive Planner, Ms. M. McGarvey, Senior Staff Officer and Ms. C. Thornton, Meetings Administrator.

Sympathy – Roger McQuaid, RIP:

On the proposal of Cllr Maxwell, seconded by Cllr O'Hanlon it was agreed that the sympathy of the Council be extended to the wife and family of the late Roger McQuaid, Environmental Patrol Warden with the Council who had passed away on the 25th November 2020.

All members of the Council associated themselves with the vote of sympathy. They spoke highly of Roger – recalling his personality, his dedication to his work, his efficiency in his role as Environmental Patrol Warden and his interest in his local community. Mr. E. O'Sullivan, Chief Executive and Mr. A. King Director of Services, associated themselves and the staff with the vote of sympathy. The Cathaoirleach adjourned the meeting for a short period as a mark of respect.

Urgent Business:

The Cathaoirleach informed the members that he had received a notice of urgent business in the name of Cllr P. Connolly.

That, in view of the fact that the Autism Unit known as Le Chéile, Edenmore NS, Emyvale Co. Monaghan is threatened with closure in June 2021, Monaghan County Council calls on the Minister for Education, Norma Foley TD and the OPW to investigate what remedial actions can be taken on the Edenmore NS grounds to ensure that the building of a permanent structure can take place thus ensuring the long term viability of this Unit into the future.

On the proposal of Cllr Maxwell, seconded by Cllr Connolly, it was agreed to go 'Into Committee' to discuss whether to accept the motion submitted as urgent business.

Following a short discussion, it was agreed to take the motion of urgent business at the end of the meeting.

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

1. Confirmation of Minutes

(i) Minutes of Council meeting held on 2nd November, 2020

On the proposal of Cllr Coyle, seconded by Cllr P. Treanor, it was agreed that the minutes of the Council meeting held on the 2nd November, 2020, be confirmed.

(ii) Minutes of Council meeting held on 9th November, 2020

On the proposal of Cllr Coyle, seconded by Cllr P. Treanor it was agreed that the minutes of the Council meeting held on the 9th November, 2020, be confirmed.

(iii) Minutes of Statutory Budget meeting held on 17th November, 2020

On the proposal of Cllr Coyle, seconded by Cllr P. Treanor, it was agreed that the minutes of the Statutory Budget meeting held on the 17th November, 2020, be confirmed.

2. Correspondence.

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

- Letter from the Office of the Minister for Defence, Mr. Simon Coveney, T.D. regarding Brexit.
- Letter from the Office of the Minister for Agriculture, Food and the Marine, Mr. Charlie McConalogue regarding the TB Herd History Risk Statement & reports.
- Letter from the Office of Public Works regarding Emyvale Garda Station.
- Letter from the Minister for Social Protection Ms. Heather Humphreys, T.D, regarding stillbirth registrations.
- Email from the Office of the Minister for Health Mr. Stephen Donnelly, T.D, regarding breakdown of COVID-19 cases.
- Email from the Office of the Minister for Social Protection Ms. Heather Humphreys, T.D, regarding the stillbirth register and stillbirth certification.
- Email from the Office of the Minister for Health Mr. Stephen Donnelly, T.D, regarding the stillbirth register.
- Email from the Office of the Minister for Children, Equality, Disability, Integration & Youth Mr. Roderic O’Gorman, T.D, regarding the existing Direct Provision system.
- Email from the Office of the Minister for Defence, Mr. Simon Coveney, T.D. regarding Jadotville.
- Email from the Office of the Minister for Justice, Ms. Helen McEntee, T.D. regarding Emyvale Garda Station.
- Email from the Office of the Minister for Social Protection Ms. Heather Humphreys, T.D, regarding request to waive the cost of fees for plots where a baby will be buried.
- Resolution from Sligo County Council regarding the Grant Thornton report.
- Information on Irish Water Connection Charges.

The following additional correspondence which had been received after the agenda had issued, was also circulated:

- Letter from Dr. Jilan Abdalmajid on behalf of the Mayor of Bethlehem regarding construction of a new Israeli Settlement north of Bethlehem (*Giv at Hamatos*)
- Resolution from Galway County Council regarding Mother & Baby Homes.

Proposals arising out of correspondence:

On the proposal of Cllr Coyle, seconded by Cllr O’Hanlon it was agreed that Monaghan County Council acknowledge the work of the Minister for Foreign Affairs and Defence, Simon Coveney T.D., the Taoiseach, Micheal Martin T.D., the Government and all their officials, their EU Colleagues governments, incoming US President Joe Biden, in ensuring that the Protocol of the Withdrawal Agreement on Ireland and Northern Ireland will apply, in protecting the Peace

Process, avoiding a hard border on the Island of Ireland, preserving the EU Customs Union, the Single Market, especially near Monaghan and the border counties.

Cllr McElvaney requested that the motion would be forwarded to LAMA and the AILG. This was agreed.

On the proposal of Cllr Coyle, seconded by Cllr O’Hanlon, it was agreed that Monaghan County Council requests the Minister for Agriculture, Food and the Marine, Charlie McConalogue T.D., to withdraw the TB Herd History Risk Statement and Report, as it is only leading to the categorisation of herds and their devaluation which is not dealing with the root causes of the increase in the incidence of TB, which are now at the highest levels since 2012 at 4.2% and that this Council expresses serious concern at the Monaghan figure of 7.96% of herd incidence.

On the proposal of Cllr P. Treanor, seconded by Cllr McKenna, it was agreed that we write to Irish Water and request them to collaborate with Group Water Schemes to extend their supply infrastructure along public roads. It is unfair to charge each applicant the full cost of that extension.

On the proposal of Cllr P. Treanor, seconded by Cllr Carthy it was agreed that the Council respond positively to the Mayor of Bethlehem in relation to the construction of a new Israeli Settlement north of Bethlehem.

On the proposal of Cllr Connolly, seconded by Cllr S. Treanor, it was agreed that the Council support the motion from Sligo County Council calling on the Taoiseach to implement the recommendations of the Grant Thornton Report on the future of the post office network.

3. To consider Chief Executive's Report on submissions received in respect of the Proposed Variation 2 - MCDP

The members noted the report which had been circulated in relation to the proposed variation No 2 of the Monaghan County Development Plan.

Mr T. Gourley, Senior Executive Planner outlined the background to the report which had been circulated. He stated that it was a requirement of the Planning Act to undertake a review of the alignment of the County Development Plan with the National Planning Framework and the NWRA RSES. The variation of the MCDP is required to ensure legal compliance with Section 11(1)(b) of the Planning and Development Act 2000. The proposed variation was advertised in the NS on 10 September 2020 inviting submissions up to 09 October 2020. 13 submissions had been received and a summary of assessment was included in the circulated report.

On the proposal of Cllr Keelan, seconded by Cllr Maxwell, it was agreed that the Council adopt the proposed variation and that the additional text as set out in paragraph 2.4 of the Report is inserted into Section 1.12 of Chapter One of the Monaghan County Development Plan 2019-2025, as follows:

“The Monaghan County Development Plan (MCDP) was prepared concurrently with both the National Planning Framework (NPF) and the Northern & Western Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy (NWRA RSES) and a significant amount of synergy was achieved between the provisions of the MCDP and the provisions of both the NPF and the NWRA RSES as a consequence. However, for the purposes of clarity the provisions of the NPF and the NWRA RSES will take precedence over the provisions of MCDP.”

4. To Consider Part VIII proposal to extend Peace Link, Clones (Ref 20/8006)

The members noted the Chief Executive's report dated 30 November 2020 in relation to planning permission for the proposed extension to the Peace Link Clones (Planning Ref 20/8006)

On the proposal of Cllr Truell, seconded by Cllr P. Treanor, it was resolved that the Council proceed with the development as proposed, namely; the extension of the Peace Link, Clones and all associated works (Ref 20/8006) to comply with the report from the Chief Executive dated 30 November 2020, in accordance with Part VIII of the Local Government (Planning and Development) Regulations 2001 (as amended).

5. To consider Section 183 Notice relating to the disposal (by lease) of Pringle Building, Clones

The members noted the report which had been circulated with the agenda. The report related to the extension of a lease which had been in place for 2 years with National Transport Agency for the leasing of the Pringle Building, Clones (former Town Council offices). It was recommended that Monaghan County Council renew this lease for next 2 years at €8,400 rent p.a. with the National Transport Agency.

On the proposal of Cllr P. Treanor, seconded by Cllr Truell, it was agreed that the Council approve the disposal (by lease) of the Pringle Building, Clones to the National Transport Agency in accordance with notice dated 17 November, 2020 under Section 183 of the Local Government Act 2001.

6. To confirm date for the January 2021 Council Meeting

It was agreed that the January Council meeting would be held on Monday 11th January 2021 in the Garage Theatre.

7. To consider recommendations and minutes from Corporate Policy Group meeting

The members noted the minutes of the Corporate Policy Group meeting held on 17th November, 2020 which had been circulated.

On the proposal of Cllr Maxwell, seconded by Cllr Coyle, it was agreed that the minutes of the Corporate Policy Group meeting held on 17th November, 2020 and the recommendations contained therein be approved.

8. To receive the Management Report – November 2020:

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

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

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

The members noted the report from Cllr. McCooey in relation to her attendance at the Moorehead Report Briefing in Dundalk, Co. Louth on 30th July 2020.

10. Business submitted by the Chief Executive.

There was no discussion under this item.

11. Matters arising out of the minutes of Councils meeting held on 2nd & 9th November, 2020 and the Statutory Budget meeting held on the 17th November, 2020.

Matters arising out of the minutes of the Council meeting held on 2nd November, 9th November, 2020 and the Statutory Budget meeting held on 17th November, 2020 were responded to by the relevant officials.

On the proposal of Cllr Conlon, seconded by Cllr P. Treanor, it was agreed that Monaghan County Council seeks allocation from the Department of Housing under the 'Services Site Fund' whereby funding is made available to provide necessary infrastructure to facilitate development and reduce the cost of houses to a minimum of 10% below the realisable open market value. This measure is required to compliment the efforts of our Housing Section in thoroughly addressing the need for housing development in the County.

12. To receive update on N2 National Primary Road Schemes

Ms. P. Monahan, Director of Services informed the members that the update on this item had been included in the Management Report.

13. To receive update on North South Interconnector project

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

- Email from Senator Robbie Gallagher regarding North South Interconnector.
- Email from Ms. Niamh Smyth, T.D. regarding North South Interconnector.

On the proposal of Cllr Keelan, seconded by Cllr P. Treanor, it was agreed that Monaghan County Council writes to the Oireachtas Members for this constituency requesting they challenge Government and Eirgrid as to why those communities affected by the proposed North-South Interconnector were not consulted on the prospect of an underground option, given that the communities affected by the proposed Kildare-Meath Grid Upgrade are being consulted on an underground option.

On the proposal of Cllr Keelan, seconded by Cllr P. Treanor, it was agreed that this Council contacts the Oireachtas Members for this constituency, asking the following question: Will you revisit / reintroduce or support the Fianna Fail Motion tabled on 14th February 2017, which called for an independent analysis of the North-South Interconnector and full consultation. That the Oireachtas Members revert back to this Council.

14. To receive update on the Ulster Canal project

The Meetings Administrator informed the members that Waterways Ireland had confirmed that a presentation would be given to the full Council via an online platform in late February/early March. She stated that she had asked for an earlier date for the presentation if possible and was awaiting confirmation of this.

15. Questions:

Cllr P. Connolly will ask:

1. What plans have Monaghan County Council to introduce a scheme which would encourage the cutting of hedges/trees which need attention along the public road network to improve road safety i.e. a grant that would be open to community groups and or groups of persons/residents?

Reply: Community Hedge cutting Schemes have been piloted in a number of Local Authorities and offer small grants for community groups and residents to cut areas of hedgerows with the consent of landowners. The Roads Section are currently investigating the details of the scheme, its popularity and the budgetary implications and will report back to the next meeting with this update.

Cllr N. Keelan will ask:

2. How much rent in total is Monaghan County Council paying per annum for buildings in order to provide services to the people of the county?

Reply: The Council spends €257,000 p.a. on the rental of office space. Rented facilities make up part of the Council's offices facilities, rented property is used where a need to provide a service has been identified and existing Council owned facilities are not available or suitable.

3. When is it expected that an affordable housing scheme will be rolled out across the county in order to cater for those citizens that can't get onto the local authority list because of the income thresholds etc and also can't get a home loan?

Reply: County Monaghan is an affordable place to live as the average cost in County Monaghan of a second-hand home is currently less than the cost of building a new home. Budget 2021 allocated €75 million nationally for the proposed affordable housing scheme which is reported to be a shared equity scheme. It is understood that the required legislation for the proposed affordable housing scheme, which will allow low and middle-income workers to buy State subsidised homes, is currently being drafted and agreed at Government level. Details of the proposed scheme, announced as part of Budget 2021, are not yet available and Monaghan County Council is awaiting further information and the commencement of the proposed affordable housing scheme before making definitive plans.

The previous affordable housing scheme was discontinued in 2011 and another new affordable housing scheme was announced five years ago in Budget 2016 but was never enacted. Under the newly proposed affordable housing scheme it is reported that there is an expectation that the main lending institutions and the Department of Housing will put money into a special purpose entity under the auspices of the Department, which will then put up some of the equity to help finance the purchase of new homes. It is understood it will be possible for the homeowner to buy out the equity stake held by the special purpose entity in the future, based on market value at the time. Reports suggest that this form of affordable housing may rely on

State subsidies for the purchase of houses built by the private sector.

Monaghan County Council owns land in Monaghan town which could potentially be used for the provision of affordable housing and Monaghan County Council has advertised for land to purchase throughout County Monaghan in anticipation of the need to purchase additional land for the provision of affordable housing and social housing. Definitive plans for the provision of affordable housing will be made when the details of proposed affordable housing scheme are available.

The Elected Members will be informed as soon as details of the proposed affordable housing scheme are available.

4. What is the up to date position in relation to the upgrading of the very dangerous Tullyvaragh junction on the N2?

Reply: Monaghan County Council Roads Department had meeting with TII Safety on 24 Nov and they propose that we proceed with the Safety scheme which would include the widening of the local side road L8100 at the junction with the N2 and with the proposal for Right Turning Lanes to be excluded from the design. Previous Design and Part 8 documents will need to be updated. MCC have a meeting scheduled with the Castleblayney – Carrickmacross MD for the 21st December 2020 to outline the details of the project.

5. What plans have the Council in the time ahead to build social and affordable homes in the villages across county Monaghan, including Inniskeen, Donaghmoynne in consultation with local communities?

Reply: As noted previously County Monaghan is an affordable place to live as the average cost in County Monaghan of a second-hand home is currently less than the cost of building a new home.

County Monaghan is a predominantly rural county with more than 60 % of the population living in small towns, villages and rural areas. Monaghan County Council has historically provided social housing in small towns, villages and rural areas throughout the county such as Inniskeen, Magheracloone, Oram, Bawn, Tyholland, Knockatallon, Newbliss, Rockcorry, Annyalla, Clontibret, Clara, Emyvale, Glaslough, Tydavnet, Latton, Doohamlet, Threemilehouse, Scotshouse, Ballinode, Knockatallon and Scotstown.

At present, under the National Planning Framework (NPF) 2040 Monaghan County Council is actively working on the “reversal of rural decline in the core of small towns and villages” and in particular has been working to strengthen small towns and villages by increasing social housing to meet housing needs identified which in turn, through increasing population, supports all of the local services in rural areas.

Every year Monaghan County Council purchases individual houses in rural areas to meet particularly urgent housing needs and proactively seeks opportunities to increase social housing in small towns and villages. A recent example of this was the provision of 10 new social houses at The Meadows Smithborough and 12 social houses at Maple Grove also in Smithborough. In addition, Monaghan County Council is currently constructing 24 social housing units in Clones town centre and providing 32 social houses in the village of Scotstown (4 derelict houses being brought into used and 28 new houses). These developments are of enormous significance to small towns and villages and the surrounding areas as they address derelict properties while providing much needed social housing, improving the sustainability of small towns and villages and strengthening the viability of local services for the wider rural community in the areas in question.

Monaghan County Council recently supported the acquisition of 5 houses at Castleross, a rural area near Carrickmacross. The houses are to be owned by Tuath Housing Association and used as social housing to be allocated to Housing Applicants on Monaghan County Council's Housing Waiting List. Also, following two years of negotiation, Monaghan County Council recently secured agreement with a local contractor to provide 6 social houses in Tydavnet village, funding approval was received in October 2020 and the houses will be completed by year end of 2020.

Monaghan County Council advertises regularly for Expressions of Interest in the sale of land and/or houses from Property Owners and Developers and this process has yielded significant results in the main towns and has also benefited the villages and rural areas such as Smithborough and Tydavnet already mentioned. Through this process Monaghan County Council is working on potential opportunities to deliver social housing in Inniskeen and Ballinode and is also examining future potential for social housing other villages.

Villages & "Rural Community Settlements": Monaghan County Council has developed social housing or purchased houses for use as social housing in every village in County Monaghan (such as Inniskeen) and in most of the "Rural Community Settlements" in County Monaghan (Rural Community Settlements are listed in Monaghan County Development Plan 2019-2025).

Monaghan County Council has identified potential opportunities for small housing developments in many of the small villages in County Monaghan where a housing need exists. Where feasible and in line with the objectives of Monaghan County Development Plan 2019-2025; Monaghan County Council intends to develop housing in villages that have services and facilities such as churches, schools, community centres, small shops, local bus services, water supply and sewage treatment plants. Monaghan County Council has been approached by Developers interested in the provision of social housing in Inniskeen, Tydavnet, Rockcorry, Ballinode and Emyvale. In 2020 an additional 12 social housing units have been provided in Rockcorry in conjunction with Clanmil Housing Association and a further 6 social houses are currently being completed in Tydavnet on behalf of Monaghan County Council.

Monaghan County Council is discussing and actively pursuing other opportunities for the development of social housing in other villages throughout County Monaghan.

"Dispersed Rural Communities": With regard to "Dispersed Rural Communities" which might include Donaghmoyn; the Monaghan County Development Plan 2019-2025 states *"Within the rural area there are dispersed rural communities which have small scale clustering around one or more focal points which may include a crossroads, a shop or a church. It is considered that there is scope for some additional dwellings which may consolidate existing focal points and utilise existing services in the area subject to normal planning considerations. It is anticipated that the majority of development taking place will be individual dwellings. Where a multi-unit residential development (more than 2 houses) is proposed in Tier 6 settlements the onus will be on the developer to justify the Monaghan County Development Plan 2019-2025 demand for housing proposed. Any development shall be centred on the focal point of the settlement and shall be subject to the satisfactory provision of infrastructure and services"*.

In addition the following further extracts from the Monaghan County Development Plan 2019-2025 containing specific objectives of the plan should be noted:

2.3.9 Tier 4 – Village Network

Village Network Objective	
SHO 4	To promote and facilitate development that is commensurate with the nature and extent of the existing villages and support their role as local service centres.

2.3.10 Tier 5 – Rural Community Settlements

Rural Community Settlement Objective	
SHO 5	To support and encourage the development of Tier 5 settlements to ensure that local services are sustained in the rural community settlements.

2.3.11 Tier 6 – Dispersed Rural Communities.

Dispersed Rural Communities Objective	
SHO 6	To support the viability of dispersed rural communities and seek to encourage the growth of Tier 6 settlements generally in the form of single dwellings.

Monaghan County Council will continue to seek every opportunity to increase social housing provision in all areas of housing need; to reverse rural decline, increase the sustainability of small towns and villages and strengthen the viability of local services for the wider rural community.

6. In relation to the ongoing scourge of illegal dumping across the county has the Council been successful in detecting and prosecuting anyone for dumping in rural areas in particular excluding bring centres and bottle banks?

Reply: In 2020 Monaghan County Council has

- 1. Referred three waste management files for prosecution in relation to large scale illegal dumping in County Monaghan.**
- 2. Referred 2 litter fines, non CCTV related for prosecution**
- 3. Served 26 Section Notices under the Waste Management Act on persons in relation to alleged breaches of the Waste Management Act 1996**
- 4. Issued 17 Fixed Payment Notices (€500) for Offences under Section 32 of the Waste Management Act**
- 5. A further 3 cases from 2018 and 2019 are also currently before the courts, awaiting hearing**

Cllr P. Treanor will ask:

7. What steps have been taken by Monaghan County Council to establish the Coiste Logainmneacha? When will its first meeting take place?

Reply: The elected member nominees to the Coiste Logainmneacha were appointed following the local elections in 2019. These are Cllr. Pat Treanor, Cllr. Aoife McCooey, Cllr. Richard Truell and Cllr McElvaney. In addition, the membership of the previous Coiste Logainmneacha included a number of external reps - members of the public who had an interest in the Irish Language/History. We will liaise with the elected reps on the Coiste Logainmneacha to progress the recruitment of the external members with a view to holding a meeting of the Coiste Logainmneacha early in the new year.

8. Has the Minister approved Monaghan County Council's Scéim Gaeilge? When will it be launched publicly?

Reply: The Draft Sceim na Gaeilge 2020 – 2023 was noted by the Council at the October meeting. The Scheme has since been forwarded to the Minister of State for Gaeltacht Affairs. When the formal approval of the Minister is received, arrangements will be made to launch the Scheme publicly.

9. Has Monaghan County Council contributed to Waterways Ireland's application to the Category 1 Rural Regeneration and Development Fund in relation to the Ulster Canal marina at Clones? When should we expect a result?

Reply: Monaghan County Council is a partner to Waterways Ireland and has assisted in the preparation of its application for funding for the Clones Marina Project under the Rural Regeneration and Development Fund 2020. The closing date for receipt of applications was 1 December 2020. An decision on the success or otherwise from the Department is not anticipated until Q2 2021, at least.

10. What other applications have Monaghan County Council made/involved in, to the Rural Regeneration and Development Fund?

Reply: Monaghan County Council submitted four applications to the Rural Regeneration and Development Fund 2020 in November 2020. The projects submitted were

- Clones Monastic Project
- Truagh Rural Enterprise and Community Hub
- C Tek II Co-working Enterprise Hub, Carrickmacross
- Newbliss Enterprise and Digital Hub

11. Has Waterways Ireland indicated when they will do a presentation to Monaghan County Council, as invited at the beginning of 2020?

Reply: Waterways Ireland have been contacted by Monaghan County Council in relation to making a virtual presentation to the Council members. Waterways Ireland has replied that its officials would be available to schedule a presentation to the elected members of Monaghan County Council towards the end of February/early March 2021.

Cllr S. Conlon will ask:

12. In the context of the recently adopted 2021 County Council Budget that includes a four-page overview of the efforts and accomplishments of the Housing Section, without any reference to the issue of homelessness, I ask the Executive:

- (a) Please provide quantitative data outlining what solutions were arrived at to accommodate each of the families and individuals who presented as homeless during 2020 due to reasons including, and not confined to: domestic violence, rough sleeping, couch surfing, eviction?

Reply: 136 persons presented as homeless in the period January to October 2020. Individual solutions included advice, support, support from Monaghan County Council with HAP, Focus Ireland with tenancy sustainment and support in finding accommodation, mediation, link with appropriate agencies, support with deposits from the community welfare officer, advocating on behalf of the person, solutions through the HAT, 9 people and one child were provided with emergency accommodation in B&B or in hostel accommodation or in accommodation provided by Castleblayney Trust.

- (b) What process is available to homeless families and individuals who fall into any of the above category to apply for Council Housing when they have no verifiable or accessible address to submit on the application form?

Reply: Each person presenting to the Council as homeless submits an application form, so that we can assess their situation. In assessing the application, we would seek to establish that the applicant fulfills the criteria to apply for social housing support to enable them to be considered for inclusion on Monaghan County Councils housing waiting list.

13. Following my proposal at the September Council meeting to write to the Department of Local Government regarding Energy Efficiency Upgrades for Council Housing, what financial allocation has been provided to Monaghan County Council, in particular for the purpose of replacing wooden windows at 14 dwellings at Ard Gleann Monaghan?

Reply: The following is the proposal referred to that was made at the adjourned Council meeting in September 2020:

“On the proposal of Cllr. Conlon, seconded by Cllr McElvaney it was agreed that ahead of the announcement being made by the Department of Housing, Local Government & Heritage indicating the annual allocation towards Energy Efficiency Upgrades on Social Housing, that we bring to their attention that 14 houses at Ard Glas and Ard Gleann, Killygoan, Monaghan are in need of an overdue replacement of wooden windows, and that we appeal for the appropriate resources for these works to occur.”

Monaghan County Council brought the Department’s attention to the 14 houses at Ard Glas and Ard Gleann as proposed. The Department responded that there is no objection to the proposal to *“upgrade the windows/doors up to the maximum grant rate applicable under the 2020 EE Retrofitting Programme”*. The Department does not provide allocations for specific properties but does provide a general Energy Efficiency allocation for each Local Authority to carry out Energy Efficiency upgrades in compliance with the Department’s *“Technical Guidance on Eligible Works”*.

On 6 November 2020 Monaghan County Council was informed of an Energy Efficiency funding allocation in the amount of €366,456 for the upgrade of Monaghan County Council owned housing (not specifically for 14 houses at Ard Glas and Ard Gleann).

It should be noted that Phase I Energy Efficiency upgrades including attic and cavity wall insulation has been completed to all Monaghan County Council owned housing stock including the 14 houses at Ard Glas and Ard Gleann and that the windows of the houses at Ard Glas and Ard Gleann are double glazed timber windows. It should also be noted that Phase I Energy Efficiency work included upgrade to the fabric of the walls and attics of dwellings only and does not include replacement of windows and doors or the replacement of heating systems. Phase

II Energy Efficiency upgrade work is referred to as “Deep Retrofit” Energy Efficiency Upgrade. Under the Department guidelines and “Technical Guidance on Eligible Works” the replacement of existing double glazed windows is not included unless a “Deep Retrofit” Energy Efficiency Upgrade is being carried out which includes the installation of a Heat Pump in place of the existing heating systems. The upgrade of windows and doors is required to achieve a Heat Loss Indicator of 2.0 or less which is required to ensure that a Heat Pump can efficiently achieve desirable comfort levels of heating at a relatively low cost in heating bills for the tenant.

For the houses at Ard Glas and Ard Gleann; Monaghan County Council will proceed with “Deep Retrofit” Energy Efficiency Upgrades including the following works; installation of new triple glazed windows and doors, insulation of porch roof, block up chimney and associated vent and installation of an energy efficient heat pump to replace existing heating source(s). Monaghan County Council has commenced contacting tenants and the “Deep Retrofit” Energy Efficiency Upgrade will commence as soon as possible and upon completion of the upgrade works the properties will have a Build Energy Rating of B2 or higher. It is estimated that the full suite of Energy Efficiency work proposed will result in significantly reduced heating bills for tenants, reductions in the order of 30% to 50% or more are achievable. The proposal has following benefits:

- **Energy Efficiency of dwellings improved**
- **Cost of heating reduced – fuel poverty reduced/eliminated**
- **External Air quality improved by the elimination of burning of solid fuels (important for everyone in general and particularly for those with asthma and other respiratory/cardiovascular conditions)**
- **Internal air quality improved by the elimination of burning of solid fuels (important for tenants in general and particularly for those with asthma and other respiratory/cardiovascular conditions)**
- **Elimination of chimney fires**
- **Elimination of potential Carbon Monoxide exposure**
- **Reduction in Carbon Dioxide emissions**

14. For the purpose of enhancing the potential of drawing down funding for County Monaghan from the Governments €500m Shared Island Unit budget and the upcoming EU Peace Plus programme with a €600m budget for cross border projects already secured, that I ask the Council Executive for an update on the status of the Memorandum of Understanding signed between Armagh and Monaghan Councils in 2015. In the absence of any activity or developments in this regard, will Executive agree to work towards the reestablishment of this MOU in line with similar successful partnerships between Donegal - Derry -Strabane Councils and the Newry - Mourne and Louth Councils?

Reply: There has been no update in the status of the Memorandum of Understanding signed between Armagh City and District Council and Monaghan Council in 2015. Following the reorganisation of local government in Northern Ireland, Armagh City and District Council was dissolved and now forms part of Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon Borough Council and officials from both councils co-operate on Interreg and Peace projects. Monaghan County Council is an active member of East Border Region Ltd and Irish Central Border Area Network, where regional priorities are agreed and pursued. Both organisations have indicated that they are seeking to liaise with the newly established Shared Island Unit within the Department of the Taoiseach.

Clr C. Carthy will ask:

15. Will the Council consider adding public notices (road closures etc) to their social media accounts to increase the spread of information to the public?

Reply: IT & Roads Dept's are currently working on a mechanism to link the Map alerts issued to social media and this will be trialled in January.

Tenant (Incremental) Purchase Scheme	BB/CL	CMX/CBY	MON	TOTAL
Sold 2016	0	0	0	0
Sold 2017	3	1	1	5
Sold 2018	2	5	8	15
Sold 2019	3	5	5	13
Sold 2020	6	0	9	15
Total	14	11	23	48

16. Can the housing section confirm the number of council tenants in Co. Monaghan that have applied to buy their homes under the current tenant purchase scheme and how many have been approved (with a breakdown of each Municipal District)?

Reply: The Tenant (Incremental) Purchase Scheme 2016 commenced in January 2016. Since its launch Monaghan County Council has received 124 applications. Of these

Status	Ballybay/ Clones Municipal District	Carrickmacross/ Castleblayney Municipal District	Monaghan Municipal District	Total
Closed Ineligible or not progressing	10	23	27	60
Approved Letters of Offer Issued	3	2	4	9
Approved Currently with the solicitors	3	1	3	7
Sold to date	14	11	23	48
Total Applications	30	37	57	124

17. With the changes to the level of funding available under the repair and lease scheme, will the council be contacting those who were unsuccessful, initially, who required more work than the original sum allowed for?

Reply: Monaghan County Council will contact all suitable applicants that are eligible under the increased Repair and Leasing funding limit which has increased from €40,000 to €60,000.

18. When is it envisaged that works will commence on the upgrade of the Carrickmacross Water Treatment plant (tender process to completion)?

Reply: The plan is currently to go to tender in Q1 2021 with a view to commencing in Q1 2022.

The scope of the upgrade works is as follows: - new inlet pumping station - upgrade to the inlet works - refurbishment of the original oxidation ditch and settlement tank - new treated effluent pumping station and rising main - relocation of the discharge point to downstream of Monalty Lough - associated siteworks, pipework, etc.

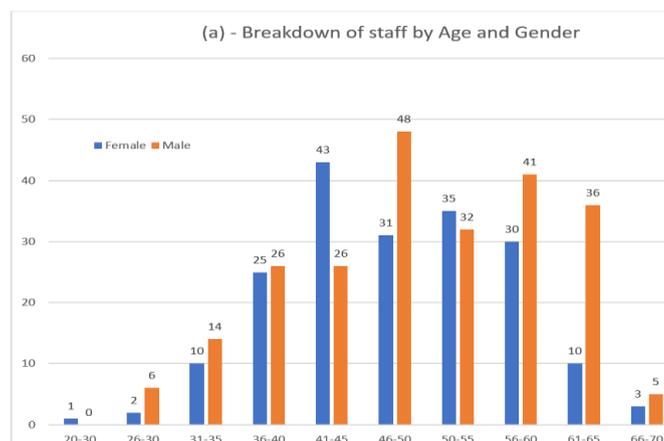
Cllr A. McCooey will ask:

19. Can Monaghan County Council please outline any plans that have been made for any type of mental health facility within the new Peace Campus in Monaghan town.

Reply: The provision of a Youth Mental Health service has been identified as a key core element of the Peace Campus from early in its development and planning. This has been factored into the design and concept of the Peace Campus and has been discussed at length with a range of stakeholders. The provision of such services are a matter for the Health Service Executive and Monaghan County Council is in continuing discussion with the HSE on the issue. Monaghan County Council senior staff will be meeting with HSE counterparts early in the New Year to advance that planning. The projected opening of Peace Campus is set for Quarter 2 of 2022.

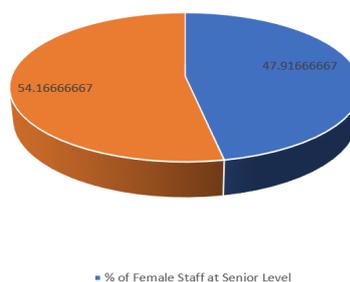
20. Can Monaghan County Council please give a breakdown of:

(a) The staff within the organisation, by gender and age.



(b) The % of female staff who are in positions of manager or are at senior level?

(b) - Gender % of Staff at Senior Level Management



(c) How do Monaghan County Council ensure all opportunities are equal irrespective of age or gender?

Reply: Monaghan County Council include in their media advertisement of jobs and on their recruitment documentation for every competition that they are an 'Equal Opportunities Employer'.

(d) Do Monaghan County Council provide any type of training or routes of progression for its staff? Particularly in giving female members of staff the skills and knowledge to progress.

Reply: Monaghan County Council provide all employees with equal opportunity and exposure to training and development so far as such training and development relates to their business needs.

Attendance on all Health & Safety programmes is mandatory.

Applications to attend third level education programmes are supported having been considered carefully in light of the relevance to the individual, the organisation, the cost of the course and the level of funding available. However, depending on the budget allocated for training it may not be possible to meet all demands for third level assistance in any academic year. Employees undertaking a third level course can progress from the Certificate to Diploma, Degree and Masters.

There have been a number of third level courses afforded to females recently such as:

- **Cross Border Women's leadership Programme**
- **Leadership in Local Government**
- **Certificate, Diploma, Degree in Local Government**

CLlr A. Campbell will ask:

21. What is the update in the handing over to the first 11 New houses in the new Development out of a total of 38 for Tuath Housing Association on the Shercock road out of Castleblayney? And subsequent hand over of the remanding houses?

Reply: The first phase of 11 houses in the new development known as Radhairc an Bhri (on the Shercock road out of Castleblayney) has been completed and proposed tenants have been nominated to Tuath Housing Association by Monaghan County Council. Tuath has advised that a further 14 houses are programmed for completion in Q1/Q2 of 2021 and the final 13 houses are programmed for completion in Q4 of 2021. More accurate handover dates will be available in 2021.

22. What is the update on the Hope Castle, Annex and the Lough Muckno park in Castleblayney?

Reply: Due to Covid 19 restrictions over the past six weeks, there has been no progress on this matter.

23. Climate change is recognised as the major challenge facing us at both National and International level with policy responses required in terms of both mitigating the causes of climate change and in adapting to the consequences of our changing climate. The Climate Change Adaptation Strategy represents a proactive step by Councils and with Monaghan County Councils Climate Change Adaptation strategy been recently submitted to the Department of Environment Climate and Communication. Under the six thematic areas of

1. Local Adaptation Governance and Business Operations.
2. Infrastructure and Build Environment.
3. Land Use and Development.
4. Drainage and Flood Management
5. Natural Resources and Cultural Infrastructure
6. Community Health and Wellbeing.

(a) How much progress have we made?

Reply: In October Monaghan County Council submitted the first Climate change adaptation strategy progress implementation report to the Eastern and Midlands Climate Action Regional Office. This progress report demonstrated that of the 61 actions as detailed in the Climate Change Adaptation strategy, approximately 70% of the actions are either complete or in progress. Of these approximately 10% of the actions have been completed.

(b) What are the key priorities in the short-time to mitigate against the onset of Climate Change?

Reply: Prioritised actions for delivery in the short term have been identified in a Climate Action Delivery Plan 2020-2021 that was prepared by Environmental Services during the summer with the help of staff members from all council departments. This Action Delivery Plan contains the climate actions that have been prioritised for delivery in 2020/2021 by each council Division, detailing the high-level actions to be progressed along with the anticipated outputs. The linkages and connection to similar actions in the National Climate Action Plan 2019 and the Climate Action Charter are also recorded as are timeframes for delivery.

That plan contains 42 actions for delivery/part delivery across all council departments during the period 2020/2021 which represents approximately 60% of the total actions identified in the adaptation strategy.

(c) What are the highlights of the report that has gone to the Department from Monaghan County Council?

Some of the highlights as detailed in the progress implementation report include:

- **Formation of new Climate Action Steering Committee.**
- **Setting up of new designated Climate Action and Environmental Services SPC.**
- **Monaghan County Council in partnership has piloted Climate change training programs for staff with further training scheduled for 2021.**
- **In terms of energy usage, Monaghan County Council is currently ranked 8th best performing local authority in the country, having already achieved a 37% energy improvement by the end of 2019.**
- **New Biodiversity and Heritage Plan 2020-2025 published.**
- **Works has commenced for in identifying council owned lands suitable for the planting of native woodlands under the Woodland Creation on Public lands scheme.**
- **Monaghan County Council has progressed the Smithboro-Middletown project significantly in 2020.**
- **Work ongoing with the Connacht-Ulster Regional Waste Management Planning Office in implementing the Regional Waste Plan with a focus on the circular economy.**

- **Purchase of first Electric Sweeper in Ireland by Carrickmacross-Castleblayney MD.**
- **Construction of BER A rated homes in Scotstown.**
- **Further progress made in the retrofitting of public lighting.**
- **Progression of the “Hilly Way” walling and cycling route.**
- **Development of new village park in Scotshouse with specific planting that supports local biodiversity.**

24. With regard to the Market House in Castleblayney and the process of moving the process to the design stage under the recent Rural Regeneration Grant of €500,000. **€295,000 in RRDF funding (75% funding) was secured in June 2020 for the preparation of detailed designs for the refurbishment of the Market House and Market Square public realm.**

(a) Has Monaghan County Council procured the relevant experts to engage in the start of this process?

Reply: A P & E Architects, a team of architects with distinct expertise in relation to small towns, community engagement, spatial analysis and adaptive reuse have been appointed by Monaghan County Council. The consultants will prepare a report which will include an assessment and recommendations of potential uses, reflecting the input from the community and stakeholder consultation and participatory engagement exercises.

(b) When is the consultation process due to commence?

Reply: AP+E commenced the consultation the week beginning 23 November. The consultants are expected to complete their report by March 2021.

(c) With Covid-19 and the difficulty of public meetings or gathering how will this process of consultation be managed?

Reply: AP+E have proposed a range of consultation engagement methods, including online surveys, questionnaires and online group meetings. Subject to public health guidance, it is proposed to have a socially distanced community engagement day in Castleblayney in early January.

16. Notice of Motion

Cllr P. Connolly proposed, Cllr S. Treanor seconded:

1. That Monaghan County Council Monaghan on the Ministers for Justice, Finance and Public Expenditure to make provisions where drug trafficking monies confiscated under the Proceeds of Crime Legislation be redirected from central coffers back into local addiction services, youth organisations, and community initiatives to combat the effect of addiction on our communities, and that the necessary legislation is changed as a matter of urgency to allow this vital funding support to happen”

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

Cllr S. Conlon proposed, Cllr P. Treanor seconded:

2. In regard to the option of dual heating systems in Council houses, typically from an oil burner as well as solid fuel, that this Council continue to honour Council tenancy agreements whereby tenants occupy dwellings on the basis that both heating systems are available.

Following a short discussion on the motion, it was agreed that this motion would be referred to the Housing SPC for consideration.

Cllr A. McCooey proposed, Cllr Aughey seconded:

3. That Monaghan County Council supports the right to Personal Assistance Service (PAS) for disabled people to have freedom, choice and control over all aspects of their lives to enable them to fully participate in an inclusive society as equals. That this local authority would call on the Government and the Minister with responsibility of Disabilities, Anne Rabbitte TD, to enact legislation to standardise and fund additional PA hours.

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

17. Votes of sympathy/congratulations

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

- *The husband and family of the late Maire Clements, RIP (nee Leonard) Ballybay and Cavan and sister of Meath County Councillor Suzanne Jamal.*

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

- *The new Church of Ireland Bishop-elect for the Clogher Diocese, The Rev. Canon Dr. Ian W. Ellis on his appointment.*
- *The new Chair of Monaghan County Board GAA – Declan Flanagan*
- *The outgoing Chair of Monaghan County Board GAA – Michael Owen McMahon*
- *Cavan County Board GAA on winning the Ulster Senior Football Championship 2020*
- *The Kavanagh Centre Inniskeen on the completion of the refurbishment works to the centre.*
- *Kathleen McCrudden, Council employee on her retirement after 45 years service.*

18. Conferences

There were no conferences approved at the meeting in view of Covid 19 travel restrictions.

Urgent Business:

Cllr Connolly proposed, Cllr Maxwell seconded

That, in view of the fact that the Autism Unit known as Le Chéile, Edenmore NS, Emyvale Co. Monaghan is threatened with closure in June 2021, Monaghan County Council calls on the Minister for Education, Norma Foley TD and the OPW to investigate what remedial actions can be taken on the Edenmore NS grounds to ensure that the building of a permanent structure can take place thus ensuring the long term viability of this Unit into the future.

Following a discussion on the motion, the Cathaoirleach put it to the members and it was agreed.

The Cathaoirleach wished all present and their families, a very happy Christmas and a peaceful and healthy new Year 2021.

Signed: _____
Cathaoirleach

Meetings Administrator

Date: _____