

Minutes of Meeting of Monaghan County Council held via Microsoft Teams, on Monday 8th February, 2021 at 11.00 a.m.

Chair: Cllr C. Carthy, Cathaoirleach

Present: Cllrs. Aughey, Bennett, Campbell, Conlon, Coyle, Connolly, Gilliland, Keelan, Kerr-Conlon, Maxwell, McCooey, 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. A. Hughes, Senior Planner, Ms. M. McGarvey, Senior Staff Officer and Ms. C. Thornton, Meetings Administrator.

Apology: Cllr McElvaney

1. Statement by An Cathaoirleach, Cllr. Colm Carthy on the Final Report of the Commission of Investigation into Mother and Baby Homes

Cllr Colm Carthy, Cathaoirleach read the following Statement

As Cathaoirleach of Monaghan County Council and on behalf of the elected members, I wish to apologise unreservedly to the women and girls who were incarcerated, their babies, the survivors, those now deceased and their relatives, for the pain and suffering caused while resident in Mother and Baby Homes or in the County Home in Castleblayney, while it was under the control of Monaghan County Council.

An Taoiseach Michéal Martin T.D. issued a formal apology on behalf of the State to former residents of the Mother and Baby Home and County Homes institutions, following the publication of the Final Report of the Commission of Investigation into Mother and Baby Homes, (on January 12th).

The Government now intends to give detailed consideration to the Report over the coming months with a view to developing a comprehensive Government Action Plan to address eight specific themes to include:

- *A survivor-centred approach;*
- *Apology;*
- *Access to Personal Information;*
- *Archiving and Databases;*
- *Education and Research;*
- *Memorialisation;*
- *Restorative Recognition;*
- *Dignified Burial.*

Monaghan County Council, as a public assistance authority, had responsibility for unmarried mothers and their children and the operation of the County Home in Castleblayney until 1970.

The Council sincerely apologises to the residents, their children/adopted people, their families and the relatives of those who resided in the Mother and Baby Homes or the county home, who suffered and were mis-treated while resident there.

Monaghan County Council will actively participate with Government in furthering the development of the Government Action Plan as it relates to local government and as it relates to County Monaghan.

Monaghan County Council commits to supporting local measures that form part of the suite of follow-up actions, for example, in relation to memorialisation and access to archives and records.

In this regard, the Council will request that Government brings forward, as a priority, the legislation required to enable survivors and adopted people the right to access their records and personal information, which will be an important step in addressing the concerns expressed by the residents. We also call for robust supports to be put in place that are unconditional. Most of all, we ask that the women and girls, and their now adult children, are listened to and respected.*

While the Council's apology cannot undo the pain and suffering, it is an acknowledgement of our deep regret that the women and girls, and their children, were failed by the State and a recognition that the Council was part of that failure.

Ends.

*For information on current available supports please see Appendix 1.

Appendix 1:

Current available supports:

For information on available supports and information on how to access them call the HSE Live Team on **1800 817 517**. Lines open Monday to Friday from 8.00 am to 8pm and on Saturday from 9.00 am to 5.00 pm.

Contact your local HSE Counselling Service CHO Area Louth, Meath, Cavan and Monaghan – Phone **1800 234 117**

Connect Counselling provides telephone support. Anyone affected can also directly contact the CONNECT free telephone out of hours telephone counselling and support service where they can talk in confidence with a trained counsellor. This service is generally available between 6pm and 10pm Monday through to Sunday on **1800 477 477**.

Visit yourmentalhealth.ie for more mental health options including phone, text and online. Or call the YourMentalHealth Information Line on **1800 111 888**.

Support is available for adults through Barnardos post-adoption and origins services. The confidential and professionally staffed helpline is open daily 9.30 am – 4.30 pm Monday to Friday at **01 4546388**. Email adoption@barnardos.ie

After he read his Statement, the Cathaoirleach adjourned the meeting for a short period as a mark of respect.

On resumption, Cllr Connolly stated that he wished to make a proposal in relation to the Final Report of the Commission of Investigation into Mother and Baby Homes.

The Cathaoirleach advised Cllr Connolly that, as agreed with the Corporate Policy Group and the Party Leaders, there would be no discussion on the report.

Urgent business:

The Cathaoirleach informed the members that he had received a notice of urgent business in the names of Cllrs P. Treanor, McKenna, Conlon and Carthy, as follows:

That Monaghan County Council will write to the Minister for Enterprise, Trade and Employment that international trade agreements, such as Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement (CETA), providing a right to multinational corporation and investors to sue Ireland outside the democracy of the ordinary legal and democratic systems, should be fully and properly scrutinised by the Oireachtas before any Dail vote on ratification. Also TDs should be allowed a vote of conscience on such an important and far reaching issue"

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

2. Confirmation of Minutes

(i) Minutes of Council meeting held on 11th January, 2021

On the proposal of Cllr McKenna, seconded by Cllr Bennett, it was agreed that the minutes of the Council meeting held on the 11th January, 2021, be confirmed.

3. Correspondence.

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

- Letter from the Office of the Minister for Agriculture, Food and the Marine regarding occurrence of TB in Co Monaghan.
- Letter from HSE to Senator Robbie Gallagher regarding Bóthar Oirialla Group Home, Carrickmacross.
- Letter from Senator Robbie Gallagher to the members regarding Bóthar Oirialla Group Home, Carrickmacross.
- Letter from the Office of the Minister for Disabilities, Ms. Anne Rabbitte T.D. regarding the Respond premises at Drummond Otra , Carrickmacross.
- Letter from the Tánaiste and Minister for Enterprise, Trade and Employment, Mr. Leo Varadkar, T.D regarding Debenhams workers.
- Letter from the Office of the Minister for Defence and Foreign Affairs, Mr. Simon Coveney, T.D. regarding Jadotville.
- Letter from the Office of the Minister for Justice, Ms. Helen McEntee, T.D regarding Tearmann – Domestic Violence services support.
- Letter from the Cathaoirleach of Cumann Lúthchleas Gael, Déaglan Ó Flanagan in response of letter received from MCC regarding his new role.
- Letter re Annual Declaration under the Ethics Framework (which had been circulated separately to each member.)

- Resolution from Donegal County Council regarding request for rail link from Letterkenny to Derry.
- Resolution from Galway County Council regarding the Agri Kids Be Farm Safe Presentation, attached.

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

- Email from the Office of the Minister for Justice, Ms. Helen McEntee, T.D regarding Domestic Abuse.
- Email from Deirdre Ní Raghallaigh, Dublin City Dublin on behalf of Cllr Darcy Lonergan regarding Maternity leave for Councillors and enclosing copy of letters to Minister O’Gorman and Minister O’Brien from Dublin City Council members outlining their comments.

Proposals arising out of correspondence:

On the proposal of Cllr Bennett, seconded by Cllr O’Hanlon, it was agreed that the Council supports the correspondence from Dublin City Council calling on the Minister for Housing, Local Government and Heritage and the Minister for Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth to make appropriate legal provisions to allow sitting Councillors avail of Maternity Leave.

On the proposal of Cllr Bennett, seconded by Cllrs O’Hanlon and McKenna it was agreed that the Council support the motion from Galway County Council circulating the Agri Kids - Be Farm Safe Presentation and inviting each local authority to join this imitative of Farming Safety and Safety Measures in Council Awareness Programmes at a local level.

In response to queries from a number of members relating to correspondence delivered to them late on Friday evening, the Chief Executive stated that he could not comment on the matter as it was currently before the Court. He advised that it would be inappropriate and highly inadvisable to discuss it in public. He confirmed that a briefing would be arranged as soon as possible and the members would be notified.

4. To consider Section 183 Notices relating to disposal of the following property:

(i) Disposal of lands at Carn, Clones

Mr. A. King, Director referred to the report which had been circulated recommending the disposal of 207m² of land at Carn, Clones and which was outlined in blue on the accompanying map.

On the proposal of Cllr Coyle seconded by Cllr P. Treanor, it was agreed that the Council approve the disposal of land at Carn, Clones, in accordance with notice dated 15 December 2020 under Section 183 of the Local Government Act 2001.

(ii) Disposal of property at 25 Old Cross Square, Monaghan

The members noted the report which had been circulated recommending the disposal of land/property at 25 Old Cross Square, Monaghan and which was outlined in red on the accompanying map.

On the proposal of Cllr Connolly, seconded by Cllr Aughey, it was agreed that the Council approve the disposal of property at 25 Old Cross Square, Monaghan, in accordance with notice dated 20 January, 2021 under Section 183 of the Local Government Act 2001.

(iii) Disposal of property at 2/3 Thomas Street, Castleblayney

The members noted the report which had been circulated recommending the disposal of property at 2/3 Thomas Street, Castleblayney marked in red on the accompanying map.

On the proposal of Cllr Campbell, seconded by Cllr McCooey, it was agreed that the Council approve the disposal of property at 2/3 Thomas Street, Castleblayney, in accordance with notice dated 20 January, 2021 under Section 183 of the Local Government Act 2001.

5. To consider the Chief Executive's Report prepared in accordance with Part VIII of the Planning and Development Regulations 2001 (as amended) in respect of former Council Offices, Newbliss

The members noted the Chief Executive's report dated 29 January 2021 in relation to planning permission for the renovation and restoration of the former Council Offices at Main Street, Newbliss, which is a protected structure, for use as an Enterprise and Digital Hub. Planning Ref No. 20/8007 refers.

On the proposal of Cllr P. Treanor, seconded by Cllr Truell, it was resolved that the Council proceed with the development as proposed, namely; the restoration and renovation of the former Council Houses at Main Street, Newbliss Planning Ref. 20/8007, to comply with the report from the Chief Executive dated 29 January 2021, in accordance with Part VIII of the Local Government (Planning and Development) Regulations 2001 (as amended).

6. To approve newspapers for publication of planning notices

On the proposal of Cllr Carthy seconded by Cllr Maxwell, it was agreed that the Council approve the following newspapers in accordance with Part 4 Article 18 (2) of the Planning and Development Regulations 2006 –

- Northern Standard
- Anglo Celt
- Dundalk Democrat (Carrickmacross-Castleblayney Municipal District only)
- Irish Independent
- Irish Daily Star
- Irish Times

7. To approve the Monaghan County Council Draft Annual Service Delivery Plan 2021

The Cathaoirleach informed the members that this item had been deferred to the March Council Meeting pending consideration firstly by the Corporate Policy Group.

8. Audited AFS 2019

- (i) To receive the Audit Committee Report on the Annual Financial Statement 2019 and the Local Government Auditors Report 2019 on the Accounts of Monaghan County Council for year ended 31st December 2019.

Mr. J. Murray, Head of Finance referred to the Audited AFS, Audit Committee Report on the Annual Financial Statement 2019 and the Local Government Auditors Report 2019 on the Accounts of Monaghan County Council for year ended 31 December 2019, all of which had been circulated to the members.

Mr. Murray responded to queries from the members.

On the proposal of Cllr Conlon, seconded by Cllr Carthy it was agreed that this Council seeks of the Minister for Housing Darragh O'Brien TD and Minister for Social Protection Minister Heather Humphreys TD seeking of their Departments to re-assess the Housing Assistance Payment (HAP) and other rent support structures following yet another report that highlights rent increases throughout rural Ireland that creates further hardships for recipients.

Cllr Conlon proposed, Cllr Keelan seconded that this Council writes to Failte Ireland seeking to robustly re-assess their tourism promotion budget towards County Monaghan following the miserly €3000.00 allocation for 2019 and to work with relevant stakeholders in a more appropriate branding for this County outside of the expansive Irelands Ancient East. Also for Failte Ireland to give a county by county breakdown of the tourism promotion allocation.

Cllr Maxwell suggested that Cllr Conlon's proposal be deferred pending a report from the officials outlining the breakdown of total grant funding received from Failte Ireland in respect of Council projects.

Responding to the proposals put forward, the Chief Executive clarified that the amount of €3,000 referred to by Cllr Conlon was in respect of local festival grants and was not representative of the amount of grant funding received by the Council in respect of projects such as Rossmore Park, the Kavanagh Centre, Carrickmacross Lace Gallery and Carrickmacross Workhouse. He stated that officials would give an overview of the Tourism Programme at a future Council meeting.

Cllr Conlon agreed to defer his proposal pending an update on Tourism at either the March or April Council meeting.

9. Audit Committee:

- (i) To receive the Audit Committee Annual Report for 2020 which includes Performance & Effectiveness.**

The members noted the Audit Committee Annual Report for 2021, which includes Performance and Effectiveness, which had been circulated with the agenda.

On the proposal of Cllr Maxwell, seconded by Cllr Coyle, it was agreed that the Audit Committee Annual Report for 2021, as presented, be noted.

(ii) To approve the Draft Audit Committee Charter for 2021

The members noted the Draft Audit Committee Charter for 2021 which had been circulated with the agenda.

On the proposal of Cllr Maxwell, seconded by Cllr Coyle, it was agreed that the Draft Audit Committee Charter for 2021, as presented, be adopted.

(iii) To approve the Draft Audit Committee Work Programme for 2021

The members noted the Draft Audit Committee Work Programme for 2021 which had been circulated with the agenda.

Cllr P. Treanor proposed, Cllr Bennett seconded, that we include in the Work Programme for 2021 a request to the Committee to review and recommend to the Council how we maximise the benefits to businesses in County Monaghan, from Capital spend projects, through legitimate use of Social Clauses or other instrumentals.

Cllr Maxwell stated that the Audit Committee remit is to look at the day to day operations of the Council and put in place appropriate checks – it could not take on the body of work requested by Cllr P. Treanor.

Mr. C. Flynn, A/Director of Services stated that the Audit Committee was part of the local authority governance Framework and was independent to the elected members. He did not think it was the appropriate mechanism to deal with Cllr Treanor's proposal. He stated that he would forward information he had received from the Procurement Unit in relation to social clauses to each member.

In view of Mr. Flynn's response, Cllr Treanor's proposal was not put to the meeting. Cllr Treanor asked that the Council would look again at what he was proposing.

On the proposal of Cllr Maxwell, seconded by Cllr Coyle, it was agreed that the Draft Audit Committee Work Programme for 2021 as presented, be adopted.

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

The members noted the minutes of the Corporate Policy Group meeting held on 26th January, 2021 which had been circulated.

On the proposal of Cllr Keelan, seconded by Cllr Gilliland, it was agreed that the minutes of the Corporate Policy Group meeting held on 26 January 2021 and the recommendations contained therein be approved.

On the proposal of Cllr P. Treanor, seconded by Cllr Carthy, it was agreed that the Council would receive an online presentation from ICBAN on the Framework of Priorities 2020 – 2025.

11. To receive the Management Report – January 2021:

The members noted the Management Report for the month of January 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 Conlon, seconded by Cllr Bennett, it was agreed that in encouraging efforts at fulfilling Climate Change targets, we seek of Minister Darragh O'Brien and the Department of Housing to elaborate on what increased measures and incentives have been added to the Warmer Homes Scheme and National Home Retrofit Scheme for 2021.

Mr. J. Murray, Director of Housing referred to a presentation that was given to the Housing SPC on Home Heating and Energy Efficiency and he stated that he would circulate a copy of the presentation to all members.

12. To fix a date for special meeting to consider the Capital Programme 2021-2023 and Civic Offices Project.

It was agreed to list this item again on the March Council agenda.

13. Business submitted by the Chief Executive.

The Chief Executive reminded members that an invitation had issued for a briefing on Tuesday 9th February in relation to the announcement on the Preferred Route Options for the N2 Ardee to Castleblayney and the N2 Clontibret to the Border road schemes.

14. Matters arising out of the minutes of Councils meeting held on 11th January, 2021

Matters arising out of the minutes of the Council meeting held on 11th January, 2021 and were responded to by the relevant officials.

Cllr Bennett requested that the Council would again write to An Post requesting them to locate a post box at Annyalla to facilitate local residents.

15. 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.

16. To receive update on North South Interconnector project

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

- a. Email from Niamh Smyth, T.D. regarding North South Interconnector.
- b. Email from Minister Heather Humphreys, T.D. regarding North South Interconnector.
- c. Letter from Pauline Tully, T.D. regarding North South Interconnector.

On the proposal of Cllr. Keelan, seconded by Cllr Coyle it was agreed that this Council notes with deep concern no change in policy from Minister Ryan - Eirgrid - or Government in relation to the undergrounding of the North South interconnector. That this Council further notes that Government - Minister Ryan - & Eirgrid are in breach of Government policy - Re Community acceptance (Government policy 2012) - in relation to infrastructure such as electricity infrastructure etc. That we write to Minister Ryan - An Taoiseach Michael Martin & the Oireachtas members for this constituency requesting a response to this motion

On the proposal of Cllr Keelan, seconded by Cllr Coyle, it was agreed that this Council notes with deep concern the excessive spending of taxpayers money by Eirgrid on advertising as exposed at the Public Accounts Committee and that we write to Minister Eamonn Ryan, An Taoiseach Micheál Martin, Eirgrid & the Oireachtas members for this constituency requesting a response on this issue.

Cllr Maxwell proposed, Cllr O'Hanlon seconded - that this Council writes to Michelle O'Neill, MLA asking why Sinn Fein in the Northern Ireland Executive have washed their hands of the North South Interconnector and have not invoked the Petition of Concern in the Assembly to have Minister Mallon's decision debated in the Northern Ireland Chamber to argue the case for undergrounding of the Interconnector.

Cllr McKenna stated that he could not support the motion unless the reference to "Sinn Fein in the Northern Ireland Executive have washed their hands of the North South Interconnector" was removed from it. Cllr Maxwell agreed to remove the reference as requested by Cllr McKenna.

The Cathaoirleach put Cllr Maxwell's motion, as amended, to the meeting and it was agreed.

17. To receive update on the Ulster Canal project

Cllr Connolly referred to the presentation given by Waterways Ireland to the Council members on 19th January 2021 and stated that he was shocked to learn that there was no brief for the Ulster Canal beyond Clones toward Monaghan Town and Middletown. He made the following proposal, which was seconded by Cllr Coyle.

That Monaghan County Council writes to Waterways Ireland asking them to clarify their role in the development of the Ulster Canal from Clones to Middletown, Co. Armagh.

Cllr McKenna proposed that the Council writes to the North-South Ministerial Council seeking clarification in relation to the project and requesting that funding is provided for the entire route of the canal. Cllr P. Treanor seconded the proposal.

The Cathaoirleach put both proposals to the meeting and they were agreed.

18. Questions:

Cllr A. Campbell asked:

1. With regard to the development of the 28 houses in Bree, Castleblayney known as Plas an Bhri and these houses near completion.
 - (a) Will the work on these houses be allowed to continue to get them finished due to the stopping of construction work due to Covid-19?
 - (b) When will these houses be ready for hand over?
 - (c) What is the energy rating of these homes?

Reply: Monaghan County Council has contracts in place with Ballymar Developments Limited for the provision of 26 houses at Plás an Bhrí, Bree, Castleblayney, funded by the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage under the Rebuilding Ireland Programme.

Plás an Bhrí has been designated an essential project and works to complete the 26 houses have continued in accordance with the public health regulations under Level 5 restrictions. The houses are substantially completed. There remains minor works and snagging which are due to be completed by March 2021. The 26 homes will be finished to a high quality and will have Building Energy Ratings of A2.

2. With a large vacant site now in the town centre of Castleblayney where the Fire Station and Council office/yard were located and the housing section in Monaghan Council having ongoing discussions regarding this site.
 - (a) What is the update in relation to Monaghan County Councils plans for housing and in particular housing for the elderly in this town centre location?
 - (b) Will these plans include the protected structure in this area?
 - (c) What is the time scale in terms of these plans?

Reply: In consultation and cooperation with an Approved Housing Body, that has provided excellent sheltered housing projects in other counties, Monaghan County Council is examining the possibility of providing sheltered housing for older people in the location where the old Fire Station and Council office/yard are located in Castleblayney. It is intended that the plans will include the protected structure. The proposal is at feasibility stage.

3. The impacts of climate change are becoming increasingly apparent at both local and global level and the scientific evidence suggests that these impacts will intensify over the coming decades. With regard to climate change and the energy 2030 targets which have been set out.
 - (a) What plans has Monaghan Council in place?

Reply: Since 2009, Monaghan Co Council has been working towards the National Energy targets – the Energy Reduction target for 2020, and now the Energy & Carbon Dioxide equivalent targets for 2030 and 2050. Monaghan Co Council continually strives to optimise its Energy usage and reduce its Carbon emissions.

- (b) What are the key aspects of any plans which are in place?

Reply: From 2009 to 2020, the focus for Public Bodies was entirely on Energy Reduction, ie Electrical, Thermal & Transport. As Electrical Energy made up the largest component of Monaghan Co Councils energy usage, and Public Lighting made up the largest part of the electrical energy usage, Monaghan Co Council commenced its LED Retrofit of the Public Lighting in order to reduce this. As of end

2019, Monaghan Co Council has reached the 2020 energy reduction target, one year ahead of target. In order to achieve the required Energy & Carbon reductions required for 2030 & 2050, it will be necessary for Monaghan Co Council to improve the energy performance of its public buildings and reduce the usage of fossil fuels.

(c) How will any plan the Council have in place be monitored?

Reply: The 2020 energy performance of all Public Bodies, including Local Authorities, is recorded and monitored by the Sustainable Energy Authority of Ireland, on behalf of the Government. Monaghan Co Council inputs all its energy- and fuel usage data into this online monitoring system on an annual basis. It has recently been announced that the same SEAI Monitoring & Reporting system is to be used to record Public Body performance towards the 2030 and 2050 Energy and Carbon targets.

4. With regards to the National Waste Enforcement Priorities for 2021. What priorities have Monaghan County Council in place under the various headings including tackling significant illegal waste activity, construction and demolition activity, End of Life Vehicles, Waste Collections etc.

Reply: Monaghan County Council is required to detail the steps to be undertaken to progress National Waste Enforcement Priorities and ensure that resources are allocated to these through a submission to the EPA. Below is some detail on the work programme for the Waste Enforcement Team in 2021.

Multi Agency Sites of Interest

- **Attend multi agency forum**
- **Re-establish check points when public health advice allows for them.**
- **Request Gardaí to accompany WEO on sites where there is the potential for conflict or there is a criminal element involved.**
- **WERLA shall be kept informed of sites of interest through regular contact with the Coordinator and at the quarterly meetings.**

Tackling Significant Illegal activity

- **Respond to all complaints and put resources into complaints of most risk.**
- **Be proactive in gathering and assessing intelligence including aerial surveys.**
- **Close out 3 cases that are currently before the courts.**
- **Currently another 5 files with Solrs or pending submission that will require action in 2021. All involve serious criminal activity and construction and demolition waste.**
- **Work with WERLA on their work programme to include ADI Scheme, Multi Agency Site inspections, operators of concern.**
- **Awareness programme based on ADI materials supplied in 2020.**

Construction and Demolition Waste

- **Request Construction and Demolition Plans one month prior to works commencement for major projects and projects that involve any level of demolition through the planning process.**
- **Follow up on these plans including review and site inspections**
- **Ensure that all demolition sites comply with requirements of the Waste Permit Regulations for crushing or infilling on sites**
- **Review all article 27 notifications and were issues arise notify the EPA through Art 27 process. This includes site visits of both source and receiving sites and a desktop review of planning conditions pertaining to both sites.**

- Review of AER data at WFP and COR sites and Waste Collectors dealing with C&D waste especially soil and stone
- Investigate all complaints of C and D waste being illegally disposed of.
- Protect wetlands in County Monaghan from infilling

End-of Life Vehicles (ELV) & the Waste Metal sector

- Inspect licences Authorised Treatment Facilities (ATF)
- Inspect waste data from ATFs
- Identify and inspect unauthorised sites containing ELVs. Take appropriate action on these sites

Household and Commercial Waste

- Validate AER Data and work collaboratively with CUWMPO on any audits of major waste collectors, one of which is in County Monaghan
- Data validation of waste collectors AER data and follow up with discrepancies as per waste data and waste flows
- Carry out site audits on at least two operators of concern
- Work with the 3 household waste collectors located in the County on provision of brown bin roll out

Household awareness campaign on recycling and food waste and Commercial waste awareness campaign utilising materials provided by www.mywaste.ie

5. With the Country in Level 5 due to the ongoing Covid-19 pandemic and the importance of health and wellbeing for so many people. Under the Healthy Ireland Keep Well Campaign which promotes exercise and physical activity and minding your mental health. And the big issue with so much information being bombarded at us how to switch off.

- a) What plans has Monaghan County Council in place to promote this very important plan at this time?

Reply: The Healthy Ireland Keep Well message has been promoted to all sectors of our community in various ways since the campaign launched in November 2020. Monaghan County council has created a designated page on the council website www.monaghan.ie/keep-well where a variety of information can be found across the 5 key themes of the campaign. A “Keep Well” calendar has been created on this page which is populated with events, activities, training and information sessions happening locally. It is currently mostly online but still provides lots of opportunities for members of the public to engage in activities to support their physical and mental health.

Throughout the month of December and January, MCC has booked a large number of advertising slots on Northern Sound, pointing people to the County Council or Monaghan Sports Partnerships website or social media accounts for information. There is also a twice weekly slot on the popular “Wider View” Programme on Northern Sound where each week there are two guest speakers interviewed on topics that tie into one of the 5 key themes of the campaign. Those themes being, Staying Connected, Keeping Active, Minding Your Mood, Switching Off and Eating Well. All of these interviews have been saved as podcasts and can also be found on the council website at <https://monaghan.ie/podcasts/>.

With funding received from the Community Resilience Fund MCC has developed a programme of work with a variety of actions and activities

planned, some already delivered. These see us linking with internal partners like Monaghan Age Friendly programme, Monaghan PPN, Monaghan Sports Partnership & County Libraries on contacting our communities in a variety of ways. All these campaigns and messages are promoted regularly on the Healthy Monaghan Facebook, Twitter and Instagram pages. Advertisements have also been taken in the Northern Standard promoting the Community Call helpline and specific Age Friendly initiatives.

Cllr C. Carthy asked:

6. What is the updated position on Vacant Housing in Co. Monaghan i.e: How many units have been brought back into use since the start of 2019?

- What plans are in place to make use of remaining Vacant Units?

Reply: Under the government Vacant Homes Scheme Monaghan County Council have coordinated 7 properties taken back into use under the Buy and Renew Scheme since 2019 (17 houses in 2018 delivered also), 2 properties have been taken back into use under the Repair and Lease Scheme since 2019 (4 units in 2018 delivered also), 80 houses have been taken back into use by Approved Housing Bodies in conjunction with Monaghan County Council since 2018 and 59 new homes will be delivered or in the process of being delivered on previously Derelict Sites in Co. Monaghan (including 32 on the unfinished housing development in Scotstown).

Further to this, since the inception of the Vacant Homes Programme, the Vacant Homes Office carried out onsite inspections of circa 300 vacant homes in county Monaghan. Once vacancy is confirmed Monaghan County Council issues information regarding possible options to owners to bring vacant properties into use (such as the Repair and Lease Scheme) and engages with owners if they are interested to advise them of the particulars of each scheme available. Monaghan County Council's Vacant Homes Office is registered with www.vacanthomes.ie where the public can provide the details of any vacant homes in their locality and the website will automatically notify the Vacant Homes Office by email for further investigation.

Monaghan County Council will continue gathering information and surveying vacant homes to provide a holistic profile on vacancy throughout County Monaghan with the intention of encouraging the use of vacant homes wherever possible towards revitalising and repopulating the areas that are most affected by vacancy.

7. What is the current make-up of the Co. Monaghan Council Housing list:

(a) How many are on the list for 2, 3, 4 & 5 bed units?

(b) What are the figures per Municipal District?

Reply: Total waiting list as of 29/01/2021 = 1289

MD	1/2BED	3BED	4+BED
Monaghan	448	127	34
Ballybay/Clones	163	34	13
CMX/CBY	362	71	37
TOTAL	973	232	84

(c) How long, on average, are people waiting for a housing offer (depending on house size)?

Reply: Information is not currently available.

Cllr R. Truell asked:

8. Can Monaghan County Council investigate the status of 4no. houses that appear to be derelict on Lower Main Street, Newbliss, Co. Monaghan. The Eircode's of these dwelling houses are (i) H18 DK24 (ii) H18 FK52 (iii) H18 W932 and (iv) H18 TE80. If these dwellings are deemed to have derelict status potential, I request that Monaghan County Council advise if the derelict sites process can be commenced for these dwellings and if there is a potential for refurbishment of these houses to assist with housing need in the area.

Reply: Monaghan County Council will investigate the condition of these four houses and liaise with Ballybay Clones Municipal District office when our report is completed.

Cllr S. Conlon asked:

9. Following the selection by Irish Water in July 2020 to upgrade the Waste Water Treatment Plants (WWTP) at Clontibret, Glaslough, Carrickroe, Knockatallon, Oram and Newbliss under the Small Towns and Villages Growth Programme and accompanying budget of €1,238,000, please provide an update on how these upgrade schemes are progressing.

And further, what percentile range are these six WWTP's compliant with discharge standards.

Reply: No reply has been received by Irish Water, but members will be updated once received.

10. Following the recent Government announcement that the National Transport Authority plan to create 248 new Local Authority posts to expand walking and cycling facilities throughout Ireland, what resources have been allocated to Monaghan County Council for this purpose?

Also, do allocated resources include the establishment in Monaghan of one of the 30 new Regional Cycling Design Offices?

Reply: The Executive of Monaghan County Council is aware of the government announcement relating to the proposed creation of 248 new posts to expand walking and cycling facilities across the country, to date no formal communication has been received from the Department or the NTA in this regard.

Staff from the Roads section are engaging with the NTA in regard to the Active Travel scheme and a preliminary meeting was held with NTA on 2nd February where potential schemes and staffing requirements were discussed.

It's envisaged that a submission for staff resources will be made to the NTA in the coming weeks. A significant list of potential schemes has been submitted to the NTA for consideration and further discussions with NTA staff are scheduled to take place in the coming weeks. In regard to the question on Regional Cycling Design Offices, again MCC has not received any formal communication regarding what is being proposed however, the Roads Section will make enquiries off the NTA on this issue.

11. Considering the €442,625 underspend from the 2020 Active Travel Measures allocation, and that less than €50,000 of the original €1,172,275 was allocated to the Monaghan MD area, will unsuccessful proposed projects previously submitted for this MD now be eligible for some allocation of this carried over funding for works this year?

Reply: In August 2020 Monaghan County Council received an allocation of €1,172,275 from the Department of Transport, Tourism, and Sport (DTTAS) under the July Stimulus Active Travel measures to complete 10 identified schemes. During 2020, MCC successfully completed 5 of these ten schemes, and commenced work on

a further 4 schemes, for completion in 2021, with work on the remaining scheme also carried forward to 2021. The below table sets out the list of approved funded schemes, including the amount awarded against each scheme and the completion date/expected completion date.

Active Travel Projects:			
Road Number	Location	Amount Awarded	Schemes Status
Monaghan, Carrickmacross, Clones	Monaghan, Carrickmacross, Clones -Cycle lockers	€30,000	Completed in 2020
R162	Ballybay Town - Resurfacing	€150,000	Completed in 2020
R183 (formerly the N2 out of Castleblayney heading northbound)	Monaghan Rd Castleblayney – Cycle lane & Resurfacing	€357,500	Completed in 2020
R183	Ballybay town park (Lighting)	€20,000	Completed in 2020
LT-14114	Widened /Update of Existing Footpaths to the Estate	€43,650	Completed in 2020
L8934, R178-5, L8932,L8511-0, R179-6, R178-6,	O Neill St, Farney St, Chapel Lane, Parnell St, Shercock Rd, Ivy Lane Carrickmacross – Pedestrian Crossing	€50,000	Commenced 2020, for completion 2021
R938	Dublin Rd Castleblayney Resurfacing and Footpath upgrade	€151,125	Commenced 2020, for completion 2021
R162	Ballybay Town - Monaghan Road Footpath	€55,000	Commenced 2020, for completion 2021
R180	Lough Egish Village – Footpath	€175,000	Commenced 2020, for completion 2021
R927(formerly the N2 out of Carrickmacross heading southbound)	Castleblayney Rd Carrickmacross Cycle lane & Resurfacing	€140,000	To be carried out in 2021
	Total:	€1,172,275	

Subsequent to the August 2020 award of funding, and in recognition of the challenge of delivering Works Designs, Tender Documents, Procurement, Contract Award and Works Completion in the relatively short period to December 2020, DTTAS relaxed the deadline at the request of numerous Councils. This allowed the remaining works and the associated funding to be carried forward for completion in 2021, as per table above.

To date Monaghan County Council has drawn down €926,618 on completed/partially-completed schemes, and will draw down the remaining €245,657 in 2021, on completion of the tabled schemes. It is thus expected that all projects will be completed and no underspend will arise. No further funding will be allocated by DTTAS for the 2020 programme.

In 2021 the National Transport Authority (NTA) announced new budget strands for urban-based Active Travel projects. MCC is in discussions with NTA with a view to identifying suitable qualifying projects across all Municipal Districts. NTA has emphasised that funding will be allocated based on the quality of proposed projects, regardless of geographic location. It is not yet clear whether further funding may be announced for rural-based schemes. Staff will keep members appraised as additional information comes to hand.

Cllr N. Keelan asked:

12. In relation to road safety approximately how many hedge cutting notices have been sent out to landowners across the county, what action/follow up will be taken to insure that the hedge cutting notices are complied with before the end of the cutting season on the 28th of February next?

Reply: At the beginning of the hedge cutting season in September, and during the first month of February the Roads Section publish an advert in the regional paper advising landowners of their obligations under Section 70 of the Roads Act (1993). The advert also appears on the MCC website and social media channels.

Hedge cutting issues are also resolved as a result of MD outdoor staff contacting landowners directly. Failure to comply with this verbal request results in letters of being issued by the Municipal District. If a landowner still does not comply, a Notice is issued.

MD	Ballybay/ Clones		Carrickmacross/ Castleblayney		Monaghan	
	Letters	Legal Notices	Letters	Legal Notices	Letters	Legal Notices
2020	7	3	5	1	12	1
2021 (to 1/2/21)	0	0	1	0	0	1

13. What is the annual fuel bill (diesel/petrol costs) for all the Council owned vehicles and where is this fuel purchased?

Reply: The annual fuel bill for Council owned vehicles for last year (2020) is as follows:

€222,656 for Auto Diesel

€14,653 for Gas Oil (Non road user vehicles) eg. Surface dressing plant

€1,015 for Addblu

There are three fueling depots within the County.

- 1. Monaghan Town Machinery Yard (Main Depot) comprising of Auto, Gas oil and Addblu pumps.**
- 2. Newbliss Fuel Depot containing Auto Derv pump.**
- 3. Carrickmacross Fuel Depot containing Auto Derv pump.**

All depots are interconnected using an online Jigsaw fuel management system.

Fuel is purchased in bulk deliveries using the OGP single supplier bulk fuels framework currently awarded to Circle K Ireland.

Reply from Fire Section:

Expenditure annually is €18,956.00

Supplier is Circle K with a local agreement in place in Ballybay (as there is no CircleK in the vicinity).

14. In relation to climate change and energy saving measures what is the up to date position in relation to the retrofitting of the public lighting network across the county with low energy LEDs bulbs?

Reply: Progress is continuing towards completion of the remaining LED retrofits, up to December 2020 90% of streetlights have been converted to energy efficient LED lights. Substantial completion is estimated by the end of April 2021 with a total completion estimated by end June 2021.

15. In relation to the roll out of high speed broadband which is now more critical than ever with so many people working from home, when can we expect that every home and business across the county will be connected? Also, in relation to broadband connection points how many community building/schools etc. are awaiting this service across the county and when will this work be completed?

Reply: The National Broadband Plan is expected to be a 5-7 year rollout. Efforts are being made to expedite the rollout of the National broadband Plan but there will be work taking place within the county throughout the duration of the Plan. As noted in the Broadband Officer's Report, about 25% of premises awaiting connectivity in Monaghan are expected to be connected in 2021, with further areas to be connected in each subsequent year.

Ten BCPs have already been connected across the county. Tullycorbet is next and due to be connected in the first week of February. Two BCPs are awaiting connectivity, namely, St. Pats & Drumhowan. Additional BCPs have been proposed. Monaghan County Council received approval for Latton Community GAA Centre and Clara Hall. The BCPs in question should be completed by the end of 2021. It is hoped that more BCPs will be approved for Monaghan in the course of 2021.

16. What is the up to date position in relation to the upgrading of the Dundalk to Cavan regional road R178 which is critical to this region's economy, in particular the section from Carrickmacross to Sherlock town?

Reply: Cavan County Council, who are the leading partner have made a submission to the DTTaS looking for funding to complete a risk- based analysis for the route to identify the high -risk priority sections in 2021. Funding details for 2021 have not been released to date.

Cllr C. Bennett asked:

17. Can Monaghan County Council please raise the issue of Hard water in Scotstown and Ballinode with Irish Water? The issue still exists and consumers are still being forced to replace appliances due to this ongoing issue. Can Monaghan County Council please outline any measures that they have taken to improve this water supply.

Reply: In relation to the query raised by Councillor C. Bennett regarding the issue of Hard water in Scotstown and Ballinode, Irish Water completely understands the Councillor's concerns with regard to hard water, however, water hardness is not classified as a priority at this time. Water hardness is caused by dissolving minerals in the water, predominantly Calcium and Magnesium (not to be confused with Manganese). It is usually associated with limestone areas where the water filters through the rock and the minerals become dissolved in the water. When the water is boiled it can have a cloudy appearance.

Irish Water is required to comply with the European Union (Drinking Water) Regulations 2014. There are no limits specified for hardness in these regulations. Hard water is generally not a health risk. It is perfectly safe to drink and studies indicate that hard water can be an important source of essential minerals. When hard water is heated calcium deposits can form as limescale. This

can affect household appliance such as kettles, showers, dishwashers, washing machines and some older direct heating systems.

With regard to softening at source, hard water can be softened by chemically removing the calcium by a process called ion exchange. This is where the calcium is replaced with sodium chloride or potassium chloride, commonly referred to as salt. Chemically softened water is not suitable for everyone to drink, particularly infants and some risk category adults, such as people with blood pressure issues. This is the main reason why it is not recommended to soften the entire water supply.

It is possible to install individual household water softeners, and there are many systems available. However, care must be taken in the design and installation of such a system to prevent the occurrence of excessive chemicals in the softened water. For this reason, it is recommended that only the water for domestic hot water system should be softened, and the cold water system, and especially the cold supply to the kitchen sink, should be excluded from the softened process.

Irish Water's primary concern is that the water it provides is fit for human consumption. Lime in water is a naturally occurring chemical and is not harmful to consumer's health.

18. Can Monaghan County Council please provide me with the number of vacant commercial properties registered to them.

Reply: At the end of 2019 there were 709 vacant properties listed on the Schedule of uncollected rates.

19. Can Monaghan County Council please provide me with a list of initiatives that have so far progressed from the Sliabh Beagh Masterplan. The Sliabh Beagh Masterplan needs to be used to its full potential.

Reply: A Tourism Development Action plan has recently been developed in consultation with key tourism stakeholders on Sliabh Beagh. Following on from this, an Appropriate Assessment Screening was commissioned to determine the permissibility of key actions and a funding application was submitted in December under the Outdoor Recreation Infrastructural Funding Measure.

Under the Road Infrastructure actions of the plan, road number L11356 was resurfaced in full, from Knockballyroney, over Sliabh Beagh past the Penal Cross to the next junction. Also a short section of the L11355 was completed. The existing picnic areas were all developed and additional picnic areas added.

Cllr A. McCooey asked:

20. Can Monaghan County Council outline the number of social housing units which will be added to the housing stock in 2021 in each Municipal District.

Reply: In 2020 Monaghan County Council and Approved Housing Bodies (AHBs) combined to deliver 94 social houses and prepared more than 50 houses for re-letting (casual vacancies). 44 houses were built directly for Monaghan County Council at various locations throughout the County, 23 were built for AHBs, 20 secondhand houses were purchased by Monaghan County Council, 3 were leased and 4 were built under Part V.

In 2021 it is envisaged that circa 150 social housing units will be delivered in County Monaghan however the timing of delivery is affected by the current Covid19 restrictions that have required building sites to close. Eight social housing sites were allowed to remain open as they were nearing completion, however sites that will potentially deliver significant numbers in 2021 are currently closed including; Lui na Greine Scotstown (32 affected), Clones Renewal Scheme (18 affected), Radhairc an

Bhrí Castleblayney (27 affected), Gortakeegan Monaghan (8 affected) and Lakeview Carrickmacross (12 affected).

Assuming that sites reopen and get back to up a high level of productivity in March 2021 and assuming that there will be no further site closures in 2021 then it may be possible to deliver the following:

- Carrickmacross-Castleblayney Municipal District:- 96
- Monaghan Municipal District:- 40
- Ballybay-Clones Municipal District:- 29

The figures above exclude voids or casual vacancies and also exclude house purchases. It is envisaged that the number of casual vacancies arising in 2021 will be similar to 2020 which will result in circa 50 houses becoming available for re-letting throughout the County. At present the number of secondhand houses to be purchased has not been determined as this will depend on the progress of construction projects, if construction projects are delayed further then funding might be made available by the Department for the purchase of secondhand houses.

21. Can Monaghan County Council outline the number of housing units which will be suitable for people of the one and two bed housing list respectively.

Reply: Monaghan County Council has accelerated our delivery of 2-bedroom dwellings in response to the increased demand. In 2019 Monaghan County Council constructed 8no 2-bedroom houses in Castleblayney and 29no 2-bedroom houses as part of a 43-house development in Monaghan town. In 2020 additional 2-bedroom dwellings were completed in Carrickmacross (6) by Monaghan County Council and (11) by Clanmil Housing Association in Rockcorry.

A further 71no 2-bedroom dwellings are under construction and due for completion in 2021 and onwards into 2022. We are aware of the growing demand for 1/2 - bedroom units and will manage our resources to address this need on a regular basis. This is an area of focus for us presently.

22. Can Monaghan County Council and/or the Planning section give detail on:

a) any guidelines or restrictions, if any, that are in place for people who convert parts or their homes or outside garages in to home offices.

Reply: Individuals may be permitted to use a part of their residential premises for commercial use without the need for applying for planning permission, where there is no material change of use. Advice on this is available in the Information Leaflet, '*A Guide to Planning for the Business Person*', recently issued by the Office of the Planning Regulator, in partnership with the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage. This leaflet is available online at <http://www.opr.ie/planning-leaflets/> and also on the Council website. The Planning Office is also available to offer individual advice where necessary, either by telephone or email. <http://www.opr.ie/planning-leaflets/>

b) what implications there may be from a rates point of view.

Reply: If there is commercial activity taking place the relevant portion of the property would be liable for commercial rates.

Cllr P. Connolly asked:

23. To ask Monaghan County Council in relation to the Local Authority Mortgage Payment Break for

a) an update in relation to the scheme?

Reply: The Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage have just announced provision for a fourth mortgage payment break bringing the total of the four mortgage payment breaks up to a maximum of twelve months.

b) the number of home loan borrowers availing of this scheme.

Reply: Nine home loan borrowers have availed of this scheme.

19. Notices of Motion

Cllr S. Coyle proposed, Cllr O’Hanlon seconded:

1. *That Monaghan County Council demands of the government and the Minister for Housing, Local Government and Heritage, Darragh O’Brien T.D., that funding be made available for application by Local Authorities to allow them carry out corrective works in Housing Estates, where inferior/defective Developer Provided Infrastructure (DPIs) exists, as this is causing great difficulty for the residences/property owners, the Local Authorities and utility agencies, with many of these properties have been purchased at high prices in the Celtic Tiger years and today carrying a huge mortgage and a devalued property due to the poor/weak Developer Provided Infrastructure.*

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

Cllr C. Bennett proposed, Cllr P. Treanor seconded:

2. *This Council notes the centenary of the passing by the British Parliament at Westminster of the Government of Ireland Act in December 1920, the Act which provided for the Partition of Ireland. We recall the deep injustices, divisions and conflict caused by this Act. We reiterate our support for the Good Friday Agreement and the political process arising from it, including the revoking of the Government of Ireland Act. We reaffirm our support for the self-determination of the people of Ireland as expressed in Article 3.1 of Bunreacht na hÉireann and for the bringing about of a United Ireland "by peaceful means with the consent of a majority of the people, democratically expressed, in both jurisdictions". Accordingly we call on both the Irish and British governments to fully implement the Good Friday Agreement and all their obligations with regard to the rights of citizens; we call on the British government to agree to set a date for the Irish Unity referendum as provided in the Agreement; we call on the Irish government to work for this outcome. We stand ready as a Council to work with all statutory bodies and with civic society to plan and prepare for the referendum on Irish Unity and for a positive outcome to the referendum.*

Following a discussion on the motion, a recorded vote was taken which resulted as follows:

For: Cllrs. Bennett, Carthy, Conlon, Connolly, Keelan, McKenna, P. Treanor and S. Treanor
Total 8

Against: Cllrs Campbell, Gilliland, Maxwell, O’Hanlon, and Truell,
Total 5

Absention – Cllr McCooey. Total 1

The Cathaoirleach declared the motion carried.

Cllr N. Keelan proposed, Cllr Carthy seconded:

3. That Monaghan County Council writes to the Minister for Health Stephen Donnelly TD and to An Taoiseach Micheál Martin TD requesting the immediate suspension of all medical card reviews until the Covid 19 vaccine roll-out is completed.

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

20. Votes of sympathy/congratulations

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

- Bernie McMahan & Ann Burke, Council employees on the death of their mother Marie Kellett (née Duffy) RIP.
- Brendan Buckley and Suzanne Graham, Council employees on the death of Breda Brannigan, RIP.
- The MacCormack Family, Castleblayney on the death of Geraldine, wife of former County Councillor, Macartan MacCormack,
- Cllr David Maxwell and the Walsh Family, Caherdavin, Limerick on the death of Dennis Walsh Jr, RIP
- Michael Fisher, Journalist on the death of his mother Peggy, RIP
- Patrick Jones, former Councillor on the death of his brother James Jones RIP
- Cllr Raymond Aughey on the death of his aunt Alice Aughey RIP, and former TD and County Councillor, Jimmy Leonard on the death of his sister.

Urgent Business:

Cllr P. Treanor proposed, Cllr Keelan seconded

That Monaghan County Council will write to the Minister for Enterprise, Trade and Employment requesting that international trade agreements, such as Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement (CETA), providing a right to multinational corporation and investors to sue Ireland outside the democracy of the ordinary legal and democratic systems, should be fully and properly scrutinised by the Oireachtas before any Dail vote on ratification. Also TDs should be allowed a vote of conscience on such an important and far reaching issue.

Following a discussion on the motion, a recorded vote was taken which resulted as follows:

For: Cllrs. Bennett, Carthy, Conlon, Connolly, Keelan, McCooey, McKenna, P. Treanor and S. Treanor Total 9

Against: Cllrs Campbell, Gilliland, Maxwell, O'Hanlon, and Truell, Total 5

The Cathaoirleach declared the motion carried.

March Council meeting:

It was agreed that the March Council meeting would be held on Monday March 8th 2021 and if Level 5 Covid 19 restrictions are still in place, the meeting would be held online.

The meeting then concluded.

Signed: _____
Cathaoirleach

Meetings Administrator

Date: _____