

Minutes of Meeting of Monaghan County Council held in the Iontas Centre, Castleblayney, on Monday 06 December 2021 at 10.00 a.m.

Chair: Cllr A. Campbell, Cathaoirleach

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

Mr. P. Clifford, A/Chief Executive, Mr. J. Murray, Head of Finance, Ms. P. Monahan, Director of Services, Mr. Cathal Flynn and Ms. N. Woods, A/Director of Services, Mr. A. Hughes, Senior Planner, Ms. M. Cullinan, Executive Planner/Economic Co-Ordinator, Ms D Condra, Tourism Officer, Ms. L. Brannigan, Senior Staff Officer and Ms. M. McGarvey, Meetings Administrator.

At the outset, members joined with the Cathaoirleach and Executive in extending their sympathies to Cllr Seamus Treanor and his extended family on the recent death of his brother, Patsy. On the proposal of Cllr A Campbell, seconded by Cllr D Maxwell it was agreed to suspend the meeting for a 10 minutes as a mark of respect.

1. Confirmation of Minutes

(i) Minutes of Council meeting held on 01 November, 2021

On the proposal of Cllr D Maxwell, seconded by Cllr S Coyle, it was agreed that the minutes of the Council meeting held on the 1st November 2021, be confirmed.

2. Correspondence.

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

- Letter from the Office of the Minister for Social Protection, Ms. Heather Humphreys, T.D. regarding Local Employment Service and Job Clubs.
- Email from Mr. Brendan Smith, T.D. regarding Local Employment Schemes.
- Email from Ms. Niamh Smyth, T.D. regarding Local Employment Service and Job Clubs.
- Letter from the CEO of the HSE regarding the expansion of services at Monaghan General Hospital.
- Emails from the Office of the Minister for Health, Mr. Stephen Donnelly, T.D. regarding Monaghan General Hospital.
- Email from the Office of the Minister for Children, Equality, Disability, Integration & Youth Mr. Roderic O'Gorman, TD, regarding Domestic Violence accommodation in Co. Monaghan.
- Email from TII regarding the N54 Tullybryan Realignment.
- Resolution from Ballybay-Clones Municipal District regarding nine recommendations from the Oireachtas Joint Committee on Social Protection Community and Rural Development.
- Letter from the Office of the Taoiseach, Micheál Martin, T.D regarding Eirgrid.
- Letter from the Office of the Taoiseach, Micheál Martin, T.D regarding Climate Action & CAP Reform implications for Agri Sector.
- Email from the Office of the Minister for Children, Equality, Disability, Integration & Youth Mr. Roderic O'Gorman, TD, regarding paid leave in the case of miscarriages.
- Letter from the Minister for Housing, Local Government and Heritage, Mr. Darragh O'Brien, T.D. regarding Local Authority Housing Delivery Action Plans.

Proposals arising out of correspondence:

On the proposal of Cllr P Treanor, seconded by Cllr S Coyle, it was agreed that this Council support the Ballybay-Clones MD motion calling on Minister Heather Humphreys, Minister for Social Protection and Rural Communities asking her to implement the nine recommendations from the Oireachtas Joint Committee on Social Protection Community and Rural Development published on 09 November 2021.

On the proposal of Cllr C Carthy, seconded by Cllr C Bennett, it was agreed that this Council rewrite to Minister Roderic O’Gorman TD regarding his response on Maternity/Paternity leave in cases of parents who have suffered a miscarriage and ask him to establish a scheme of support as a matter of urgency.

On the proposal of Cllr S Coyle, seconded by PJ O’Hanlon, it was agreed that this Council acknowledge the response of the HSE in relation to the Monaghan General Hospital Minor Injury Unit but request the Minister for Health, Stephen Donnelly, TD and the HSE to extend its opening hours to 24/7, 365 days a year, acknowledging the excellence of all staff at the facility, particularly at this time with Covid overcrowding in A&E departments across the region.

On the proposal of Cllr S. Conlon, seconded by Cllr B. McKenna, it was agreed that this Council respond to Minister Stephen Donnelly regarding Monaghan Hospital Minor Injuries Unit, stating our unanimous rejection to his response, and seek at a minimum the reinstatement of the pre- 2011 opening hours which are comparable to current MIU’s in the State at 12 hours per day, 7 days a week. This proposal to be circulated to our constituency Oireachtas members seeking their support in assisting our lobbying efforts seeking improved healthcare provision for our citizens.

On the proposal of Cllr S Conlon, seconded by Cllr C Bennett, it was agreed that this Council acknowledge the response from Minister Roderic O’Gorman regarding provision of a domestic violence refuge and in particular notes the repetitive content of his letter sent to this Council from his office 10 months ago on February 14 past. That we seek without further prevarication, the establishment of a dedicated refuge facility that will provide emergency shelter for victims of domestic violence in County Monaghan.

3. To consider Section 183 Notices

(i) Industrial Site at Drummond Otra, Carrickmacross

Mr P Clifford, Deputy Chief Executive, presented the Section 183 notice which had been circulated in relation to the proposed sale of Industrial site at Drummond Otra, Carrickmacross, Co Monaghan.

On the proposal of Cllr N. Keelan, seconded by Cllr PJ O’Hanlon, it was agreed that the Council approve the sale of Industrial site at Drummond Otra, Carrickmacross, Co Monaghan in accordance with the terms of notice dated 17 November 2021 and attached site location map under Section 183 of the Local Government Act 2001.

(ii) Sale of Monaghan Town Library

Mr. C. Flynn, A/Director of Services, presented the Section 183 notice which had been circulated in relation to the proposed sale of Monaghan Town Library, Monaghan Town.

Cllr R. Aughey proposed, Cllr B. McKenna seconded, that the Council approve the sale of Monaghan Town Library, Monaghan Town in accordance with the terms of notice dated 6 December 2021 and attached site location map under Section 183 of the Local Government Act 2001.

A vote by show of hands resulted in 16 for, 1 against, 1 abstention. The Cathaoirleach declared the S183 agreed.

4. To consider Dublin Street North Regeneration Plan / Roosky Lands Master Plan

Mr A Hughes, Senior Planner, introduced Ms Charlotte Sheridan and Mr Kevin Woods from Sheridan Woods Architects and Urban Planners to the meeting to provide members with an update on the status of the Dublin Street North Regeneration Plan and the Roosky Lands Master Plan. Mr Hughes stated that the Master Plan was a roadmap for the regeneration of lands within the environs of Dublin Street in Monaghan Town. He advised that Monaghan Co Council had already secured Department funding of €13 million to deliver the broader regeneration project. There are three elements to the Master Plan:

- Dublin Street South
- Dublin Street North
- Roosky Lands

The Dublin Street South element of the plan was already part of the Monaghan Co Development Plan and had been through a recent public consultation process.

He stated that this proposal was an ambitious but deliverable Master Plan for the redevelopment of Monaghan Town.

Mr Hughes stated that the members were now being asked to approve progression to the formal public consultation process seeking opinions on the variations to the Development Plan.

Ms Sheridan and Mr Woods then took members through the plans, outlining the strategies of each plan and providing estimated timelines for delivery.

Ms Sheridan, Mr Woods and Mr Hughes responded to members queries.

On the proposal Cllr S. Conlon, seconded by Cllr R. Aughey, it was agreed to approve the Dublin Street North Regeneration Plan and the Roosky Lands Master Plan.

The Cathaoirleach complimented Sheridan Woods on their input and also acknowledged the contributions made by Monaghan Co Co Regeneration officer Maire Cullinan and by Mr Hughes and his planning team.

5. To consider Muckno Public Consultation Report

Mr P. Clifford, Deputy Chief Executive, presented the report circulated with the Agenda in relation to the recent Muckno Public Consultation process and outlined progress to date on the Muckno Estate. He outlined the ownership history of the Muckno Estate and detailed the project developments of recent years in which the local authority had been involved. He advised members that they must now make a critical decision on further investment in a Vision for Lough Muckno. Following an extensive public consultation, 66% of respondents broadly supported advancing to the next phase to explore the vision for Lough Muckno through a Feasibility Study in collaboration with Fáilte Ireland. The Feasibility Study would cost in the region of €250 - €300,00 to carry out and this work would take approximately 12 months. Monaghan County Council's contribution to the study would be €150,000 and Fáilte Ireland were supportive of the move to feasibility stage.

Mr Clifford outlined three options to members:

- Put Castle, Annex and 2.4 ha of lands to the market for sale as a potential hotel (as per the CHL Consulting & Howley Hayes Architects Report in 2019)
- Restore Hope Castle & Annex and operate as Lough Muckno Nature, Education & Adventure Centre (Friends of Muckno proposal)
- Explore the Vision for Lough Muckno further by initiating a feasibility study in partnership with Fáilte Ireland

The Deputy Chief Executive told the members that if the Council wished to proceed to the next phase as outlined in the Vision Report, it would require an investment, in partnership with Fáilte Ireland, in conducting a feasibility plan to test the market and examine all the economic, environmental and planning issues involved. He stated that the feasibility study would explore both options contained within the report and outline how a project could be delivered. The decision to proceed would only be made when the full information was available following completion of a feasibility study.

Following a lengthy debate, the Deputy Chief Executive responded to members queries on the matter. He assured members that the public consultation process had been one of the most extensively advertised campaigns and all groups in the locality contributing during the 6 week process. He also committed to further public consultation as part of the feasibility stage of the project.

On the proposal of Cllr A McCooey seconded by Cllr C Carthy, it was agreed to proceed with the feasibility study as outlined in the Vision for Lough Muckno.

On the proposal of Cllr N Keelan, seconded by Cllr PJ O'Hanlon it was agreed that in order to achieve the widest public consultation possible, and to gain the greatest public acceptance and buy in for the proposals around Lough Muckno, that this Council at the earliest opportunity will arrange a series of information days (mindful of covid restrictions) that will benefit the general public in having their say and also having a better understanding of what is proposed at Lough Muckno.

7. To confirm date for the January 2022 Council Meeting

The members agreed that meeting be held on 10th January 2022.

8. To consider recommendations and minutes from Corporate Policy Group meeting held on 17th November, 2021.

The members noted the minutes of the Corporate Policy Group meeting held on 17th November 2021 which had been circulated.

On the proposal of Cllr N Keelan seconded by Cllr PJ O’Hanlon, it was agreed that the minutes of the Corporate Policy Group meeting held on 17th November 2021 and the recommendations contained therein be approved.

9. To receive Management Reports – November 2021

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

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

On the proposal of Cllr S Conlon, seconded by Cllr N. Keelan, it was agreed that this Council write to the IDA regarding their oversight and responsibility of the recently completed Advance Technology Unit at Knockaconny seeking them to immediately publicise and make available the use of the 3 EV charging points at this new development.

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

The members noted the report from Cllrs. Coyle and McKenna in relation to their attendance at the following conference/training event:

- AILG – Mental Health & Wellbeing – Co. Kilkenny
- AILG – Elected Members Module 2 Training – Co Galway
- LAMA – Autumn Training Seminar, Planning and Mental Health – Co Sligo

11. Business submitted by Chief Executive

The Deputy Chief Executive informed the members there was no matters for consideration under this item.

12. Matters arising out of the minutes of meetings held on 1st November, 2021

No matters arising out of the minutes of the Council meetings held on the 1st November 2021.

13. 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.

14. To receive update on North South Interconnector project

No further update on North South Interconnector.

On the proposal of Cllr Seamus Coyle, seconded by Cllr N Keelan, it was agreed that this Council immediately correspond with the Minister for Environment, Climate, Communications and Transport, Eamonn Ryan TD, all local Oireachtas members for counties Cavan, Monaghan and Meath demanding the Government to immediately direct Eirgrid, ESB networks and their agents to cease all works on the North South Interconnector as they are clearly in breach of commitments to An Bord Pleanála, under Health & Safety, EIS etc and are not being supervised by Government Agencies including the local Authority. Landowners, residences, businesses and communities are being shown total disrespect and animals are being frightened off lands. In view of the current threat to the poultry industry of the Avian flu, the examples of works at Latnakelly, Annyalla are evidence of what is to come if the proposed plans proceed.

On the proposal of Cllr N Keelan, seconded by Cllr P Treanor, it was agreed that this council note the grave concerns of the general public in relation to Eirgrid's agents accessing lands without due care an attention especially the concerns in relation adjoining landowners that do not consent to this project in its current form and the possible damage to property including livestock worrying etc. That we request Eirgrid & the Oireachtas members for this constituency to respond back to this council on this important issue of public concern.

On the proposal of Cllr N. Keelan, seconded by Cllr P Treanor, it was agreed that this council note that Eirgrid over the years has changed its policy in relation to a number of proposed developments including Grid West also grid south / grid link overhead projects given the lack of community acceptance etc - we also note the proposed under-grounding of the Kildare to Meath 400kv line. Given these developments, we write to Eirgrid & the Oireachtas members for this constituency asking the question 'is there an alternative plan given the clear & outright opposition to the over-grounding of this project'.

15. To receive update on the Ulster Canal project

No further update on Ulster Canal project.

16. Questions

Cllr P. Connolly will ask:

1. In view of the recent reported unauthorised intrusion/access on to the lands on the proposed route of the North South interconnector and in relation to the conditions laid down by An Bord Pleanála for this project to ask Monaghan County Council in relation to
 - (a) Condition Number 5 whether Eirgrid or any of their agents have notified Monaghan County Council planning authority verbally or in writing regarding the proposed commencement of works, surveys (including hydrological or geotechnical investigations) relating to the proposed development along the route

Reply: Condition 5 (a) of the North South Interconnector decision required the undertaker to notify the relevant planning authority in writing at least four weeks prior to the commencement of any site operation (including hydrological and

geotechnical investigations) relating to the proposed development. The Planning Authority received formal notification of this on 03 August 2021.

- (b) Condition Number 6 states “Prior to commencement of development the undertaker shall agree a monitoring programme for Whooper Swan with the relevant planning Authority” Has such a programme been discussed with Monaghan County Council?

Reply: A meeting was held with ESB Networks in Sept 2018 at which a discussion took place in respect of compliance with the relevant conditions. The minutes of this meeting are attached to the planning file and are available for public inspection. Notwithstanding this, the Planning Authority has not received a monitoring programme for Whooper Swans as referenced in condition No 6 of the relevant permission.

- (c) Condition Number states 9 “Prior to commencement of development, the undertaker shall lodge with the relevant planning authority a cash deposit, a bond of an insurance company or other security”. Has such a bond etc. been paid to Monaghan County Council and for how much?

Reply: The Planning Authority has not received a bond as referenced in condition No 9 of the relevant permission.

2. What steps are Monaghan County Council taking to ensure that planning conditions as laid down by An Bord Pleanála are being adhered to by applicant for the North South interconnector?

Reply: The obligation to comply with conditions attached to this planning permission falls on the developer. If in the event the Planning Authority becomes aware that a condition has been breached, then appropriate enforcement action will be progressed.

CLlr C. Carthy will ask:

3. What is the up-to-date situation on the taking-in-charge of the Alderwood estate in Carrickmacross; when is it expected to be concluded?

Reply: Assessments in respect of water services, lights and roads are being carried out by the Local Authority. Some defects have been identified and these have been relayed to the developer, who it is understood is currently resolving these. It is hoped that the taking in charge process can be progressed to the public consultation stage in the near future.

4. How many applications have been taken off the Monaghan County Council Social Housing list over the last 12 months and what were the reasons for their removal?

Reply: A total of 101 applications have been removed from the Waiting List between 03/11/20 and 17/11/21.

The main reasons for their removal included 30% voluntarily withdrawing their applications; 28% not responding a request for information from the Council; 16% having exceeded the income threshold limits and 7% having passed away.

Of the remaining proportion of households (19%), the reasons for their removal included the following a) Applicants being in no longer need of social housing support b) Applicants have left the area c) Applicants not contactable/unknown whereabouts d) Applicants have transferred to another local authority.

5. When is it expected that construction works will commence on the CTEK II building in Carrickmacross and what is the expected schedule for completion?

Reply: Monaghan County Council will seek tenders from contractors for the Design/Build of the C Tek II building in early Q1 2022. It is envisaged that construction work will commence in Q3 2022, with a view to project completion by the end of 2023.

Cllr N. Keelan will ask:

6. What is the up to date position in relation to the rollout of the community plans for the village areas across our county?

Reply: The Plans which are being undertaken are based on community areas. Some of these may be villages, but this is not always the case; many communities encompass a broader area.

As of 25th November 2021, the following Plans have been completed and launched:

- **Scotshouse**
- **Oram**
- **Lough Egish/ Aughnamullen**

The following Plans have been completed and await sign-off by their respective communities:

- **Newbliss/ Killeevan**
- **Emyvale**
- **Ballinode**

The following communities have been approached and have signed up to participate in the planning process:

- **Smithboro**
- **Donaghmoynes, to include Broomfield and Lisdoonan**

Communities were selected based on an exercise carried out by staff which identified where funding was – and wasn't – going to around the county. Communities which did not seem to be drawing down a fair share of the available funding have been prioritised.

C&E staff work with each selected community over a period of more than a year to build plans tailored to their needs. The close contact with the communities allows the staff to identify the issues which may be holding the community back, and set about addressing these issues whilst working alongside the groups in preparing the Plan. The contact time with the groups also enables our staff to provide direct training, advice and assistance to each individual, building their capacity so that they can continue the work unsupported after the Council departs.

This work is intensive and time consuming on our staff, and involves much evening work. Therefore, it is not possible to undertake more than two Plans at any one time with our current level of resources. We understand that many communities will wish to avail of our assistance, especially in light of the successes already being experienced in Scotshouse, Oram and Lough Egish. Covid 19 restrictions will make it difficult to get the face-to-face interaction which is a very necessary part of the process for the community, but we will endeavour to complete Smithboro and Donaghmoynes in 2022 nevertheless.

7. What is the overall situation in relation to the very important issue of water quality throughout our county, how many (boil notices) have been issued over the last 12 to 18 months?

Reply: To follow from Irish Water

8. What is the up to date position in relation to the local lane improvement scheme (LIS) & when is it expected that new applications will be accepted onto the list?

Reply: Thirteen lanes remain on the historical list and one hundred and eighteen applications received in 2017 & 2018 are awaiting assessment. No new assessments will be accepted until this body of work is completed. The timescale for the completion of these schemes will depend on the level of funding received from the Department.

9. In relation to (housing for all) a new government policy what plans have the council to roll out a programme of social and affordable housing in our village areas including areas such as Inniskeen/ Lisdoonan /Donaghmoyne etc?

Reply: As noted previously County Monaghan is an affordable place to live as the average cost in County Monaghan of a secondhand 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 secured agreement with a local contractor to provide 6 social houses in Tydavnet village, completed in late 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 were provided in Rockcorry in conjunction with Clanmil Housing Association and as mentioned 6 social houses were 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 Donaghmoynne and Lisdoonan; 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:

Further extracts from Monaghan County Development Plan 2019-2025

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.

Under Housing for All 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.

10. What is the up to date position regarding rural planning and the department / government locals only policy (local needs) can the council executive explain why the department has not implemented the (Flemish decree 2013) European court ruling on this important planning matter?

Reply: There has been no further received from the Department in respect of this matter.

Cllr A. Campbell will ask:

11. With the recently published draft on the River Basin Management plan for Ireland 2022-2027 to strengthen our river basin management and protect and improve our water environment, water quality in our local rivers and lakes which is essential for protecting our drinking water sources, environment and peoples quality of life to help implement the EU Water Framework Directive (WFD). Having specific regard to Lough Muckno in Castleblayney.

- (a) What is the current quality of the water in Lough Muckno and how is this compared to similar lakes in the area?

Reply: Lough Muckno is currently Bad Status and Eutrophic. The closest monitored lakes are Lough Egish, White Lake, Lough Avaghon, Drumlona and Inner lakes on the Dromore System. These lakes are all currently classified as “at Risk”. Each lake has individual characteristics so direct comparisons cannot be drawn. Each lake and waterbody is classified based on a number of criteria. Ecological (phytoplankton, fish,) and Chemical Status (water chemistry) are independently assessed.

Lough Muckno’s significant pressures are agriculture and urban wastewater influences.

- (b) How often is the water quality tested and where is this information published?

Reply: Muckno is sampled 4 times per year with three sampling sites per round. Data is available at catchments.ie via the mapping tool.

- (c) Has the quality of the water improved over recent years?

Reply: A steady decline in water quality has been observed.

- (d) What plans and timescales are in place to enhance the quality of the water in Lough Muckno?

Reply: The “Muckno Road to recovery project” being progressed by Environmental Services will attempt to predict a lag time for recovery based on limited inputs or best-case scenario. The plan is to determine a baseline recovery model and following on from that to develop an Integrated Catchment

Management plan for Muckno and the influencing waterbodies. The Water Framework Target for Muckno is “restore 2027” which is optimistic.

- (e) What monitoring do Monaghan County Council do on the river basin area which flows into and feeds Lough Muckno?

Reply: Operational monitoring on behalf of the EPA is carried out on each of the waterbodies feeding Lough Muckno.

12. With the recent launch of “The Climate Action Plan 2021” which provides a detailed plan for taking decisive action to achieve a 51% reduction in overall greenhouse gas emissions by 2030 and setting us on a path to reach net-zero emissions by no later than 2050 putting Ireland on a more sustainable path, cutting emissions, create a cleaner greener economy and society and protect us from the devastating consequences of climate change and With the recent annual report on The Climate Adaptation Strategy 2019-2024 having being submitted by Monaghan County Council to the Department of Environment Climate and Communications.

- (a) What are the key actions to be implements?
(b) What is timeline for the implementation of the key actions of our plan?
(c) How have we in Monaghan County Council improved on previous years?
(d) With a key part of the Climate Action Plan 2021 being Citizen Engagement How are we in Monaghan County Council proposing to bring the people with us and engage people ensuring that they are empowered to take the actions needed to achieve our goals?
(e) With the need for retrofitting and renewable energy and the opportunity this brings around creating high quality employment What plans have Monaghan County Council to capitalise on this opportunity?

Reply: On July 23rd 2021 the Climate Action and Low Carbon Development (Amendment) Act was signed into law. The act now sets Ireland on a legally binding path to net-Zero emissions no later than 2050, and to a 51% reduction in emissions by the end of this decade. A key element from a local authority perspective is that Local Authorities will be required to prepare individual Climate Action Plans. Unlike the Climate Change Adaptation Strategies which concentrated primarily on Climate Adaptation these new Climate Action Plans will include both climate mitigation and adaptation measures. These climate action plans will be required to be updated every five years. The CARO offices are currently working with the EPA and Climate Ireland to develop guidance documents for the local government sector to assist in drafting these local action plans. Once the guidelines are issued and Minister Ryan issues a direction to local authorities to commence preparation of their plans, each local authority will have 12 months to prepare their respective local Climate Action Plan. It is expected that Citizen Engagement will form part of these new Climate Action Plans. An “empowering change” training program developed by CARO aimed at staff in local authorities who work with communities was scheduled to take place in December but this has been postponed until March 2022 due to Covid. In addition, it is expected that the new climate action plans will see Local Authorities working collaboratively with other sectors which will lead to opportunities as a result of our adaptation and mitigation actions.

13. With Significant funding coming from the government in terms of Active Travel and now with the setting up of Active Travel Unit within Monaghan County Council, where this year alone Monaghan County Council received up on €3.985620

- (a) With the idea of Active Travel being travelling with a purpose using your own energy be it walking or cycling in Monaghan what plans have Monaghan County Council in place to promote this objective?

Reply: The launch of the recent Walking and Cycling Strategy will prove as a guiding strategic document for the Active Travel Unit. Several actions within this document will increase awareness internally within the organisation and externally amongst the community about the benefits of Active Travel. The first steps in this regard will take place in quarter one of 2022 with the establishment of an Interdepartmental team and a Walking & Cycling Forum.

- (b) With all the benefits that Active Travel has to offer in terms of Environmental, Health, Safety and Social. What steps have Monaghan County Council to get this message into our schools and youth to promote all these benefits?

Reply: Work has already commenced in regards promoting Walking & Cycling benefits to young people in schools and youth organisations in the last quarter of this year. We received 240 submissions for our Active Travel Art Competition which we promoted to the local primary schools in partnership with the libraries and the Road Safety Officer. We also commenced our Cycle Right Secondary school cycling training after Halloween. 6 out of the 12 Secondary schools will have participated in the scheme by Christmas. It is planned to roll out the training to the remaining schools in quarter one of 2022.

- (c) What plans has Monaghan County Council for developing a master plan for the County in terms of Cycle Lanes, Greenways and walking routes to allow for a full network and joined up approach?

Reply: There are several strategic documents that have been approved for funding under the current active travel allocation. Those documents are an Urban Mobility Plan for County Monaghan, a review of the walking and cycling strategies for Castleblayney and Carrickmacross, Active Travel Network plans and a Transport strategy for Monaghan Town. Having these plans in place will provide the Council with a clear project path to follow in completing our objective of providing quality walking and cycling infrastructure. In turn we will reduce demand for car-borne journeys, thereby promoting active, healthy lifestyles, contributing to a low carbon and climate resilient society.

We will be working closely with the NTA in the development of all these plans. It has been agreed nationally that the NTA and TII will lead on this work in partnership with each local authority. Work is commencing in the Greater Dublin area first and then rolling out to other local authorities on a phased basis. We await confirmation from the NTA of a commencement date, which is expected in quarter 1 of 2022.

- (d) What plans has Monaghan County Council in place to roll out more Electric Bicycles for our main towns?

Reply: In September this year we launched an e-bike scheme to staff and elected members. 10 bikes are available in 5 locations across the County and can be used during working hours for business or leisure purposes. At present there are no plans to roll out additional electric bikes to members of the public in our main towns.

14. With a number of sites already zoned in our towns under the Development plan for "Proposed Residential B" which allows for low density residential development, at a maximum density of 10 units per hectare.

- (a) What plans has Monaghan County Council in place to increase access and supply service to these sites in the main towns in County Monaghan to allow and encourage private house building in our towns which is needed to drive economic growth in Monaghan?

Reply: The Local Authority is currently in the process of appointing consultants to carry out an analysis of the existing housing provision in County Monaghan, together with a review on the delivery of housing units on zoned residential land. The consultants, as part of their appointment, shall also be required to undertake and complete a Housing Need and Demand Assessment.

The report when complete, shall identify impediments to the delivery of private housing in the towns and villages of the county, as well as recommended actions to overcome these impediments.

It is anticipated that this report shall be completed in early 2022, at which time it shall be presented to the Elected Members of the Council.

- (b) What available funding stream which can be looked for from the Department to pursue these works?

Reply: There are currently no specific public funding streams in place to promote or facilitate private housing development on zoned residential lands in County Monaghan.

- (c) What is the update on the Planning exemptions for “above shops “conversions and guidance relating to protected structures in our town centres which was announced in Housing for all?

Reply: Current planning legislation that exempts certain vacant commercial premises from requiring planning permission to change its use to residential purposes, expires on the 31st December 2021. It is understood that the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage (DHLGH) is in the process of reviewing these regulations, with a view to extending them until 2025.

It is also understood that the DHLGH intends to develop guidance relating to protected structures, which encourages their repurposing and/ or refurbishment for use as residential accommodation, in the first half of 2022.

15. With the Design Team now appointed to bring the Market House in Castleblayney to Planning stage.

- (a) What works have been carried out to date?

The Design Team Consultants commenced Preliminary Design works on the Castleblayney Market House & Market Square project in mid-October. To date the Consultants have carried out a structural assessment of the Market House building and internal site investigation works were recently completed. Topographical survey tenders for the Market House and Square area were recently received and it is anticipated that these survey works will commence in early December. The Design Team are currently preparing tender packages for traffic and utilities services surveys within the project area in order to inform the design works. In tandem with the foregoing, the Consultants are holding meetings with various Monaghan County Council Departments to assist with the progression of design works for relevant project elements.

- (b) What is the expected timeline for this work to take?

Reply: It is anticipated that Preliminary Designs for the project will be

completed in Q1 2021, following this Detailed Design works will be commenced. It is envisaged that a Part VIII Planning Application for the project will be submitted in Q2/Q3 2022 and that Detailed Design works will be completed in Q3 2022.

Cllr P. Treanor will ask:

16. (a) How many houses have been taken back into use through the Repair and Lease Scheme in 2019, 2020 and 2021?

Reply: 2018 – 4
2019 – 1
2020 – 1
2021 – 0
Total – 6

(b) What are the main barriers to this Scheme being more successful at bringing vacant properties back into use ?

Reply: The main issues raised include the following:

- **The extent of works required to bring the property up to a standard that will allow Monaghan County Council to let the property for a period of 20 years. Monaghan County Council cannot lease properties that are in sub-standard condition.**
- **Achieving an acceptable BER and compliance with Fire Regulations.**
- **The relative low rental value of properties in the county and the 80% Market Rental Payment.**
- **Under the Repair and Lease Scheme older properties that require significant work are sometimes not suitable as no matter how much money is spent the property cannot be renovated to a standard that would be acceptable (bearing in mind that it may have to be leased for 20 years due to the high cost of renovation).**

It is important to note that ownership of social housing by Local Authorities is prioritised above Long Term Leasing under Housing for All. Monaghan County Council has always prioritised ownership of social housing above leasing and will continue to do so.

17. What plans are in place to ease the traffic congestion on the Clones road and Glen road, Monaghan, for commuters approaching from Clones, Smithborough, Threemilehouse, Newbliss and Corcaghan/Rockcorry, during school term?

Reply: Monaghan County Council has awarded a contract to Traffic Solutions Ltd, to install a new “smart” traffic light system at the junction between Macartan Road/Broad Road and the Glen Road/Dawson Street. The new traffic lights will be vehicle activated and will respond to the increased traffic demand from individual arms of the junction as required making the junction operate more efficiently and therefore improving traffic flow. The installation of this new system is scheduled to commence in January 2022.

The long-term solution to the congestion problem in Monaghan town is to provide a Northern bypass of the town linking the Clones Road to the N2, however this scheme is not currently on a list of approved schemes for funding. The Roads section of MCC intends to draft a Strategic Assessment Report for this scheme in 2022 in an effort to get the scheme advanced for funding.

18. How many landlords are Monaghan County Council aware of in County Monaghan?

Reply: Currently there are ,2605 registered private landlords in County Monaghan (PRTB 2020)

17. Notices of Motion

Cllr C. Carthy proposed, Cllr N Keelan seconded:

1. The Members of Monaghan County Council call on the Executive to extend the Fee Waiver for the Street Space rental (regarding Outdoor Dining), which is currently due to conclude at the end of 2021, to the end of 2022 to take into account the continued uncertainty with the Covid Pandemic.

The Deputy Chief Executive advised members that the Local Authority had no discretion to extend the Fee Wavier, that planning fees were set by regulation by the Minister for Housing, Local Government & Heritage. Following a short debate on the motion, the members agreed to forward the request to the Minister.

Cllr P. Connolly proposed, Cllr S Treanor seconded:

2. That Monaghan County Council calls on the Department of Justice to:
 - (a) Take full responsibility for the policy and governance of the State's Coroner Service including the payment of fees and expenses associated with the service provided by Coroners thereby removing the cost and responsibilities associated with the service from Local Authorities.
 - (b) Ensure that in the event of a sudden unexpected death, death by suicide, car accident, drowning etc that a full weekend Post Mortem service be provided.

Following a short debate on the motion, the Cathaoirleach put the motion to the members and it was agreed. Motion to be circulated to all other Co Cos with the exception of Dublin City.

Cllr R. Truell proposed, Cllr N. Keelan seconded:

3. That Monaghan County Council would agree to write to all the tidy town groups in the county, congratulating all groups in their participation in the National SuperValu Tidy Towns for 2021 and also thanking them for their valuable work in their communities, keeping streets tidy and presentable and making their communities more pleasant places to live.

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

18. Votes of sympathy/congratulations

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

- Francis Meehan, Water Services Caretaker on the death of his wife Ann RIP
- The family of the late Raymond McKenna , Derrycorry, Killybrone, Co Monaghan RIP

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

- Brendan Lillis on winning the Federation of Irish Sports Volunteers in Sport' award for his work with 'Border Bounce' Gymnastics Club

19. Conferences

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

Promoting Authority	Subject/Theme	Venue	Dates	Members Selected
Celtic Conferences	The Finance Act	Four Season Hotel, Carlingford, Co Louth	7 th , 8 th , 9 th Jan '22	
Celtic Conferences	Housing for All	O'Donovan's Hotel, Clonakilty, Co Cork	21 st , 22 nd , 23 rd Jan '22	Cllrs S Coyle, R. Truell, D. Maxwell, S Gilliland

The meeting concluded with the Cathaoirleach encouraging all to support local shops and businesses over the Christmas period. He wished all present and their families, a very happy Christmas and a peaceful and healthy new Year 2022.

Signed: _____

Cathaoirleach

Meetings Administrator

Date: _____