

Minutes of Meeting of Monaghan County Council held in the Council Chamber, Mtek Building, Armagh Road, Monaghan, County Monaghan, on Monday 04 December 2023 at 2 p.m.

Chair: Cllr D. Maxwell, Cathaoirleach

Present: Cllrs Aughey, Campbell, Carthy, S Conlon, Connolly, Gilliland, Keelan, P. Conlon, McCooey, McElvaney, McKenna, O'Hanlon, P. Treanor, Truell

Apologies: Cllr C Bennett

Mr. R. Burns, Chief Executive, Mr. C. Flynn, Ms. P. Monahan, Ms Carmel O'Hare
Directors of Services, Mr. G. McMahon, Ms. O. McConnon, A/Directors of Services,
Meetings Administrator, Ms. M McGarvey

1. Confirmation of Minutes of Meetings held on 06 November and 20 November 2023 and Statutory Budget meeting 24 November 2023.

The Minutes of the Meeting held on 06 November 2023 be amended under item of Urgent Business to read 'hostages' instead of 'prisoners'.

On the proposal of Cllr N Keelan seconded by Cllr B McKenna it was agreed that the minutes of the Council meeting held on the 06 November be confirmed.

On the proposal of Cllr P Treanor seconded by Cllr R Aughey it was agreed that the minutes of the adjourned Council meeting held on the 20 November be confirmed.

On the proposal of Cllr N Keelan seconded by Cllr R Aughey it was agreed that the minutes of the Statutory Budget Council meeting held on the 24 November be confirmed.

2. Correspondence

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

- Email from Mr. Kieran O'Donnell, T.D., Minister of State for Local Government and Planning, regarding report on funding allocated to Monaghan County Council by year from 1999 to 2023.
- Acknowledgement Letter from the Assistant Private Secretary to the Taoiseach, Leo Varadkar T.D., regarding Support peace in Israel.
- Letter from Ms. Heather Humphreys, T.D., Minister for Rural and Community Development, regarding Working Group of Dog Control publications.
- Acknowledgement email from the Assistant Private Secretary of the Minister for Agriculture, Food and the Marine, Mr. Charlie Mc Conalogue, T.D., regarding Working Group of Dog Control publications.
- Acknowledgement Email from the Private Secretary to the Minister for Health, Mr. Stephen Donnelly T.D., regarding CF medication Kaftrio available to all patients.
- Email from the Private Secretary to the Minister for Finance, Mr. Michael McGrath T.D., regarding the Residential Zoned Land Tax.
- Resolution from Clare County Council regarding Primary Medical Certificates (PMCs) to all individuals with physical disabilities.

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

- Acknowledgement Email from the Private Secretary to the Minister for Health, Mr. Stephen Donnelly T.D., regarding Osteoporosis

Proposals arising out of correspondence:

On the proposal of Cllr P Connolly, seconded by Cllr H McElvaney it was agreed that this Council support the Clare Co Co motion calling on the Minister for Finance, Minister for Health and An Taoiseach to take immediate action in introducing Primary Medical Certificates to all individuals with physical disabilities.

3. To Consider Material Contravention of the Monaghan County Development Plan 2019-2025

Mr A Hughes, Senior Planner outlined the proposed Material Contravention of the Monaghan County Development Plan 2019-2025 for the extension and upgrade works to existing Petrol Filling Station at Killycard, Castleblayney for Carragher Retail Ltd. Mr Hughes stated that four different land use zonings apply at this site. He advised that no objections were received following the statutory public consultation periods. The proposal is considered to be in accordance with the proper planning and sustainable development of the area. The report by the Director of Planning Services recommended that the material contravention be passed by resolution.

On the proposal of Cllr N. Keelan, seconded by Cllr A Campbell it was agreed that the Council unanimously approve the Material Contravention of the Monaghan County Development Plan 2019-2025 to grant planning permission for the extension and upgrade works to existing Petrol Filling Station at Killycard, Castleblayney for Carragher Retail Ltd and all associated works, subject to the conditions contained in the circulated report of the Director of Planning Services.

4. To approve Draft Byelaws for Monaghan Libraries

Ms D McQuaid, Co Librarian outlined the draft document circulated with the Agenda. She advised that no submissions had been received following the public consultation period. The Draft-Bye laws

On the proposal of Cllr Carthy, seconded by Cllr Connolly it was agreed that the Draft Bye Laws for Monaghan Libraries be adopted.

5. To approve Monaghan Fire & Civil Protection - Operational Plan 2023-2027

Mr D Brannigan, Chief Fire Officer provided an overview of Monaghan Fire & Civil Protection Operational Plan 2023-2027. He stated that all obligations of the previous plan were fulfilled in terms of organisational structure, new equipment, fleet and facilities along with absorbing Monaghan County Council's Climate Change commitments. D. Brannigan advised that the new plan will follow the main principles of the previous plan but will include new objectives such as recruitment and retention, the integration of the Building Control reform agenda,

Civil Defence 2030 strategy and communications and include a new section on Climate Change.

Mr Brannigan responded to members queries. The Cathaoirleach thanked him for his presentation.

On the proposal of Cllr S Gilliland seconded by Cllr P Treanor it was agreed that the Monaghan Fire & Civil Protection Operational Plan 2023 – 2027 be adopted.

6. To approve new member to the LCDC

On the proposal of Cllr P Treanor seconded by Cllr A Campbell it was agreed that Ms Eilin Connolly, A/Head of Enterprise would replace Ms Brieger Quinn as a member of the LCDC.

7. To receive an update on Lough Muckno

Members agreed to a deferral of this Agenda item until February 2024 to allow the Executive to prepare a detailed update.

8. To consider recommendations and minutes from Corporate Policy Group Meeting on 13 November 2023.

The members noted the minutes of the Corporate Policy Group meeting held on 13 November 2023, which had been circulated.

On the proposal of Cllr P Treanor seconded by Cllr D Maxwell it was agreed that the minutes of the Corporate Policy Group meeting held on 13 November 2023 and the recommendations contained therein be approved.

9. To receive a presentation from DKIT

The Cathaoirleach welcomed Diarmuid O’Callaghan, President and Irene McCausland, Vice President of Strategic Planning, Communications and Development at DKIT to the meeting to engage with members as part of DKIT’s Strategic Planning consultation process. During their presentation, Mr O’Callaghan and Ms McCausland provide an overview of student body statistics, academic schools and DkIT research themes. They provided an update on campus development and potential strategic collaborative engagement with Maynooth University. They concluded their presentation by responding to members’ questions. The Cathaoirleach thanked them for their presentation.

10. To receive Management Report – November 2023

The Chief Executive introduced the Management Report for November 2023 which had been circulated with the agenda. He stated that the report was a snapshot in time of some of the work being carried out by staff. He acknowledged the contribution of the staff, stating that with greater demands on staff, they continue to show great flexibility in carrying out their work.

The members noted the Management Report.

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

11. To receive Reports from Members attending Conferences/Training events.

The members noted the reports from Cllrs Maxwell, P. Connolly, Carthy and McKenna in relation to attendance at the following Conference/Training events:

- AILG, Overview of Planning Legislation and Policy Guidance, 15 June 2023, Mullingar Park Hotel, Mullingar, Co. Westmeath
- LAMA, Autumn Seminar, 25– 26 October 2023, Ard Ri House Hotel, Tuam, Co. Galway.
- AILG, Autumn Seminar, 13– 14 September Sligo Park Hotel, Sligo, County Sligo.
- AILG, Elected Members Security, 19 October 2023, Hotel Kilmore, Cavan, Co. Cavan.
- AILG, Elected Members Security, 21 October 2023, The Rose Hotel, Tralee, Co. Kerry

12. Business submitted by Chief Executive

The Chief Executive and Cathaoirleach advised members that they both hoped to attend the St Patrick's Day celebrations in New York in 2024. This purpose of this trip is to strengthen Monaghan County Council's connections in NY and to build relationships with business people. Project Children would also be an important part of the visit.

On the proposal of Cllr S Gilliland, seconded by Cllr C Carthy it was agreed that that the Cathaoirleach and Chief Executive would visit NY for St Patrick's Day 2024.

13. Matters arising out of the minutes of Council meeting held 06 November and Adjourned Meeting held on 20 November 2023

There were no matters arising out of the Council meeting held on 06 November 2023 and Adjourned meeting held on 20 November 2023.

Mr C Flynn, Director of Services confirmed that the 'Tourism & Recreation Forum' would be an item on the January Economic Development SPC.

14. To receive update on N2 National Primary Road Scheme

Mr G. McMahon, A/Director of Services advised members that Jacobs have re-engage and commenced detailed design phase of the Clontibret to the Border scheme. There is currently no further updated in relation to the Ardee to Castleblayney scheme.

15. To receive update on North South Interconnector project

The following correspondence was received in relation to the North south Interconnector project:

- Email from the Office of the Minister for Communications, Climate Action and Environment, Eamon Ryan T.D., regarding development of a new Interconnector between Northern Ireland and Scotland.
- Acknowledgement Letter from the Private Secretary to the Tánaiste and Minister for Foreign Affairs, Mr. Micheál Martin, T.D., regarding the North South Interconnector issue
- Acknowledgement Letter from the Assistant Private Secretary to the Taoiseach, Leo Varadkar T.D., regarding intervention on the North/South Interconnector issue

On the proposal of Cllr N. Keelan, seconded by Cllr P Treanor it was agreed that this Council write to the Minister for Environment, Climate & Communications Eamon Ryan TD and to An Taoiseach Leo Varadkar TD requesting information about the National Grid and the recent report commissioned by Wind Energy Ireland, carried out by KPMG, which finds that the National Grid is not fit for purpose and will make it very difficult for us to reach 80% of electricity generated from renewable sources by 2030.

On the proposal of Cllr P Treanor, seconded by Cllr H McElvaney it was agreed that this Council write to Anthony O'Grady, Private Secretary to Minister Eamon Ryan TD confirming that Monaghan County Council is in favor of the North South Interconnector provided it is undergrounded.

16. To receive update on the Ulster Cancel project

No further update

17. Questions & Replies:

Cllr C. Carthy asked:

- 1. What is the latest, up-to-date, situation with the Taking in Charge of both Conabury Hill (Castleblayney) and Alderwood (Carrickmacross) and what is Monaghan County Council doing to bring these projects to a conclusion? In the knowledge that some of the delays are outside the remit of MCC, has the executive been liaising with Uisce Eireann and Developers directly, to move these projects on?**

Conabury Hill: A taking in charge application was received in April 2021. The Local Authority has carried out a technical assessment of the development. In addition, it has consulted with Uisce Eireann and is currently awaiting their response. The process shall be progressed upon the receipt of their comments.

Alderwood: The Local Authority remains in contact with the developer's agent regarding taking in charge matters. Final works have been carried out and consultation shall now take place with Uisce Eireann in respect of the taking in charge of the water assets.

- 2. Following tender invitations being published this month for a Feasibility Study and Strategic Assessment Report for a Swimming Pool for Carrickmacross, what is the timeframe for the return of tenders to Monaghan County Council? Once returned, and subject to pursuing a contract, how long does the Executive think the process will take to have a final report available to the Council for review?**

Monaghan County Council are currently preparing tender documentation for the engagement of professional services to prepare a 'Feasibility Study' & 'Strategic Assessment Report' for a proposed Swimming Pool and Leisure Centre in Carrickmacross. The professional services tender invitations are scheduled to be published in December 2023. The normal minimum period for return of tenders is 3 weeks, making allowance for the Christmas period it is expected that tenders will be returned in mid-January 2024. It is expected that the final report will be available within 20 weeks of formal engagement of the professional services.

3. **Is the executive pursuing the purchase of strategic lands being put up for sale on the open market, rather than relying on Expressions of Interests received from landowners only? If a parcel of land is being sold in an urban area that would be suitable for housing, public infrastructure etc, will the council be liaising with the vendors or does the seller have to make contact first?**

Housing pursues all avenues to acquire lands. For example, housing is in the process of acquiring a large parcel of land on the open market in Monaghan Town and have recently completed the purchase of lands in Clones through direct negotiations with landowners. Prospective vendors / anyone who is considering selling land that might be suitable for the development of housing can also submit an Expression of Interest to Housing Procurement housingprocurement@monaghancoco.ie For more information regarding the expression of interest see,

[Monaghan County Council Expression of Interest Sale of Houses, Land and Turnkey Development for Social Housing to Monaghan County Council 2023-2025. - Housing](#)

4. **How many homeless presentations have been made to Monaghan County Council so far in 2023 and how do the figures compare to the previous 3 years?**

From 1st January 2023 to 24th November 2023, Monaghan County Council received 117 enquiries either directly from individuals themselves or from others on their behalf, reporting homelessness. Often children are implicitly part of these enquiries.

Presenting to Monaghan County Council	2020	2021	2022	2023
Adults	147	97	122	117
Children	44	11	22	51
Total:	191	108	144	168

5. **What plans have Monaghan County Council to develop sheltered housing options, not only for older people (which is vital) but also for people with additional needs? Following an assessment of needs, which is currently being carried out by the Housing section, will we be formulating our own policy to develop purpose-built accommodation to suit the outcomes of the assessment, or will we be relying on Government/Department instruction?**

Monaghan County Council intends to continue the development of suitable proposals for the accommodation of older people and people with disabilities under Housing for All. It is Monaghan County Council intention that a minimum of 20% accommodation provided is to be Age Friendly: accessible / suitable / adaptable for older people and people with diminished mobility / disabilities. To achieve this goal the Housing Section have established a Housing Disability Steering Group that will deliver on the objectives of the National Housing Strategy for Disabled People 2022 – 2027.

Cllr S. Conlon asked:

1. **What progress is occurring with advancing a roads realignment scheme for the N12 - Armagh Road from Knockaconny to Tyholland, following a recent meeting between the Road Section and Department of Transport?**

Monaghan County Council have submitted a Strategic Assessment Report to the Land Use Planning Department of Transport Infrastructure Ireland. We are awaiting a response from TII.

2. **Following Department of Transport approval for the upgrade of the Glen Road Culvert pipes in Monaghan Town and appointment of a contractor, has a schedule of works been**

established to commence these flood mitigation works, and will similar upgrade works be undertaken at the pedestrian crossing / Credit Union junction leading into the Shambles River? Also, have Aldi committed to culvert upgrade works across their extensive site that will ensure joined up connections?

Phase 1 of these works across the Glen Road has been given approval by the DoT. The works required at the Credit Union junction form part of Phase 3 of the culvert upgrade. For Phase 3 to progress Phase 1 and Phase 2 (Aldi Site) must be completed sequentially. Aldi are committed to the culvert upgrade works.

Cllr N. Keelan asked:

- 1. What is the up-to-date position in relation to the possible provision of a much-needed affordable housing scheme for county Monaghan?**

Housing Section is continuing to meet with Housing Developers in the County to try and develop a turnkey affordable housing option as well as developing a Council-led scheme on lands at Latlorcan.

- 2. Has there been any Indication from the department when the draft planning guidelines for rural housing in particular will be published, given this is vital information to have as our county development plan is currently under review?**

The Planning Authority has received no update on this matter from the Department.

- 3. What progress if any has been made in relation to the proposed upgrading and improvement of the Dundalk to Cavan town regional road (R178) including the section from Carrickmacross to Shercock town, given this is a very important transport and economic link which is not fit for purpose?**

The Department of Transport (DOT) and County Council Senior Engineer working group meet regularly to identify strategically important sections of this route that can be advanced in the coming years which includes the R178. It is planned to apply for funding for this section along with other Strategically important sections in the county under the DOT Strategic Improvement Scheme and when the current R181 Lough Egish to the Cavan Border is completed.

- 4. in relation to the recent announcement by government regarding a complete review of the speed limits on our county road network, what guidance or direction have we received from the department as to how we proceed with this review?**

To date there has been no guidance from the Department of Transport (DOT) on what is required to complete a review of the speed limits on our county road network. Road's Section will seek advise on how to proceed in this regard.

- 5. How many people are currently employed by Monaghan County Council, what is the annual wage bill for these employees, how many people have retired or resigned in the last two years, how many people have we recruited in the last two years?**

As at the 30th September 2023 Monaghan County Council employed 443 staff and 48 Retained Firefighters (total 491) The annual wage bill for these employees is approx. €25m. 70 staff resigned/retired in the last two years. 104 new staff have been recruited in the last two years.

Cllr P. Conlon asked:

- 1. Based on the pop-up swimming pool coming to Carrickmacross, would Monaghan Co. Co. do a scoping exercise on the feasibility of a swimming pool complex coming to Carrickmacross.**

Monaghan County Council are currently preparing tender documentation for the engagement of professional services to prepare a 'Feasibility Study' & 'Strategic Assessment Report' for a proposed Swimming Pool and Leisure Centre in Carrickmacross. The professional services tender invitations are scheduled to be published in December 2023.

- 2. Based on a positive result from the scoping exercise, would Monaghan Co. Co, then consider a swimming pool complex in Carrickmacross.**

The information and data provided in the Feasibility Study & Strategic Assessment Report will allow the Council to make an informed and reasoned decision on whether to advance the proposed project to the next stage in the project lifecycle, preliminary business case development.

Cllr S. Gilliland asked:

- 1. Re: North South Interconnector (NSI)**

What is the status of the NSI in relation to the agreements between Monaghan County Council and EirGrid / ESB as stipulated in An Bord Pleanála planning conditions?

**In particular what, if any, agreements have been discussed or agreed in relation to:
Condition 3: CEMP, Traffic and Waste Management Plans?**

Condition 3 (a): Details of appropriate geophysical survey in respect of construction sites in the vicinity of towers 103 to 118?

Condition 3 (b): Measures to demonstrate compliance with the relevant Waste Management Plans?

Condition 3 (c): Site specific arrangements for each temporary access route?

Condition 6: Agreement of a whooper swan monitoring programme?

Condition 7: Details of the external appearance of the construction materials storage yard?

Condition 8: Protection of all road surfaces, culverts, verges, and public lands?

Representatives of ESNB have written to Monaghan, Meath and Cavan County Councils seeking to arrange a collective meeting with the three Planning Authorities so as to discuss a methodology for the discharge of the requirements of the related planning conditions. No date has been set for this meeting, and no agreements have been made in respect of compliance with any planning conditions.

Cllr B. McKenna asked:

- 1. Can Monaghan County Council please provide a detailed update on Council efforts to acquire the unfinished housing development at Chapel Court, Carrickroe?**

This has been ongoing for over 5 years and the local community are anxious that action is taken by the County Council to resolve this situation as a matter of urgency.

In order to resolve the dereliction issue on this site, Monaghan County Council has

undertaken extensive engagement with the owners of the unfinished housing development at Chapel Court, Carrickroe.

Unfortunately, this engagement process has been unsuccessful resulting in the recording of the site on the Country Derelict Sites register. The Council will shortly proceed to issue Section 22 and 15 notices to allow for the Compulsory Acquisition of this derelict site to be completed.

Cllr R. Aughey asked:

1. Can you provide an update on URDF call 3 for Monaghan Town.

In August 2023, Monaghan County Council received approval for €1.5 million of funding under URDF Call 3 for 17 target properties located in Monaghan Town.

This allocation is a revolving fund and will be replenished from the proceeds received from the sale or reuse of properties and sites, allowing the Council to establish a rolling programme of acquisitions to tackle long-term vacancy and dereliction. The inclusion of additional/alternative properties in the programme is subject to the approval of the Department.

The Council is currently in the process of engaging with owners of the approved target properties and working with them to identify solutions. To date this engagement process has been generally positive with owners of 9 of the approved properties having plans to address dereliction/vacancy. The Council will continue to engage with the remaining owners and if this engagement process is not successful, will then utilise its powers as outlined in the Derelict Sites Act to address the issue.

The Council has also submitted proposals to the Department for the inclusion of additional properties to the programme. Following receipt of formal approval from the Department, the Council will proceed with the engagement process for these properties.

2. How many properties have been entered on to the derelict site register in respect of URDF call 3. 2

Currently none of the approved URDF Call 3 properties have been entered onto the Derelict sites register.

The Council is currently in the process of engaging with owners of the approved target properties and working with them to identify solutions. To date this engagement process has been generally positive. The Council will continue to engage with remaining owners and in the event that this engagement process is not successful, will then utilise the Derelict Sites Act to address the issue.

Cllr P. Connolly asked:

1. To ask Monaghan Co Co that in view of the fact that Ash dieback is presenting as a safety concern on our roads what plans have Monaghan Co Co to provide funding or logistics to landowners to coordinate the safe removal of effected trees?

As part of the Road Safety Improvement Programme, Monaghan County Council identify, assess and if warranted, take measures to remove, partly or entirely, any trees situated on Monaghan County Council lands, that are deemed to represent a potential hazard to road users.

Ash dieback is a disease that effects the common ash tree and was first reported in Ireland in 2012. Trees located on private lands are the responsibility of the landowner. The 1993 Roads Act places a statutory obligation on landowners and occupiers to ensure roadside structures, trees, shrubs or other vegetation do not present a danger to those using and working on public roads.

2. To ask Monaghan Co Co for an up regarding the Unfinished Housing Development, Chapel Court, Carrickroe?

In order to resolve the dereliction issue on this site, Monaghan County Council has undertaken extensive engagement with the owners of the unfinished housing development at Chapel Court, Carrickroe.

Unfortunately, this engagement process has been unsuccessful resulting in the recording of the site on the Country Derelict Sites register. The Council will shortly proceed to issue Section 22 and 15 notices to allow for the Compulsory Acquisition of this derelict site to be completed.

18. Notices of Motion

Motions 18 (1) and 18 (2) deferred to January 2024 meeting.

19. Votes of Sympathy/Congratulations

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

- Fintan Smyth, Fire Fighter, Castleblayney Fire Service on the death of his Father, Eamon Smyth.
- Caroline Walshe, Clerical Officer, Housing Section on the death of her mother, Dymrna Harte (née O'Neill).
- Cllr C Bennett on the death of her cousin Barry McArdle, Middletown, Co Armagh
- Minister Heather Humphreys on the death of her mother Emily Stewart (née Fannin)

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

- Castleblayney Drama festival committee under the stewardship of Director Joe Hanratty and Chairperson Rita Connell.

The Cathaoirleach concluded the meeting by wishing everyone a very happy Christmas.

Signed: _____
Cathaoirleach

Meetings Administrator

Date: _____