

Minutes of Meeting of Monaghan County Council held in the Council Chamber, Mtek Building, Armagh Road, Monaghan, County Monaghan on Monday 06 November at 10.00am

Chair: Cllr D. Maxwell, Cathaoirleach

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

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

Urgent Business:

The Cathaoirleach informed the members that he had received a notice of urgent business in the name of the Sinn Fein party as follows:

That this Council call on the Irish Government to demand of the Israeli Government an immediate and unequivocal cessation of their brutal bombing and killing of innocent people in Gaza and immediate and unconditional release of all prisoners. We also condemn Hamas for the killing of innocent civilians on 07 October in Israel.

On the proposal of Cllr N Keelan, seconded by Cllr B McKenna, it was agreed to enter '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 N Keelan, seconded by Cllr B McKenna, it was agreed that the Council revert to public session.

1. Confirmation of Minutes:

Minutes of Council Meeting held on 02 October 2023

On the proposal of Cllr S Coyle seconded by Cllr N Keelan it was agreed that the minutes of the Council meeting held on the 02 October 2023, be confirmed.

2. Correspondence

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

- Acknowledgement Letter from Private Secretary to Mr. Paul Reid CEO HSE, regarding increase in the nursing staff complement in Monaghan South
- Acknowledgement email from the Private Secretary to Karen Trant, Commission for Regulation of Utilities Foreign Affairs, regarding regulation of electricity and energy.
- Acknowledgement Letter from the Private Secretary to the Minister for Housing, Local Government and Heritage Mr. Darragh O'Brien T.D., regarding an extension to the 13-month timeframe currently required to secure grants under Croí Cónaithe Scheme.
- Letter from Mad about Monaghan, regarding inward tourism into Monaghan (town and county) a result of Feile Oriel and Mad about Monaghan.
- Resolution from Limerick County Council regarding Funding to the National Treatment Purchase Fund (NTPF) to stop further nursing home closures.

- Resolution from Dun Laoghaire Rathdown County Council regarding Fossil Fuel Non-Proliferation Treaty.
- Resolution from Clare County Council regarding that traffic calming measures would be part of planning conditions for all new housing applications.

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

- Email from the Private Secretary to the Minister for Housing, Local Government and Heritage Mr. Darragh O'Brien T.D., regarding grants under Croi Cónaithe Scheme.
- Email from the Office of the Minister for Justice, Ms. Helen McEntee T.D., regarding the New Garda Rosters.
- Acknowledgement Letter from the Assistant Private Secretary to the Taoiseach, Leo Varadkar T.D., regarding grants under Croi Cónaithe Scheme.
- Letter from Private Secretary to Sam Waide RSA, regarding review policies that can help reverse the upward turn in road death.
- Letter from the Private Secretary to the Minister for Education, Ms. Norma Foley T.D., regarding access to school transport.

Proposals arising out of correspondence:

On the proposal of Cllr N. Keelan, seconded by Cllr C Bennett it was agreed to refer the correspondence received from Clare Co Co regarding imposing planning conditions on all new housing applications in respect of traffic calming measures to the Economic Development and Enterprise Support SPC for discussion and consideration.

On the proposal of Cllr C Bennett, seconded by Cllr N. Keelan it was agreed that this Council extend an invitation to Ms Siobhan Griffin, Bus Eireann, to attend a meeting of Monaghan County Council for the purpose of having a discussion to ensure all school children have a place on the school bus in 2024.

3. To consider Chief Executive's Report on Proposed Variation 5 to the Monaghan County Development Plan 2019-2025

The members noted the reports which had been circulated in relation to the proposed variation No 5 of the Monaghan County Development Plan.

In accordance with the Local Government Act 2011 (as amended) and the Ethics Framework, Cllr N Keelan declared a conflict of interest in relation to this item and withdrew from the meeting whilst the matter was being dealt with.

Mr T Gourley, Senior Executive Planner outlined the Chief Executive's Report on Proposed Variation 5 of the County Development Plan. Following agreement from the members at the September Council meeting to proceed to public consultation with twenty-three requests for a change in zoning of lands (19 to be dezoned and 4 to be rezoned), Mr Gourley advised that the public consultation period concluded on 05 October 2023. Ten submissions were received during the public consultation period, all from Government organisations and Local Authorities, and a summary of these with responses were set out in the Chief Executive's Report circulated with the agenda. Mr Gourley pointed out that the Office of the Planning Regulator (OPR) recommended that the proposed variation relating to lands at Tully, Monaghan (variation sub reference 5c) be omitted and that the Strategic Residential Reserve

land use zoning for these lands be retained. Mr Gourley advised, having considered the recommendation of the OPR, that it was now concluded that this proposed change of zoning would be best determined under the preparation of the Monaghan County Development Plan 2025-2031 and should therefore not proceed.

On the proposal of Cllr P Connolly, seconded by Cllr S Coyle it was agreed to adopt proposed Variation No 5 to change the zoning of certain lands in the settlements of Monaghan, Carrickmacross, Castleblayney, Clones, Scotstown and Ballinode.

4. To Consider Section 183 notice relating to Sale of Land (Building) at 4/5 Mill Street Monaghan

Mr C. Flynn, Director of Services, referred to the Section 183 notice dated 19th September 2023 which had been circulated in relation to the Sale of Land (Building) at 4/5 Mill Street, Monaghan. He advised that Monaghan Co Co acquired the property in 2017 via CPO. The property was offered for sale on the open market but no expressions of interest were received. Monaghan Co Co carried out structural works to stabilise the building in 2021 and no potential use has been identified for the property. C. Flynn stated that from a regeneration perspective, the sale of the building is in the best interests of the economic development of Monaghan town. The proposal has been discussed at Monaghan MD.

On the proposal Cllr P Connolly seconded by Cllr R Aughey it was agreed that the Council approve the sale of Lands the Sale of Land (building) at 4/5 Mill Street Monaghan, in accordance with the terms of the notice dated 19 September 2023 and attached site location map under Section 183 of the Local Government Act 2001.

5. Presentation of draft Tourism Strategy 2023 – 2028

Mr Alan Hill and Ms Deirdre Lewis from Alan Hill Tourism Management Consultants joined the meeting to present the draft Tourism Strategy for Co Monaghan 2023 – 2028. Mr Hill commenced his presentation by stating the consultants had been appointed in early 2023 to develop a vibrant Tourism Strategy that would be the roadmap for tourism development in Co Monaghan for 2023-2028. They were tasked with four essential things:

- Ensure that requisite infrastructure is in place
- Develop a shared vision
- Identify key actions to guide and stimulate
- Present innovative and collaborative tourism opportunities and visitor experiences

During the course of the presentation, Mr Hill and Ms Lewis referred to:

- Monaghan Tourism Strategy – phased approach
- Policy and Context for Tourism Strategy
- Stakeholder Engagement – at the core of Tourism Strategy
- Vision for the future of Monaghan Tourism
- Focus on Destination and Experience Development

Mr Hill outlined the Road Map for Tourism Development consisting of 6 pillars, each integrated to achieve the overall vision and objectives of the Strategy.

Ms Lewis referred to the seven Key Performance Indicators which were established to assist in monitoring the implementation of the strategy and evaluate progress.

Mr Lewis concluded by highlighting the additional resources and interventions to assist in the rollout and delivery of the Tourism Strategy 2023-2028.

On the proposal of Cllr S Conlon, seconded by Cllr N Keelan it was agreed to refer the proposed establishment of a Tourism and Recreation Forum to the Economic Development and Enterprise Support SPC for discussion and consideration.

On the proposal of Cllr A. Campbell, seconded by Cllr C Bennett it was agreed to adopt the Draft Tourism Strategy 2023-2028 as presented.

6. To ratify the decision taken at the Special Council Meeting on 17th October 2023, to proceed with a Part 8 Planning submission and tender process, for the development of Civic Offices at Rooskey, Monaghan.

Cllr S Coyle proposed, Cllr B. McKenna seconded that Monaghan County Council proceed with a Part VIII Planning submission and tender process for the development of Civic Offices at Rooskey, Monaghan.

A recorded vote was taken which resulted as follows:

For: Cllrs Aughey, Bennett, Campbell, Carthy, S. Conlon, Coyle, Gilliland, Keelan, P. Conlon, McElvaney, McKenna, O’Hanlon, P. Treanor, Truell

Total: 14

Against: Cllrs P Connolly, O’Hanlon, McCooey, S Treanor

Total: 4

The Cathaoirleach declared the proposal carried.

7. To nominate members to amalgamated Cavan/Monaghan Drugs & Alcohol Forum

*On the proposal of Cllr D Maxwell, seconded by Cllr S Gilliland it was agreed that **Cllr R Truell** be nominated to the Cavan/Monaghan Drugs & Alcohol Forum*

*On the proposal of Cllr C Carthy, seconded by Cllr S Conlon it was agreed that **Cllr C Bennett** be nominated to the Cavan/Monaghan Drugs & Alcohol Forum*

*On the proposal of Cllr R Aughey, seconded by Cllr A McCooey it was agreed that **Cllr S Coyle** be nominated to the Cavan/Monaghan Drugs & Alcohol Forum*

8. To receive a presentation on Strategy to deal with Vacancy & Dereliction in Co Monaghan

Ms O McConnon, A/Director of Services introduced the presentation by stating that the presentation would outline the multi-pronged approach to dealing with vacancy and dereliction across the county. She introduced Kevin McNally who was recently appointed as Town Regeneration Officer; John Reilly, Vacant Homes Officer and Sinead McCann who would point to the positive interventions taken by members in dealing with vacancy and dereliction in 2023.

During the course of the presentation K. McNally and J. Reilly outlined the following:

- Context - Town Centre First Policy – Challenges facing our towns

- Issues leading to property Dereliction & Vacancy
- Role of Vacant Homes officer
- Outputs of initial surveys
- Schemes/Initiatives to deal with Vacancy and Dereliction
- Progress to date in dealing with dereliction
- Proposed Next Steps
- Implications of proposals

S. McCann provided an update to members on commercial rates in Co Monaghan. She advised that there are 2500 commercial properties in the County with €14.7 million accrued in 2023. There are 602 vacant properties with €1.5 million write off on vacant properties in 2023. She stated that the collection rate for occupied properties is one of the highest in the country. She advised that a decision was taken by members at budget 2023 to apply an 80% write off to vacant commercial properties, previously a 100% write off applied. S. McCann advised that 562 customers were issued with Vacancy Packs setting out the new vacancy scheme requirements. She outlined the outcomes of the scheme in each area. She advised that the scheme did not have the desired impact on town center properties. S. McCann proposed that the 20% levy should be recommended to members for budget 2024.

K McNally, J Reilly and S McCann responded to members queries. The Cathaoirleach thanked them for their presentation.

11. To receive a presentation from David Clarke, National Ambulance Service

Mr David Clarke, National Ambulance Service along with Tom Horwell, Assistant Chief Ambulance Officer; Sean Prior, Operational Resource Manager and Ken Lyons, General Manager, National Emergency Operations Centre joined the meeting to provide members an overview on the National Ambulance Service. Mr Clarke commenced by stating that NAS are acutely aware of its limitations. During the course of his presentation he referred to:

- Capacity
- Infrastructure Development Plan
- Emergency Ambulances – locations, availability and rosters
- KPI Target 2023 and Response Times – 75% of Clinical Status Purple incidents responded to in under 19 minutes and 45% of Clinical Status Red incidents responded to in under 19 minutes
- Challenges – Capacity v Demand; Hospital turnaround times; Hospital admissions; Recruitment; Infrastructure/Locations
- Future Direction for NAS in terms of:
 - Recruitment
 - Hospital Turnaround Times
 - New HSE Rapid Turnaround KPIs
 - New Geographical Structure
 - Sláintecare
 - Community Health Organisations and Hospital Groups to Health Regions
 - New Strategy

Mr Clarke concluded his presentation by highlighting the following Key Takeaways:

- Significant increase in demand not matched by increased resources
- Significant ambition by the NAS
 - Supported by Ministerial commitment to invest
 - Significant investment in stations to date

- Recruitment is a significant concern for NAS in Cavan/Monaghan
- Alternative Pathways
- Integration / More strategic approach
- Key message to the public is not to call 999 unless needed
- Community First Responder
- Strategic Engagement

Mr Clarke and his colleagues addressed members queries. The Cathaoirleach thanked Mr Clarke for his presentation.

20. Votes of Sympathy/Congratulations

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

- Rosemarie Sherry, Clerical Officer, Planning on the death of her Father Eugene Treanor.
- Amanda Meehan, Clerical Officer, Housing on the death of her Father Francis McAree.
- Dermot Bannigan, Chief Fire Officer, Fire Services and Liz Brannigan, Senior Staff Officer, Corporate Services on the death of Dermot Father Gerry Brannigan.
- Fintan Smyth, (Fire Fighter, Castleblayney Fire Service) on the death of his Father Eamon Smyth.
- Smyth Family on the death of Tommy Smyth, MD, The Northern Standard
- Cllr Aoife McCooley on the death of her Aunt Gertie McCooley

Urgent Business

Cllr B McKenna proposed, Cllr C Bennett seconded that this Council call on the Irish Government to demand of the Israeli Government an immediate and unequivocal cessation of their brutal bombing and killing of innocent people in Gaza and immediate and unconditional release of all prisoners. We also condemn Hamas for the killing of innocent civilians on 07 October in Israel.

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

The meeting concluded.

Signed: _____
Cathaoirleach

Meetings Administrator

Date: _____