

**Minutes of Leitrim County Council meeting held in the Bee Park Community Centre,
Manorhamilton on Monday, 7 September 2020**

Members Present: Councillor Enda McGloin
Councillor Sean McGowan
Councillor Brendan Barry
Councillor Frank Dolan
Councillor Caillian Ellis
Councillor Pdraig Fallon
Councillor Paddy Farrell
Councillor Des Guckian
Councillor Felim Gurn
Councillor Sean McDermott
Councillor Finola Armstrong McGuire
Councillor Thomas Mulligan
Councillor Paddy O'Rourke
Councillor Ita Reynolds Flynn
Councillor Enda Stenson
Councillor Justin Warnock

Councillor Mary Bohan (Cathaoirleach) presiding

Apologies: Councillor Gerry Dolan

Officials Present: Lar Power, Chief Executive
Joseph Gilhooly, Director of Services, Economic Development,
Planning and Infrastructural Services
Vincent Dwyer, Head of Finance, Finance, Water, Environment,
Climate Action and Cultural Services
Mary Quinn, Director of Services, Housing, Corporate Services,
Community and Cultural Services
Kieran Brett, Meetings Administrator
Kathleen Ellis, Assistant Staff Officer

At the outset of the meeting Cathaoirleach, Cllr Mary Bohan welcomed all the Members, Executive and members of the public and press to the meeting in Manorhamilton.

MM.110.20 Votes of Sympathy

The Members extended a vote of sympathy to the following:

Mary Quinn and Family on the death of Mrs Dettie Cox R.I.P

MM.111.20 Adoption of Minutes

MM.111.20a Minutes of Annual Meeting held on Friday, 26th June 2020

On the **PROPOSAL** of Cllr. Padraig Fallon
SECONDED by Cllr. Felim Gurn

It was **AGREED** to adopt the minutes of Annual Meeting of 26th June 2020

MM.111.20b Minutes of Meeting held on Friday, 26th June 2020

On the **PROPOSAL** of Cllr. Finola Armstrong McGuire
SECONDED by Cllr. Des Guckian

It was **AGREED** to adopt the minutes of Meeting of 26th June 2020

MM.112.20 Disposals under Section 183(1) of the Local Government Act, 2001

MM.112.20a Consider for approval disposal of Freehold Interest in property at Ardunsaghen, Corrowallen, Carrigallen, Co.Leitrim.

On the **PROPOSAL** of Cllr. Paddy O'Rourke
SECONDED by Cllr. Caillian Ellis

It was **AGREED** that the Council consent to the disposal of Freehold interest in property pursuant to the provisions of Article 206 of the Planning & Development Regulations 2001, Section 211 of the Planning & Development Act 2000 (as amended) and Section 183 of the Local Government Act, 2001 of particulars of property which it is proposed to dispose of at a location in County Leitrim and to the persons set out in the schedule hereunder. Particulars of the property to which County Council proposes to dispose:

The Property: Property comprising of 0.29 hectares in the townland of Ardunsaghen, Corrowallen, Carrigallen, Co Leitrim as contained in Folio LM68L

The Person(s) to whom the property is to be disposed of: **Mary Connolly**

The Consideration proposed in respect of the disposal: €30. All legal fees associated with the conversion of the Leasehold interest to the Freehold interest in this property will be the responsibility of applicant Mary Connolly.

MM.112.20b Consider for approval disposal of 40 St. Patrick's, Carrick-on-Shannon, Co. Leitrim

On the **PROPOSAL** of Cllr. Finola Armstrong McGuire
SECONDED by Cllr. Enda Stenson

It was **AGREED** that the Council consent to the disposal of interest in property and pursuant to the provisions of Article 206 of the Planning & Development Regulations 2001, Section 211 of the Planning & Development Act 2000 (as amended) and Section 183 of the

Local Government Act, 2001 of particulars of property which it is proposed to dispose of at a location in County Leitrim and to the persons set out in the schedule hereunder. Particulars of the property to which County Council proposes to dispose:

The Property: Urban 2-bedroom House situated on a site comprising circa 0.02 hectare, at St Patrick's Park, Co Leitrim as contained in Folio LM13128

The Person(s) to whom the property is to be disposed of: **Mr & Mrs Earley**
The Consideration proposed in respect of the disposal: **€34,000 (minus estate agent and Leitrim County Council legal fees).**

MM.113.20 To receive an update on Leitrim County Council's Budgetary Process

Mr. Vincent Dwyer, Head of Finance, Water, Environment, Climate Action and Cultural Services presented a detailed overview of the Budgetary Process for 2021.

The update was noted by the Members.

On the **PROPOSAL** of Cllr. Mary Bohan
SECONDED by Cllr. Pdraig Fallon

It was **AGREED** that the Plenary Budget meeting of Leitrim County Council take place on Monday, 23rd November 2020.

MM.114.20 To consider the Setting of the Local Adjustment Factor for Local Property Tax Rates for 2021

Mr Vincent Dwyer, Head of Finance, Water, Environment, Climate Action and Cultural Services presented the Chief Executive's Report to the Members on the setting of the Local Adjustment Factor for Local Property Tax Rates for 2021.

On the **PROPOSAL** of Cllr. Paddy O'Rourke
SECONDED by Cllr. Enda McGloin

That the basic rate of Local Property Tax should stand varied upwards by 15% for the year 2021 in respect of relevant residential properties situated in County Leitrim.

Councillor Des Guckian proposed that the basic rate of Local Property Tax should be reduced by 15% for the year 2021 due to the hardship experienced by people during 2020.

Councillor Pdraig Fallon said he could not support a reduction in the Local Property Tax at this time as this is vital income for County Leitrim and he didn't see any benefit by reducing this until there is an improvement in the Local Authority's finances.

Cathaoirleach, Councillor Mary Bohan outlined as there is no seconder for the counter

proposal, the original proposal stands and that the Local Property Tax adjustment factor remains as it was last year.

On the **PROPOSAL** of Cllr. Paddy O'Rourke
SECONDED by Cllr. Enda McGloin

It was **AGREED** that the basic rate of Local Property Tax should stand varied upwards by 15% for the year 2021 in respect of relevant residential properties situated in County Leitrim.

MM.115.20 To approve the draft Fire and Operations Plan developed under Section 26 of the Fire Services Act 1981

Mr. Vincent Dwyer, Head of Finance, Water, Environment, Climate Action and Emergency Services provided an overview of the Fire & Emergency Operations Plan 2020 – 2025.

Councillor Des Guckian raised the following issues: -

- Major accidents on the N4 - Possibility of such accidents needs to be included as part of preparation of the Emergency Plan. Not enough specification in the plan on the N4 and the issues raised previously regarding the N4 should be included in the plan.
- Concerns regarding a potential incident that could occur at Flagford Station which is major battery storage facility located outside of Carrick-on-Shannon. Leitrim Fire Service should liaise with Roscommon Fire Service in this regard
- Use of aerial technology - where are they going to be used and in what circumstances?
- The provision of an additional Water Tanker for Leitrim Fire Service is extremely important
- Are Fire Service crews being deployed to agreed staffing levels?

Councillor Brendan Barry welcomed the additional water tanker and queried if local contractors would be considered when the need arises.

Mr Vincent Dwyer replied to the queries raised by Members as follows:

Risk Assessment is ongoing in relation to major incidents that may occur in the county and it is not appropriate to include these in plan.

The battery storage facility at Flagford is a matter for Roscommon Fire Service.

List of contractors will be available in each county for provision of Water Tanker services. Support will be within and outside each county.

Drones will be used to assess any fire incidents that covers a vast area.

Crewing numbers is determined nationally, and these numbers are currently subject to a national review. Mr Dwyer noted that one of the biggest challenges in the Fire Service in Leitrim is recruiting fire fighters. Mr Dwyer asked Cllr Des Guckian to submit the details of his specific concerns in regard to crewing and a reply will be issued to him.

Mr Dwyer said the plan sets out the key objectives that centre on maintaining the high standard of service to the community in terms of planning, training, and being equipped to deliver an effective and safe response to emergencies. Key items for the plan include upgrading of fire stations and equipment, ongoing development and operational efficiency and customer service.

On the **PROPOSAL** of Cllr. Justin Warnock
SECONDED by Cllr. Enda McGloin

It was **AGREED** to adopt the Fire & Operation Plan 2020 -2023 pursuant under Section 26 of the Fire Services Act 1981.

Cathaoirleach, Cllr Mary Bohan paid tribute to the great service provided by Leitrim Fire Service.

MM.116.20 To approve the draft Litter Management Plan 2020 - 2023 pursuant to Part 111 of the Litter Pollution Act 1997

Mr. Vincent Dwyer, Head of Finance, Water, Environment, Climate Action and Emergency Services provided an overview of the Litter Management Plan 2020-2023.

The Cathaoirleach and Members agreed that Motion No 17 from Councillor Thomas Mulligan would be taken at this point as it relates to this issue.

To consider the following Notice of Motion submitted by Councillor Thomas Mulligan;

"I propose that we devise a countywide scheme with regard to the design, provision and correct use of litter bins in our towns and villages. Presently there is various trains of thought as to whether they are a good idea or not. The misuse of existing bins for domestic waste and the ability of wildlife especially crows to eject the contents onto the street defeats the purpose for which they were intended."

Report by Head of Finance, Water, Environment, Climate Action and Emergency Services

"This matter can be referred to the Environment, Climate Action and Agriculture Strategic Policy Committee for further consideration and recommendation."

Councillor Thomas Mulligan said that the misuse of existing bins in Mohill for domestic waste and the ability of wildlife especially crows to eject the contents onto the street defeats the purpose for which they are intended and proposed that a countywide scheme be designed to ensure bins are wildlife and domestic waste proof.

Cathaoirleach, Councillor Mary Bohan said that this is a county wide issue.

Councillor Enda Stenson, Councillor Sean McDermott supported the motion.

Councillor Des Guckian supported the Litter Plan and proposed that Leitrim County Council revert to providing a waste collection service throughout the county rather than one provided by Private Contractors.

Councillor Sean McGowan proposed that a Waste Regulator be appointed, and that further contact be made with the Department in this regard. Councillor McGowan referred to the €9 increase per quarter for waste collection that was introduced earlier in 2020.

Councillor Padraig Fallon proposed that a Deposit and Returns scheme be introduced in Leitrim and in each Municipal District.

Councillor Brendan Barry referred to World Clean Up Day on the 19th September 2020 and hoped that Leitrim County Council will be facilitating this initiative.

Mr Vincent Dwyer said litter is an ongoing problem - currently there are three community wardens who continue to monitor and investigate incidents of litter pollution and illegal dumping.

Mr Dwyer said he will revert to Councillors on the Deposit and Returns Scheme in due course.

Mr Dwyer outlined that Leitrim County Council is part of the Shared Service that licenses private contractors to collect waste. Private Contractors have invested a lot of resources in providing these services in the past number of years and there is no intention for the local authority to revert to provision of waste collection services.

On the **PROPOSAL** of Cllr. Thomas Mulligan
SECONDED by Cllr. Enda Stenson

It was **AGREED** to adopt Litter Management Plan 2020 -2023 pursuant to Part 111 of the Litter Pollution Act 1997

MM.117.20 Management Reports - June & July 2020

The Management Reports for June and July 2020 was circulated to Members in accordance with Section 136 (2) of the Local Government Act, 2001 as inserted by Section 51 of the Local Government Reform Act, 2014.

Councillor Des Guckian said he had been contacted by a local business person who expressed their frustration at the enormous delay in completing the Carrick-on-Shannon Public Realm works. Cllr Guckian said that 14 businesses were affected by the delay and

sought clarification as to when the job will be finished.

In reply Mr Joseph Gilhooly, Director of Services said the Council were certainly disappointed by the progress of the contractor on this project. He said that discussions have taken place with the contractor and noted August is traditionally a time for holidays for those in the construction sector. Mr Gilhooly confirmed that significant discussions are taking place with the contractor currently and will advise the Member in question when the contractor confirms the date of completion.

The monthly management reports were noted by Members.

MM.118.20 Report from Corporate Policy Group

Report from CPG on meeting arrangements

Ms Mary Quinn, Director of Services, Housing, Corporate Services, Community and Cultural Services outlined that the Corporate Policy Group had considered the following in relation to convening of Council meetings: -

- Most Recent Public Health Guidance and key considerations for the holding of Council meetings
- The venue for future Council meetings in 2020 to be reviewed in the context of public health guidance available in advance of the meetings.
- The Corporate Policy Group agreed that meetings should be confined to 2 hour duration and that the co-operation of all members would be needed in this regard in terms of Members accepting replies to motions where the matter has been addressed satisfactorily and members speaking primarily to their own motion. The Mod.Gov app rolled out to members earlier this year, facilitates the viewing of all replies to members motions at the commencement of the meeting.
- It was also noted by the Corporate Policy Group that members and other attendees would be required to wear face coverings at all face to face Council meetings and that where a Member is attending a meeting in person they will be required to complete a Covid-19 screening questionnaire and submit to the Meetings Administrator on arrival at the meeting.
- In relation to the attendance by Media / Members of the Public, the Corporate Policy Group noted that the attendance of the media will continue to be facilitated, however it may be necessary to limit attendance by members of the public at meetings during the Covid-19 Pandemic in the context of venue capacity and Covid-19 restrictions.
- Each Municipal District meeting will be conducted in person adhering to the Public Health Guidelines

On the **PROPOSAL** of Cllr. Paddy O'Rourke
SECONDED by Cllr. Pdraig Fallon

It was **AGREED** that each Municipal District meeting would meet in person adhering to the Public Health Guidelines.

Councillor Des Guckian welcomed this. Cathaoirleach, Councillor Mary Bohan outlined the need for Leitrim County Council to adhere to National Public Health advice and agreed that meetings should be confined to 2 hour duration unless circumstances change and that the co-operation of all members would be needed in this regard.

Reports from SPC's

- Cllr Justin Warnock, gave an update from the Environment, Climate Action and Agriculture SPC
- Cllr Caillian Ellis gave an update from the Housing Policy, Social & Cultural Development SPC
- Cllr Frank Dolan gave an update from the Economic Development, Planning, and Infrastructure SPC

Reports were noted by Members.

MM.119.20 Attendance at conferences/training

On the **PROPOSAL** of Cllr. Enda McGloin
SECONDED by Cllr. Padraig Fallon

It was **AGREED** that the attendance of Cllr Paddy Farrell, Cllr Ita Reynolds Flynn and Cllr Thomas Mulligan at the AILG Training in Carrickdale Hotel, Dundalk on the 30th July 2020 be retrospectively approved.

It was **AGREED** that the attendance of Cllr Frank Dolan and Cllr Enda McGloin at the AILG Training in Hodson Bay Hotel, Athlone on the 11th August 2020 be retrospectively approved.

MM.120.20 Correspondence

- Resolution dated 16th June 2020 from Kerry County Council calling on the Department of the Taoiseach and the Department of Tourism that the VAT rate on the tourism industry be reduced to 0% to try and alleviate the pressure on related businesses and attempt to avoid the complete decimation of this sector.
- Acknowledgement received from the Office of the Taoiseach dated 3rd July 2020 in response to Resolution passed by Leitrim County Council in regard to Lending Rates.
- Acknowledgement received from the Office of the Taoiseach dated 3rd July 2020 in response to Resolution passed by Leitrim County Council in regard to Carbon Tax.
- Resolution dated 8th July 2020 from Limerick City & County Council supporting the

National Small Business Recovery Plan and calling on the Government, Taoiseach and the Minister for Enterprise, Trade and Employment to fund and immediately implement the findings and recommendations of the National Small Business Recovery Plan.

- Resolution dated 13th July 2020 from Sligo County Council calling on the Minister for Agriculture and the Minister for Justice to amend legislation to permit the Property Registration Authority to include rights of way by necessity in their remit which are the simplest to adjudicate from map inspections and should be kept away from costly court proceedings in order to free up the courts or to set up an Independent adjudicator to deal with these matters quickly.

Councillor Justin Warnock supported this motion

- Resolution dated 13th July 2020 from Sligo County Council banning the use at official and unofficial bathing places and sale of at any location within the county of inflatable dinghies and all dangerous inflatable products and that the Council write to the Department of Housing, Planning and Local Government to seek a nationwide Ban on these dangerous products before more young lives are lost. These products have consistently warned of the dangers of these products and have been described by Irish Water Safety as “Floating Killers”.

Councillor Justin Warnock supported this motion.

- Resolution dated 25th June 2020 from Roscommon County Council calling on the Government to financially support all Tidy Towns & Voluntary Groups in Co Roscommon to ensure maintenance of all public areas not under the remit of the Local Authority.
- Resolution dated 13th July 2020 from Waterford City & County Council supporting SIPTU and the “Big Start Campaign” which demands adequate investment in the Early Years services to make it affordable, accessible with high quality with professional pay for childcare workers and calls on the Government to support the campaigns.
- Acknowledgement received 16th July 2020 from the Office of the Minister for Housing, Local Government and Heritage in response to Resolution passed by Leitrim County Council regarding thresholds for the tenant purchase scheme.

Councillor Pdraig Fallon proposed that a reminder be sent to Minister O’Brien in this regard.

- Resolution dated 14th July 2020 from Limerick City and County Council calling for an urgent meeting with the Minister with responsibility for Planning to outline the Council’s opposition to the National Planning Framework on Rural Housing Policy and that Limerick City and County Council totally reject the National Planning Framework policy regarding

once off rural housing.

- Acknowledgement received 16th July 2020 from the Office of the Minister for Agriculture, Food and the Marine in response to Resolution passed by Leitrim County Council regarding the GLAS Scheme.
- Letter received 24th July 2020 from the Office of the Minister for Agriculture, Food and the Marine confirming any provisions for GLAS in the transitional period would take place within the framework of these arrangements subject to legislative and budgetary considerations.
- Acknowledgement received 16th July 2020 from the Office of the Minister for Agriculture, Food and the Marine in relation to Resolution passed by Leitrim County Council concerning Aid Package for Farmers.
- Acknowledgement received 17th July 2020 from the Office of the Taoiseach in response to Resolution passed by Leitrim County Council regarding the Compensation Fund for small businesses.
- Acknowledgement received 16th July 2020 from the Department of Communications, Climate Action and Environment in response to Resolution passed by Leitrim County Council regarding SLNCR Greenway.
- Acknowledgement received 16th July 2020 from the Department of Communications, Climate Action and Environment in response to Resolution passed by Leitrim County Council regarding High Speed Broadband.
- Resolution dated 10th July 2020 from Derry City & Strabane District Council in relation to care homes and the organisation and operation of domiciliary care services across the North should be brought back into the public ownership as part of the National Health Service.
- Acknowledgement dated 21st July 2020 from An Garda Siochana in regard to book of condolence received from Leitrim County Council in memory of the late Detective Garda Colm Horkan.
- Acknowledgment dated 27th July 2020 from An Garda Siochana acknowledging the kind expression of sympathy on behalf of Leitrim County Council concerning the death of Garda Colm Horkan.
- Acknowledgement dated 27th July 2020 from the Office of the Minister for Agriculture, Food and the Marine in response to Resolution passed by Leitrim County Council concerning the landslide on Shass mountain.

- Email received 6th August 2020 from the Office of the Minister for Finance in relation to the SMEs and confirming that the country continues to move through the roadmap for reopening society and business and the Minister and the Department endeavours to do all they can to assist SMEs to deal with this crisis.
- Resolution dated 14th August 2020 from Kerry County Council calling on the Minister for Finance that a state pension public service fund be put in place for public workers.
- Resolution dated 20th August 2020 from Louth County Council that a special taskforce be established with the relevant stakeholders and the local community in light of the impact COVID 19 is having and will continue to have on people's mental health and well-being.
- Email received 21st August 2020 from the Office of Minister Ryan referring to a Resolution passed by Leitrim County Council in regard to high speed broadband in Leitrim confirming connectivity to remote rural locations is central to promoting regional development and BCPs represent an important delivery in the early stages of the National Broadband Plan.

Councillor Des Guckian expressed his disappointment in this regard and said this should be done as soon as possible.

Mr Joseph Gilhooly said the survey on the National Broadband has been rolled out.

- Letter dated 21st August 2020 from Alison McCullagh, Chief Executive, Fermanagh & Omagh District Council calling on the Health and Safety Executive and all Councils across the island of Ireland to urge for the need for Care Homes to be brought into public ownership in the context of an all island health care service, free at the point of entry.
- Email dated 10th August 2020 from Disability Federation in relation to a public awareness campaign that brings the disability and wider community together to consider the needs of people with disabilities in the public spaces we all share and calling on Leitrim County Council to support the establishment of an annual national "Make Way Day".
- Email dated 31st August 2020 from the Department of Transport, Tourism and Sport in relation to Circular RW 09 2020 Climate Change Adaptation Allocations 2020.

Councillor Des Guckian referred to road in the Mullagh Townland and outlined that this road needs to be raised.

MM.121.20 Vote of Congratulations

The members extended a vote of congratulations to the following

- The Shed Distillery in Drumshanbo on the official opening of their Visitor Experience

Centre on the 13th September 2020 in Drumshanbo and wished them every success for the future.

- 2020 Leaving Cert Students who received their Calculated Grades today and wished them all the best for the future.
- Leitrim GAA, Brendan Doyle, and the Production team on the excellent production of the live streaming of Leitrim GAA Football Matches.

MM.122.20 Notices of Motions

At this point in the meeting Councillor Finola Armstrong McGuire excused herself from the meeting while Motion 11 and Motion 12 were being discussed due to a conflict of interest.

MM.123.20 Funding calls - Cllr Enda Stenson

"As future grant funding calls are announced by government, it is clearly understood and accepted the Executive will continue to make application for such funding for projects across the County for the betterment of the County, as they are mandated to do. I am however seeking support of members that we as Elected Members, do not encourage the discussion of such concepts or project applications with external parties, regardless of the projects merits, for any project that may ultimately involve the acquisition of a person's business or dwelling until such time as the pertinent affected party have been briefed on the project or the concept by the Council Executive or their agents."

Report by Director of Services for Economic Development, Planning, Environment and Transportation.

"The continuous and proactive approach of the council executive in identifying opportunities and responding to funding calls is a critical component of the ongoing economic, physical, cultural and social development of the County. In the recent past funding opportunities have increased significantly with the advent of a myriad of new funding streams. Indeed, in the last week alone significant allocations have been received for the County from new funds arising from the July Stimulus Package. It is not a requirement, nor can it ever be that affected parties are briefed before concept proposals are submitted to government departments for funding. However the bona fides of the particular request in this motion are accepted and in future the council executive will endeavour that all pertinent affected parties are briefed on project concepts that may ultimately involve the acquisition of their home or business before any external party discussions take place."

Councillor Enda Stenson gave the background to his motion and acknowledged that the Council must pursue any and all funding opportunities and called on the Council Executive not to discuss concept funding applications which could involve the acquisition of homes or business with external parties until those directly impacted have been briefed on the project.

Mr Joseph Gilhooly said that the bona fides of the particular request in this motion are

accepted and in future the council executive will endeavour that all pertinent affected parties are briefed on project concepts that may ultimately involve the acquisition of their home or business before any external party discussions take place.

MM.124.20 Department Funding under URDF Call - Cllr Des Guckian

"That we, Cllrs, condemn the secretive and untruthful way the CEO, Mr Lar Power, and his senior staff have gone about seeking Department funding, under URDF Call 2 Request for Funding, last May, to alter and rejig houses on Main St, Carrick-on-Shannon, opposite the church, as there was no consultation with us Cllrs or the most detrimentally affected parties such as the Geraghty family and others. We stand opposed to any attempt that may be made, on any pretext, to forcibly take the Geraghty family home and business. We urge the CEO and senior staff to apologise to the Geraghtys and the others and to immediately drop this entire ill-conceived scheme which they are pleased to call a "concept"."

Report by Director of Services for Economic Development, Planning, Environment and Transportation.

"In the first instance the reference to a secretive and untruthful approach by the Executive in relation to this matter is categorically refuted, and we take exception to it. The position is that it is the remit of the Executive to make funding bids under the various funding streams as they arise and to seek to secure as much funding as possible for the County with the objective of making Leitrim the best possible place to live work invest and visit. In terms of such funding applications there is no requirement to, nor would it be practical to, brief the Council on each and every application being made. The executive of this council could deal with over a hundred applications for funding in a year. At the appropriate time, the executive always briefs Council. Furthermore, it is not a requirement, nor can it ever be that affected parties are briefed before concept proposals are submitted to government departments for funding. As referenced in the previous item the council executive will endeavour to brief pertinent affected parties on project concepts that may ultimately involve the acquisition of their home or business before any external party discussions take place.

The Executive does not consider that this concept proposal is ill-conceived. Town centres throughout Ireland are under immense pressure from a retail perspective and are in decline, and the position is that Carrick on Shannon is no different. These pressures include, inter-alia, pressure from out-of-town retail, a transition to trading online and the existence of retail destination centres. The objective of this concept proposal is to arrest that decline in Carrick on Shannon and to construct a 3,000 sqm destination centre in the heart of the town, thereby ensuring Carrick on Shannon's sustainability and viability as a retail town centre into the future. It is considered that this concept proposal has the potential to have a transformational impact on the economy and sustainability of Carrick on Shannon and will be pursued. Finally, the Executive has already clarified the position and conveyed regrets for any misunderstandings."

Councillor Des Guckian said he recognized the need for the Chief Executive and staff to

apply for funding for projects for the County and he objected to the concept proposal.

Councillor Guckian called on the Chief Executive to call off the “dogs of war” in relation to the project and noted that over 9,000 signatures have been collected on a petition by the Geraghty family against the proposed development. He called on the Chief Executive to withdraw the concept proposal and he said that he should be asked to consider his position given the way this matter was progressed.

Councillor Brendan Barry said that he supports the Geraghty family but did not want to be associated with any of the remarks made by Cllr Des Guckian on the motion.

Councillor Pdraig Fallon said he had no doubt what has happened is wrong and it is important to remember that a family home is affected by the proposal. Cllr Fallon said he didn't support the motion as he had difficulty with some of the language used in the motion and with the personal attack on individuals.

Councillor Fallon suggested that the proposed project be moved to Bridge Street where there are a number of vacant properties for sale and queried if this location could be considered.

Councillor Pdraig Fallon further queried where the concept and plans that were drawn up originated from.

Councillor Enda Stenson said he fully supported of the Geraghty family but he did not want to be associated with language used in this motion.

Councillor Sean McGowan said he was not happy with the thrust of the motion put forward and he could not support it. Councillor Sean McGowan said people directly involved should be approached first.

Mr Lar Power, Chief Executive said as Chief Executive he has responsibility for the economic viability and social and community development of County Leitrim and he has to sweat every possible funding opportunity. There are in excess of 100 projects a year where funding is sought, yielding millions of euros back to the County. He clarified the concept for the project came from himself as Chief Executive. He outlined that all towns and villages are under pressure for retail and therefore, destinations of this nature are very important. The objective of this is to create a destination just off the N4 which would attract people into the town centre. Conditions such as location with access onto the Main Street and access to a carpark suitable for buses is critical, and therefore this location was proposed. He shared the concept with his colleagues and an architect was subsequently engaged. He outlined that he does not have to discuss concepts with any stakeholder, as all stakeholders are protected by due process and procedures which will take place if funding is granted and the project moves to design and planning stages. He acknowledged that there has been a misunderstanding and said that the Council has apologised for this. The concept had been brought before the Town Team to see if the project would be of value and if they were of a mind to support it and write a letter of support.

Mr Power contacted one of the affected landowners who was surprised at the concept and had no knowledge of it at that time but following consideration reverted to advise that they wouldn't object to the concept and offered a letter of support. Mr Power said he was aware Mrs Geraghty was an older lady and he asked this neighbouring property owner for advice on how best to approach Mrs Geraghty as he didn't want to upset her particularly as it was only at concept stage and might not get approval to proceed. This landowner kindly undertook to meet Mrs Geraghty and introduce the concept to her. Mr Power outlined that he was subsequently informed by this neighbour a number of days later that Mrs Geraghty, whilst possibly amenable to the use of the back garden was wholly opposed to the concept using her building. However, Mr Power outlined that notwithstanding the feedback that the application would be submitted as it remained a concept only and may not be approved and therefore he did not propose to discuss the concept further with Mrs Geraghty so as to avoid unnecessary upset at that time.

Arising from correspondence from the Geraghty family in July 2020 and a subsequent telephone call Mr Power met Mrs Geraghty and members of her family at their premises as arranged. At this meeting Mr Power was asked to withdraw the project but he advised that he was not prepared to withdraw the concept proposal.

Mr Power said he took exception to the comments made by Cllr Des Guckian.

Cathaoirleach, Cllr Mary Bohan said she has spoken with Mrs Geraghty and the Geraghty family on this matter. Councillor Mary Bohan paid tribute to the staff of Leitrim County Council who are one of the best counties for drawing down funding. Councillor Bohan said this is a difficult position for the Council and she acknowledged the various sentiments that have been expressed around the table.

Cathaoirleach, Cllr Mary Bohan called for a seconder to Councillor Des Guckian's motion which didn't secure any and she outlined that members had expressed reservations with the wording of Councillor Guckian's motion.

Councillor Pdraig Fallon asked Councillor Des Guckian to amend the wording of his motion. Councillor Des Guckian outlined he could not amend his motion.

Councillor Sean McGowan pointed out that this proposal will come back before the Carrick-on-Shannon Municipal District members in due course.

Councillor Enda McGloin agreed this discussion is a matter for the Carrick on Shannon Municipal District and queried if the full Council will have any say on whether the project proceeds or not.

Mr Lar Power clarified that this will be a matter for Carrick-on-Shannon Municipal District if it proceeds to the next stage and this will not be coming back to the full Council. If it gets approval for funding it will go to full design and it could be the end of next year before planning will be a consideration for the Municipal District and, if granted, it could be 2022 before any work could start.

Councillor Sean McGowan proposed that the matter is for the Carrick-on-Shannon Municipal District and the full concerns of the Geraghty family be taken into consideration at this point.

Councillor Enda Stenson supported this proposal.

Cathaoirleach, Cllr Mary Bohan said that this was a very sensitive issue and it is important that it is discussed at the Carrick-on-Shannon Municipal District.

MM.125.20 Compensation for farmers for the loss of income and damage caused by landslides - Cllr Padraig Fallon & Cllr Mary Bohan

It was agreed by the Members that Motion No. 13 in the name of Cllr. Padraig Fallon and Motion No. 22 in the name of Cllr. Mary Bohan be taken concurrently as they relate to the same issue.

"I propose that this Local Authority call on the Minister for Agriculture to ensure that a hardship fund is established for the many farmers that have been affected by the landslides in Leitrim. The lands affected are agriculture lands and therefore I believe the onus is on the Dept of Agriculture to ensure that funds are made available to mitigate, minimise and ensure that no losses, financial penalties or burden is suffered by such farmers. This issue needs to be dealt with in a timely fashion."

"I call on the Minister for Agriculture to put emergency funding in place to compensate farmers for the loss of income and damage to farmland, drainage, fencing etc. caused by the recent Shass Mountain landslide."

On the **PROPOSAL** of Cllr. Padraig Fallon
SECONDED by Cllr. Mary Bohan

It was **AGREED** that Leitrim County Council call on the Minister for Agriculture to ensure that a hardship fund is established for the many farmers that have been affected by the landslides in Leitrim. The lands affected are agriculture lands and therefore I believe the onus is on the Dept of Agriculture to ensure that funds are made available to mitigate, minimise and ensure that no losses, financial penalties or burden is suffered by such farmers. This issue needs to be dealt with in a timely fashion.

On the **PROPOSAL** of Cllr. Mary Bohan
SECONDED by Cllr. Padraig Fallon

It was **AGREED** that Leitrim County Council Minister for Agriculture to put emergency funding in place to compensate farmers for the loss of income and damage to farmland, drainage, fencing etc. caused by the recent Shass Mountain landslide.

Cathaoirleach, Cllr Mary Bohan advised that she has sent an invitation to the new Minister for Agriculture, Food and the Marine, Charlie McConalogue, the IFA, the Irish Natura and Hill Farmers Association and Teagasc to visit the area affected. Councillor Bohan said many farmers do need to be compensated without delay.

MM.126.20 Zero Discharge - Cllr Sean McGowan

"I ask the Chief Executive has there been any progress with regard to the problems we have here in Leitrim with Zero Discharge in relation to obtaining planning permission for single one off rural housing with our meetings/discussions with Dept of Housing Planning & Local Government and the EPA?"

Report by Director of Services for Economic Development, Planning, Environment and Transportation.

"A review of the current code of practice has been concluded with a revised code awaiting department review. When approved and published the revised code will be assessed in regard to impact on the County however, it is expected to contain only marginal alterations. Secondly, discussions with the Department were delayed due to Government Formation etc. However, the Council will endeavour to renew discussions."

Councillor Sean McGowan said that this is a very important issue for this county.

Cathaoirleach, Cllr. Mary Bohan advised that Cllr. Enda McGloin is currently in discussions with the pertinent Minister in this regard and he has agreed to meet a delegation from Leitrim County Council. Cllr Mary Bohan proposed that one member from each political party along with the officials from Leitrim County Council attend the meeting with the Minister. Councillor Mary Bohan proposed the meeting be postponed to the earliest possible date to see if the public health guidelines around the number of people attending meetings may change which will allow more people to attend. Cllr. Enda McGloin will liaise with the Minister and revert to the Members in this regard.

Councillor Des Guckian said this is a very urgent issue and sought clarification as to why the planning laws in this county are far more stringent than in other counties.

Councillor Sean McDermott proposed that the Minister be invited to Leitrim for this meeting.

MM.127.20 County Development Plan - Cllr Sean McDermott

"Can Leitrim County Council frame our County Development Plan, that is now at the draft stage, to address the issues that has caused depopulation to progress in many of our rural areas."

Report by Director of Services for Economic Development, Planning, Environment and

Transportation.

"The County Development Plan contains an overriding vision which the Plan seeks to realize over the life of the Development Plan and beyond. The retention of sustainable rural communities will be a priority of the next County Development Plan. The County Development Plan also establishes the policy framework against which all applications which include proposals for one off housing applications in the countryside are assessed.

The National Planning Framework recognises that careful planning is required to manage demand for housing in the countryside and acknowledges that it will continue to be necessary to demonstrate a functional economic or social requirement for housing need in areas under urban influence i.e. the commuter catchment of large towns such as Carrick on Shannon and Sligo. In the Strategic Issues Paper which were published as part of the pre-draft public consultation phase of the new County Development Plan, the Planning Authority indicated our intention to review the current policy of identifying areas of low, medium and high capacity to accommodate individual dwellings in rural areas. This may allow for a relaxation of housing local need outside of such large urban areas.

However, it is the poor soil percolation characteristics across much of our county which makes it difficult for applicants from rural areas to satisfy the requirements of the EPA Code of Practice for individual wastewater treatment systems rather than a restrictive local needs housing policy in the County Development Plan. The result has been a decline in rural population which is having a profound effect which will continue until a resolution is found to this critical issue of wastewater treatment which is not considered within the remit of a policy framework established by a County Development Plan."

Councillor Sean McDermott said the issue of depopulation is very evident in rural areas, Leitrim County Council need to be more proactive and more focus needs to be done to address this issue in the New County Development Plan as the county needs people for survival. Councillor McDermott noted there has been 13 deaths in his area in the past 9 months and no births.

Councillor Des Guckian supported the motion.

MM.128.20 Customer Service provided by 'Eir' - Cllr Enda McGloin

"That Leitrim Co Council call on 'Eir' to review their service as so many of their customers spend hours on a phone waiting for assistance. I, like many public representatives, have had endless complaints to assist and for that reason 'Eir' needs to respond with a better customer service as one of the largest communications providers in this country."

On the **PROPOSAL** of Cllr. Enda McGloin

SECONDED by Cllr. Enda Stenson

It was **AGREED** that Leitrim County Council call on 'Eir' to review their service as so many of their customers spend hours on a phone waiting for assistance. I, like many public representatives, have had endless complaints to assist and for that reason 'Eir' needs to

respond with a better customer service as one of the largest communications providers in this country.

MM.129.20 Commercial Rates Charge - Cllr Justin Warnock

"Due to the economic crash as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic, I ask Leitrim County Council to rescind the 25% Commercial Rates charge that applies to vacant commercial properties."

Report by Head of Finance, Water, Environment, Climate Action and Cultural Services

"At the outset it should be noted that commercial rates are payable on vacant properties. Leitrim County Council provide a 75% Commercial Rates Vacancy Refund Scheme for vacant properties within the county. It is not possible to amend this scheme during the financial year."

Councillor Justin Warnock agreed that this issue be considered at the Budget Meeting.

Councillor Brendan Barry queried the position regarding payment of rates for businesses that have not opened to date and may not open until next year.

Mr Vincent Dwyer, Head of Finance, Water, Environment, Climate Action and Cultural Services said that rates have been waived from 27th March 2020 to 27th September 2020 and further instruction from the Department may follow on this matter. Mr Dwyer advised that the Restart Grant Plus Scheme has commenced and is available for business that have re-opened or are preparing to re-open.

Councillor Justin Warnock said it is important that Leitrim County Council are proactive on getting small businesses back working.

MM.130.20 SLNCR - Cllr. Felim Gurn

"With the announcement of funding of 500k for the SLNCR greenway to cover design and planning of the route from Collooney to Enniskillen, it is important that this design process is completed in 2 years and additional funding of 35 million is provided to complete the greenway in a 3 further years, meaning that the whole process takes 5 years. This is more important now than ever for the survival of towns and villages along the greenway in these unprecedented times."

Report by Director of Services for Economic Development, Planning, Environment and Transportation.

"Leitrim County Council has received funding of €500,000 from the Department of Transport Tourism and Sport for this project from Collooney to Blacklion. We are waiting for the terms and conditions on this grant to be issued by the Department. In the meantime, we are preparing for the process of procuring a design consultant for the project. We have also been in discussion with the other local authorities involved, Sligo and Cavan."

Councillor Felim Gurn highlighted the need to save our towns and villages and it is very important that SLNCR concept is presented properly to landowners so that they can understand the benefits for their communities.

All Members supported the motion.

MM.131.20 Restore Podiatry/Chiropody Services - Cllr Brendan Barry

"I request that Leitrim County council call on the HSE to urgently restore Podiatry/Chiropody services and clinics in Co. Leitrim. Podiatry services have been drastically reduced in county Leitrim for several months now. We have good primary care centres where these clinics can be done safely in county Leitrim. These treatments are extremely important for people with diabetes and foot ulcers and are essential to ensure that people can remain mobile and active. These conditions can be very serious if they are not actively managed and can result in amputation."

On the **PROPOSAL** of Cllr. Brendan Barry
SECONDED by Cllr. Mary Bohan

It was **AGREED** that Leitrim County council call on the HSE to urgently restore Podiatry/Chiropody services and clinics in Co. Leitrim. Podiatry services have been drastically reduced in county Leitrim for several months now. We have good primary care centres where these clinics can be done safely in county Leitrim. These treatments are extremely important for people with diabetes and foot ulcers and are essential to ensure that people can remain mobile and active. These conditions can be very serious if they are not actively managed and can result in amputation.

MM.132.20 Opening of all Public Houses - Cllr Paddy O'Rourke

"I ask that Leitrim County Council call upon NPHEA to reconsider the opening of all Public Houses given that a widely dispersed attendance spread across more licensed premises would present less of a Public Health hazard than that of larger crowds attending fewer venues. By doing so, this would help to combat against social isolation particularly in rural areas."

Councillor Paddy O'Rourke said that a widely dispersed attendance spread across more licensed premises would present less of a public health hazard than that of larger crowds attending fewer venues. Cllr. O'Rourke said that the vital social role played by rural pubs especially for elderly or the socially isolated has not been taken into consideration. Cllr O'Rourke said that when COVID-19 is over there will be less rural pubs serving rural Ireland. Cllr O'Rourke noted that many of our banks and banking services have been scaled back during the pandemic, post offices have been lost in rural areas, and if pubs are closed there will be little left for rural communities.

On the **PROPOSAL** of Cllr. Paddy O'Rourke
SECONDED by Cllr. Sean McGowan

It was **AGREED** that Leitrim County Council call upon NPHE to reconsider the opening of all Public Houses given that a widely dispersed attendance spread across more licensed premises would present less of a Public Health hazard than that of larger crowds attending fewer venues. By doing so, this would help to combat against social isolation particularly in rural areas."

MM.133.20 Learning Hubs - Cllr Paddy Farrell

"With online learning going to play a major part in the new academic year for all third level students ,I call on the local authority to explore the possibility of establishing 'learning hubs' throughout the county where students could avail of high speed broadband and complete their studies in a safe and suitable educational environment."

Report by Director of Services for Economic Development, Planning, Environment and Transportation.

"As part of the National Broadband Plan community connection points are being established at 10 locations across the County. In addition the Council is endeavouring to identify funding support at these locations for some equipment in order to facilitate greater online access. Should this progress the opportunity for students in areas of lower broadband availability to access online services could be facilitated."

All Members supported the motion.

MM.134.20 Any other Business

MM.134.20a Taking in Charge of Estates

Councillor Caillian Ellis queried as to why the estates that were advertised for Taking in Charge in July are not listed on the Agenda. Cllr. Sean McGowan and Cllr. Ita Reynolds Flynn supported this.

In reply Mr Joseph Gilhooly said Taking in Charge of Estates also entails Taking in Charge of roads and services and this takes a period of time. Mr Gilhooly confirmed that this issue will be actively pursued over the next few weeks.

MM.134.20b Selton Hill

Councillor Paddy Farrell proposed that a commemorative picture in relation to the Selton Hill Centenary be put on display in the Áras an Chonate.

Ms Mary Quinn advised that this proposal would be reviewed by the Centenary Committee

Meeting.

This concluded the business of the meeting at 1.08 pm

Signed:

Councillor Mary Bohan
Cathaoirleach

Kieran Brett
Meetings Administrator

Dated: Monday, 2 November 2020