

**Minutes of Leitrim County Council meeting held in the Bush Hotel, Carrick-on-Shannon, Co Leitrim on Monday, 5 September 2022**

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

Councillor Ita Reynolds Flynn (Cathaoirleach) presiding

**Officials Present:**

Lar Power, Chief Executive  
Joseph Gilhooly, Director of Services, Economic Development, Planning and Infrastructural Services  
Vincent Dwyer, Head of Finance, Water, Environment, Climate Action and Emergency Services  
Mary Quinn, Director of Services, Housing, Corporate Services, Community and Cultural Services  
Emer Connolly, Senior Executive Officer  
Kathleen Ellis, Assistant Staff Officer  
Kieran Brett, Meetings Administrator  
Terry McGovern, Senior Engineer  
Marie Mulligan, Senior Executive Engineer

At the outset of the meeting Cathaoirleach, Ita Reynolds Flynn made a presentation to Rickie Wynne in honour of him breaking a World Record in June of this year when he completed 15 ascents and descents of Croagh Patrick in 24 hours.

Mr Wynne accepted the presentation and thanked the Members for the presentation and for all their support.

### **MM.105.22 Votes of Sympathy**

The Members extended a vote of sympathy to the following:

- Veronica McKeon, Drumlea, Carrigallen P.O, Co Leitrim on the death of Sean McKeon R.I.P
- The De Bromhead Family, Knockeen, Waterford on the death of Jack De Bromhead R.I.P
- The Devaney Family, Drumnacross, Manorhamilton on the death of Sharon Devaney R.I.P.
- The Clarke Family, Drumhall, Drumshanbo on the death of Michael Lynch R.I.P
- Mrs Linda McLoughlin, Aughamore, Rooskey on the death of Meenie Beirne R.I.P

### **MM.106.22 Adoption of Minutes 4th July 2022**

On the **PROPOSAL** of Cllr. Enda Stenson  
**SECONDED** by Cllr. Caillian Ellis

It was **AGREED** to adopt the minutes of 4<sup>th</sup> July 2022.

Councillor Des Guckian queried if any update has been received in regard to resolution passed by Leitrim County Council regarding working conditions and pay increase for hospital staff. Mr Kieran Brett confirmed no further update has been received to date in this regard and a further reminder will issue in this regard.

### **MM.107.22 To consider the setting and specify the period of application of the Local Adjustment Factor for the Local Property Tax**

Mr Lar Power, Chief Executive outlined that a public consultation process whereby notification of consideration of setting a local adjustment factor was published by Leitrim County Council in the Leitrim Observer on 13th of July 2022. The period for acceptance of submissions arising from the Public Consultation Process ran from 13th July 2022 until 17th August 2022. No submissions were received.

Mr Power outlined that the 2022 Local Property Tax (Local Adjustment Factor) Regulations 2022 revoke the 2014 and 2021 regulations. The 2022 regulations no longer refer to yearly decisions, but instead to “a period as specified in the resolution” meaning elected members can now set a local adjustment factor for a period of their choosing. As with all resolutions, the resolution to set a multi annual local adjustment factor can be revoked in accordance with the provisions included in standing orders, pursuant to Part 6, Schedule 10 of the Local Government Act 2001 (as amended).

Mr Power advised that Leitrim County Council is required to prepare a three-year Capital Investment Programme but have prepared a six-year programme given the longer-term

strategic outlook used by the Council in determining its scale of investment for the benefit of the County. Taking into account the legal requirement for a three year capital investment programme and the strategy of ring fencing the LPT variation to contribute to match funding for the Capital Investment Programme, the Chief Executive stated it is recommended that the local adjustment factor be set for three years. He advised the members that by maintaining the continued application of the 15% local adjustment factor for local property tax (LPT) in 2023, 2024 and 2025 financial stability will be provided for the implementation of the medium term Capital Investment Programme.

Cllr McGloin proposed that Leitrim County Council continue application of the 15% local adjustment factor for local property tax (LPT) in 2023, 2024 and 2025 in respect of relevant residential properties situated in County Leitrim. The proposal was seconded by Cllr O'Rourke.

Councillor Brendan Barry sought clarification of the following

- Income from commercial rates estimated outturn for 2022 and for the 2023 Local Financial Year
- Why the estimated LPT income is approximately 61K less in 2023 than in 2022

Mr Vincent Dwyer outlined that Local Property Tax valuation bands have changed as a result of the recent revaluation process - 22% of households who previously paid the higher Band B charge have been moved into Band A. Mr Dwyer said Leitrim County Council has the highest percentage of households paying the lowest rate of Local Property Tax in the country with 83% of properties falling into Band A.

Mr Dwyer informed the Members that the Valuation Office have carried out revaluation of some commercial properties including wind farms, and as a result there is a lack of certainty in the income generated by commercial rates.

Councillor Brendan Barry put forward a counter proposal stating that the Local Property Tax should not be fixed for 3 years due to the current cost of living crisis. Councillor Pdraig Fallon supported the motion.

Councillor Enda McGloin said this locally raised LPT is important to have if the Council wishes to meet the required match funding element of various Government funded schemes. It is important to keep the momentum going to build our towns and villages as best we can.

Councillor Mary Bohan concurred with Councillor Enda McGloin outlining that members do not want to put more hardship on citizens of this county. She highlighted that Leitrim is drawing down considerable grants that benefit many communities and the LPT provides a contribution towards the matched funding element of these grants. Councillor Bohan sought a breakdown of the LPT figure by property for each valuation band.

Mr Vincent Dwyer outlined the financial impact of Local Property Tax variation per

household as per the table below.

**SCHEDULE 3 - Financial Impact**

**IMPACT OF LOCAL PROPERTY TAX VARIATION +15%**

**Impact of Variation on a liable person**

<b>Valuation Bands</b>	<b>Mix</b>	<b>Current LPT Rate</b>	<b>Increase by 15%</b>	<b>Financial Impact (Weekly)</b>
Band 1 (€0-€200,000)	83%	€90.00	€103.50	€0.26
Band 2 (€200,001-€262,500)	12%	€225.00	€258.75	€0.65
Band 3 (€262,501-€350,000)	4%	€315.00	€362.25	€0.91
Band 4 (€350,001-€437,500)	1%	€405.00	€465.75	€1.17

Mr Dwyer said Leitrim households have received the greatest benefit from the revaluation, with many moving to a valuation band with a lower charge.

Councillor Des Guckian sought clarification on what the Local Property Tax is used for. Mr Vincent Dwyer outlined that the LPT provides the Local Authority with funding to meet the required match funding element of various Government funded schemes. Mr Dwyer outlined that members could revisit the fixing of the LPT if there were exceptional circumstances during the next three years.

Councillor Des Guckian outlined that he supported Cllr Barry's proposal, referring to inflation levels and people's ability to afford more.

Councillor Enda McGloin clarified that the rate was not being increased. Councillor Sean McDermott referred to the projects which have been secured for the County and for match funding has to be provided. Councillor Felim Gurn highlighted the benefit of public realm works. Councillor Justin Warnock outlined that the benefits far out-weigh the small cost per week.

Councillor Pdraig Fallon sought clarification on how members may look at the multi-year setting of the LPT and how a multi-year decision could be revoked. Mr Vincent Dwyer stated that there was provision within the standing orders for members to revoke a decision previously taken at a council meeting by the elected members.

Following the discussion on the LPT, Councillor Brendan Barry outlined that he would withdraw his counter motion as he was satisfied that Leitrim County Council has plans to make the best possible use of the income the LPT will generate and that the LPT facilitates Leitrim County Council in drawing down funding that benefits the County.

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

It was **AGREED** to continue application of the 15% local adjustment factor for local property

tax (LPT) in 2023, 2024 and 2025 in respect of relevant residential properties situated in County Leitrim.

**MM.108.22 Consider date for Leitrim County Council Budget Meeting**

Mr Vincent Dwyer advised Members that the Budget Meeting will take place on the Monday, 14<sup>th</sup> November 2022 at 11 am

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

It was **AGREED** the Budget Meeting of Leitrim County Council will take place on the Monday, 14<sup>th</sup> November 2022 at 11 am.

**MM.109.22 Consider date for special meeting to consider the Chief Executive's report on submissions received on the Draft County Development plan**

Mr Joseph Gilhooly advised the members that it is proposed to hold a special plenary meeting on Tuesday 4<sup>th</sup> October 2022 at 10 am in Carrick-on-Shannon to consider the Chief Executive's Report arising from the submissions received on the Draft County Development Plan.

In advance of the plenary meeting, it is proposed to hold a number of workshops with the elected members to assist them with the County Development Plan process. The dates and times of these workshops are as follows:

- Friday, 9<sup>th</sup> September 2022 - 11 am - Plenary Council Workshop online
- Monday 12<sup>th</sup> September 2022 - 2 pm – Plenary Council Workshop online
- Tuesday 13<sup>th</sup> September 2022 - 2pm – Carrick MD members workshop online
- Wednesday 14<sup>th</sup> September 2022 – 10.30 am – Ballinamore MD members workshop online
- Wednesday 14<sup>th</sup> September 2022 – 2 pm – Manorhamilton MD members workshop online

Mr Gilhooly said holding the online workshops on these dates will inform the members on the Draft County Development Plan and allow the members sufficient time to make submissions in advance of the meeting on Tuesday, 4<sup>th</sup> October 2022.

The special meeting on October 4<sup>th</sup> will have two items on the agenda, as agreed at the earlier LIS Workshop, the consideration of the Local Improvement Scheme will be on the agenda and followed by the item to consider the Chief Executive's Report arising from the submissions received on the Draft County Development Plan.

Mr Gilhooly confirmed that a presentation on the Draft Planning Contribution Scheme will also be presented to the members at the online workshop on the 9<sup>th</sup> September 2022 and before the scheme goes on public display. Following the workshop, the draft scheme will be made available for public consultation, with a view to having the adoption of the scheme listed as an agenda item, for consideration by the Members, at the January 2023 plenary Council meeting.

Mr Gilhooly confirmed that a Residential Zoned Land Tax will come into effect in 2024. The tax applies to zoned residential land that has not been brought into use. Leitrim County Council's role is to produce a series of maps showing zoned residential lands that will enable the tax to be levied. The Local Authority will not be responsible for the collection of the tax. The Local Authority is required to have a series of maps available for public consultation on 1<sup>st</sup> November 2022. An online workshop will be held for Members on Tuesday, 18<sup>th</sup> October 2022 at 2 pm on this matter

The Members agreed to the dates as proposed for the online workshops and it was agreed that a full list of the proposed dates would be furnished to the Members.

#### **MM.110.22 Presentation from National Broadband Ireland**

The members agreed to receive the Presentation from National Broadband Ireland at this point in the meeting as it is linked to and impacts the agenda item concerning the consideration of the Leitrim Digital Strategy

The Cathaoirleach, Councillor Ita Reynolds Flynn welcomed Mr Pat O'Toole from National Broadband Ireland to the meeting. Mr O'Toole delivered an overview of the Deployment of the National Broadband Plan to the members.

A copy of the presentation delivered by the Mr O'Toole appears as **Appendix 1** to the Minutes of this meeting in the Minute Book.

Cathaoirleach, Councillor Ita Reynolds Flynn invited questions/comments from the Members.

Members raised the following issues

- Why local knowledge is not been sought in the deployment of the network
- Lack of Broadband in Kinlough
- Drumkeerin Village – unable to occupy enterprise units due to lack of broadband
- Poor mobile phone signals in some areas
- Sought more detailed information on deployment areas for serving premises in Leitrim
- disappointment with speed of the roll out and queried what connection fee and rental will be charged for the service

Mr O'Toole responded as follows

- Kinlough will be serviced with Broadband from deployment areas outside the County
- Broadband Ireland cannot change intervention areas
- Full Fibre will be available all the way to the home when complete
- Interactive map is updated regularly, and more dates are updated as they get closer
- There is additional functionality to assist Elected Members so can log onto [www.NBI.ie/reps](http://www.NBI.ie/reps)
- Connection fee will be €100

The Cathaoirleach, Councillor Ita Reynolds Flynn and the Members thanked Mr O'Toole for his informative presentation.

**MM.111.22 Receive presentation on Draft Leitrim Digital Strategy and consider for approval**

The Cathaoirleach, Councillor Ita Reynolds Flynn welcomed Mr Padraig McGuinness, PMG Consult to the meeting.

A copy of the presentation delivered by the Padraig McGuinness appears as **Appendix 2** to the Minutes of this meeting in the Minute Book.

The Cathaoirleach, Councillor Ita Reynolds Flynn and the Members thanked Mr McGuinness for his informative presentation on the digital strategy for County Leitrim to 2025.

Councillor Felim Gurn outlined that Carrick-on-Shannon should be considered for a Third Level college.

Councillor Des Guckian raised the following queries:

- Technical nature of the report
- How will the plan be funded
- Highly Skilled and adequate resources will be required
- How are Cyber attacks addressed
- Will Data Centres be developed

Mr McGuinness responded to the queries raised by the members as follows

- MSLETB have a role in elevating education requirements.
- The Local Economic Community Plan (LECP) will shortly be reviewed and Carrick-on-Shannon as a destination for a Third Level College could be considered in that context.
- There is a requirement for each local authority to prepare a Digital Strategy and there are guidelines as to how the report is to be set out.

- The Strategy is designed not to cost any more money than what is already in the existing programme.
- €85 million will be provided to enterprise over a number of years and this will drive digitalisation in SME's
- Highly skilled and well-resourced teams are required.

Mr Power confirmed that majority of projects are match funded and further projects will be assessed and if fit for purpose will be pursued.

Mr Power outlined that the IT Department continue to be aware of Cyber Attacks and are putting all measures in place to prevent these from happening. There has been no expression of interest received for a Data Centre to date in Leitrim and if a data centre planning application is received it will be looked at in line with planning legislation and guidelines.

On the **PROPOSAL** of Cllr Enda Stenson  
**SECONDED** by Cllr Sean McDermott

It was **AGREED** to adopt the Leitrim Digital Strategy.

#### **MM.112.22    Management Reports - June and July 2022**

The Monthly Management Reports for June and July 2022, as circulated, were noted by Members.

Councillor Des Guckian raised the following:

- Funding for Mohill Landfill
- Why is Lough Rynn the most polluted area in the county and this should be investigated
- Acknowledgement of Leitrim Civil Defence
- Update on CCTV in Carrick-on-Shannon
- Local Road in Dromod only partially surfaced

Mr Vincent Dwyer clarified that the funding for landfill rehabilitation in the June Report refers to small landfills. Mohill and Carrick-on-Shannon Landfills are managed under EPA licences. Mr Dwyer confirmed that significant monitoring is carried out on a quarterly basis on these two landfills and the results are submitted directly to the EPA. Mr Dwyer said a review is being carried out on the Lough Rynn area.

Councillor Thomas Mulligan queried if these results are published by EPA and can they be viewed on their website. Mr Dwyer confirmed that there is active ongoing engagement on a regular basis with the EPA in regard to the Mohill and Carrick-on-Shannon Landfills.



### **MM.113.22 Commitments**

Mr Joseph Gilhooly informed the members that under the CLÁR Scheme 2022 Leitrim County Council received funding for 11 projects with a cumulative value of €376,000 approximately which has a potential match fund requirement for the local authority of up to €48,000 for 6 projects.

The Members welcomed the allocation and noted the match funding requirement.

### **MM.114.22 Report from Corporate Policy Group**

Ms Mary Quinn, outlined the Corporate Policy Group had considered the following items at their online meeting held on the 2<sup>nd</sup> September 2022:

- Updates from SPC's
- LCDC Membership  
Mr Declan Doherty has replaced Ms. Michelle Kennedy as the Department of Employment and Social Protection representative on the committee.
- Dates for Online workshops and date for special meeting to consider the Chief Executive's report on submissions received on the Draft County Development plan
- Development Contribution Scheme
- Local Improvement Scheme
- Residential Zoned Land Tax
- Date for Budget Meeting
- Presentation from M-PACT service - Moving Parents and Children Together
- Items for Council Meeting
- Attendance of Members at Conferences, Training Events and Seminars

The update was noted by Members.

### **MM.115.22 Attendance at conferences/training**

On the **PROPOSAL** of Cllr Paddy Farrell  
**SECONDED** by Cllr Sean McDermott

It was **AGREED** that the attendance of Cllr Enda McGloin, Councillor Thomas Mulligan, Councillor Enda Stenson, Councillor Paddy Farrell, Councillor Sean McGowan and Councillor Ita Reynolds Flynn at the AILG Seminar on the 14<sup>th</sup> & 15<sup>th</sup> September 2022 in Knightsbrook Hotel Spa & Golf, Trim be approved.

On the **PROPOSAL** of Cllr Caillian Ellis  
**SECONDED** by Cllr Enda Stenson

It was **AGREED** that the attendance of Cllr Justin Warnock and Councillor Mary Bohan at the Conference on the Innovation in Solar Energy Technology in O'Donovan's Hotel, Clonakilty,

Co Cork on the 28<sup>th</sup> October to 30<sup>th</sup> October 2022 be approved.

On the **PROPOSAL** of Cllr Caillian Ellis  
**SECONDED** by Cllr Enda Stenson

It was **AGREED** that the attendance of Cllr Enda McGloin at the Conference on the Role of the Local Authorities in addressing the needs of older people in Four Season Hotel, Carlingford, Co Louth on the 11<sup>th</sup> November to 13<sup>th</sup> November 2022 be approved.

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

It was **AGREED** that the attendance of Cllr Enda McGloin at the Rose of Tralee event on the 22<sup>nd</sup> to 23<sup>rd</sup> August 2022 in Tralee be retrospectively approved.

#### **MM.116.22**    Meeting Correspondence

- Resolution dated 30<sup>th</sup> June 2022 from Limerick City and County Council calling for long term covid clinics to be retained and expanded.

Councillor Des Guckian supported this motion. Councillor Mary Bohan seconded the motion.

- Resolution dated 1<sup>st</sup> July 2022 from Limerick City and County Council regarding social housing supports.
3. Letter received 11<sup>th</sup> July 2022 from Minister Humphrey in relation to Resolution passed by Leitrim County Council on Artists with Disabilities and the basic income for the Arts pilot scheme.
  4. Email received 15<sup>th</sup> July 2022 from Minister Foley in relation to Resolution passed by Leitrim County Council regarding funding and resources for children with special needs.
  5. Email received 15<sup>th</sup> July 2022 from the Office of the Taoiseach in relation to Resolution passed by Leitrim County Council in regard to Vat & Excise on Fuel.
  6. Acknowledgement received 15<sup>th</sup> July 2022 from the Office of the Taoiseach in relation to Resolution passed by Leitrim County Council regarding VAT & excise on fuel and home heating oil.
  7. Acknowledgement received 18<sup>th</sup> July 2022 from the Office of the Taoiseach in relation to Resolution passed by Leitrim County Council in relation to the convention

against human trafficking in human organs.

8. Letter received 21<sup>st</sup> July 2022 from Minister Noonan on foot of Resolution passed by Leitrim County Council in regard to the Shass Mountain Task Group.
9. Letter received 28<sup>th</sup> July 2022 from Minister Madigan in regard to supports for pupils with special educational needs.
10. Resolution dated 26<sup>th</sup> July 2022 from Wexford County Council in relation to long covid clinics to be retained.

Councillor Des Guckian supported this motion. Councillor Mary Bohan supported the motion.

11. Letter received 27<sup>th</sup> July 2022 from Minister O'Brien in relation to financial assistance towards the remediation, repair or upgrading works to, or the replacement of a domestic wastewater treatment system under new and revised grant schemes, which launched in June 2020.

Councillor Sean McGowan said €5,000 is not enough and this grant should be doubled to €10,000 and he had recently spoke to Minister O'Brien on this issue. Councillor Paddy Farrell also outlined the need for additional grant aid. Councillor Ellis asked for an update in relation to percolation areas that fail tests.

Mr Vincent Dwyer said percolation areas were discussed at a recent SPC meeting and an update will be provided at the next SPC meeting.

12. Acknowledgement received 22<sup>nd</sup> July 2022 from the Minister for Finance in relation to Resolution passed by Leitrim County Council regarding Customs and excise charges on fuel.
13. Acknowledgement received 27<sup>th</sup> July 2022 from Minister Noonan regarding the Shass Mountain Task Group.
14. Email of the 19<sup>th</sup> August 2022 from the Minister for Health in regard to the convention against trafficking in human organs.

#### **Other items discussed under meeting Correspondence**

-  
The members were advised that the Public Joint Policing Committee meeting is taking place on 14<sup>th</sup> September 2022 at 7 pm in the Ballroom of Romance, Glenfarne.

**MM.117.22 Motion from Councillor Des Guckian - Local Improvement Scheme**

**To consider the following Notice of Motion submitted by Councillor Des Guckian;**

"That we write to the Taoiseach and the Tánaiste on the following lines. The extra charges placed on householders who wish to have their lanes re-surfaced under Local Improvement Schemes and Community Involvement Schemes must be regarded as penal charges and double charges. People in country areas are already forced to pay Local Property Tax, for which they are getting no services. To now abolish the extra penal charges, of thousands of euro per household, and to allow the LPT payments to be sufficient replacements is vital in establishing a fair and equitable system."

Councillor Des Guckian gave the background to his motion and said the Government should be funding the resurfacing of all lanes and he intends to raise this matter at a national level.

Councillor Enda McGloin disagreed with Cllr Guckian's motion and he proposed a counter motion as follows:

"Leitrim County Council members acknowledges and thank the Minister for Rural and Community Development, Heather Humphreys TD for the record allocation in 2022 of over €1.1m in funding for the Local Improvement Scheme in Co Leitrim. We are very hopeful that this significant funding will have the impact of reducing the current backlog of applications from people now waiting up to 8 years to get their lane completed.

We the members ask that the Minister in the context of any review of the scheme in 2023 by her department to provide the maximum funding possible for Leitrim under the LIS scheme so that we can re-open the scheme in a meaning full way and accommodate as many applicants as possible given the huge level of interest from rural dwellers and farmers, we have witnessed over the past number of years."

Councillor Thomas Mulligan supported this motion.

Cathaoirleach, Councillor Ita Reynolds Flynn confirmed the original motion was not seconded and as the counter motion was proposed and seconded, it was deemed carried.

**MM.118.22 Motion from Councillor Sean McGowan and Motion from Councillor Brendan Barry - School Buses**

**It was agreed by the Members that Motion No 13 in the name of Councillor Sean McGowan and Motion No 22 in the name of Councillor Brendan Barry be taken concurrently as they relate to the same issue.**

**To consider the following Notice of Motion submitted by Councillor Sean McGowan;**

"I call on the Minister for Education and the Minister for Transport to provide additional

school buses to cater for the increased numbers of school children that are availing of and seeking school transport this academic year."

**To consider the following Notice of Motion submitted by Councillor Brendan Barry;**

"I request that Leitrim County Council call on Ministers Norma Foley and Eamon Ryan to change the Department of Education School Transport guidelines and provide more funding, so that more places are provided for concessionary students on school buses. The chaos in school transport is going to force parents to reduce the hours they work so they can bring students to and from school. What was introduced as a measure to tackle the cost of living crisis is going to end up costing some families a considerable amount of money."

Councillor Sean McGowan welcomed that the service is free, however he noted those that have been paying have now been left in limbo. He said he has received numerous queries on this topic in the last 6-8 weeks and he called for the Minister for Education and the Minister for Transport to provide additional funding for school buses to cater for the increased numbers of school children for this academic year.

Councillor Mary Bohan seconded the motion.

Councillor Paddy O'Rourke referred to a motion he put forward at the 4<sup>th</sup> July 2022 Council meeting calling on Leitrim County Council to contact the School Transport Section of Bus Eireann urging them to notify parents and guardians promptly as to which Students/Pupils are going to be eligible for bus tickets this coming school year. He noted that two days later, the school transport fees were waived, which he welcomed, but he said no sufficient planning or thought was put into this. He noted also there has been no reply from the Department to his motion. Cllr O'Rourke said the announcement of the waiver has further exacerbated a bad situation.

Councillor Mary Bohan said that people who in previous years had tickets are not getting them now and this has caused a lot of stress for families who have no transport to school.

Councillor Brendan Barry supported previous motions and said people are left in a difficult position. Councillor Barry said a few years ago the Sinn Fein Party had a paper on a phased free fee basis but by now abolishing it altogether it has left a mess. Councillor Barry acknowledged this is a difficult situation and he said planning for next year should start now. Applications that were put in last January are left to the last minute to make a decision and he said this is not good enough. Allocation of tickets needs to be carried out earlier so parents and students know what is going on and can prepare.

Councillor Gerry Dolan supported the motion.

Councillor Caillian Ellis said there is a big problem with bus capacity and also getting drivers and he said no research was done on this. Councillor Ellis referred to families that had been buying concessionary tickets for the last 10 years but cannot get a ticket this year. Councillor Ellis said extra buses must be provided.

Councillor Des Guckian said this must be resolved this year, and he said children within a 2-mile radius should be entitled to get transport to a neighbouring school.

Councillor Thomas Mulligan said historically there has been a problem to get bus tickets and he said the announcement of free transport on school buses was poorly thought out and it was always going to result in havoc. Councillor Mulligan said there should be a huge commitment to put additional buses on the road, this will be at a huge cost, but this has to be done.

Councillor Pádraig Fallon referred to a protest on this matter, in Sligo, that he attended recently, and he said parents were angered by the current situation and some parents have to quit work and others have to seek flexible working arrangements to get their children to school. Where a child applies for a concessionary bus ticket, they should be granted a ticket for the duration of their time in school.

Councillor Justin Warnock said extra buses were found during covid when there were capacity restrictions, and this should be done now. Councillor Warnock said no child should be left on the side of the road at this stage.

Councillor Enda McGloin noted the shortage of drivers and said bus drivers should be allowed to drive a bus who have reached retirement age, provided they complete a medical test.

On the **PROPOSAL** of Cllr Sean McGowan  
**SECONDED** by Cllr Mary Bohan

"It was **AGREED** that Leitrim County Council call on the Minister for Education and the Minister for Transport to provide additional school buses to cater for the increased numbers of school children that are availing of and seeking school transport this academic year."

On the **PROPOSAL** of Cllr Brendan Barry  
**SECONDED** by Cllr Gerry Dolan

"It was **AGREED** that Leitrim County Council call on Ministers Norma Foley and Eamon Ryan to change the Department of Education School Transport guidelines and provide more funding, so that more places are provided for concessionary students on school buses. The chaos in school transport is going to force parents to reduce the hours they work so they can bring students to and from school. What was introduced as a measure to tackle the cost of living crisis is going to end up costing some families a considerable amount of money."

It was agreed by the Members that the meeting be adjourned at this point for lunch for 30 minutes and that the meeting would resume at 2.30 pm.

**MM.119.22 Motion from Councillor Sean McDermott - Plastics been dumped in Rivers**

**To consider the following Notice of Motion submitted by Councillor Sean McDermott;**

"Can I ask the Environmental Section of Leitrim County Council to investigate the growing issues of plastics been dumped in our rivers. In many cases these rivers have fish stocks which are at risk, many of these rivers flow into lakes nearby."

**Report by Head of Finance & Water Services**

"While illegal dumping can occur in rivers and lakes, the majority of illegal dumping including plastics occurs along the roadside and in open spaces. However, while not a common occurrence, plastics from dumping may also be windblown into rivers and lakes. The Council investigate all incidents and complaints of illegal dumping and initiates enforcement action as appropriate. All incidents of illegal dumping in rivers, lakes or elsewhere should be reported to the Environment Department for follow-up investigation."

Councillor Sean McDermott said this issue has been brought to his attention recently following a local fishing competition where participants had commented on the amount of plastic in the river and on the riverbank. Cllr McDermott said greater public awareness is needed to highlight that plastic dumped in our rivers is a risk to fish stocks.

Councillor Des Guckian supported the motion and said that there is an overdependency of plastic packaging and there is a big danger of plastic getting into the sea and being a health hazard.

Mr Vincent Dwyer said that while it is not a common occurrence, plastic waste or litter may be blown into rivers and lakes. Incidents of illegal dumping in rivers, lakes, or anywhere, should be make known to the Environment Department of the Local Authority.

Councillor Enda McGloin said that the local Authority do not get engaged in clean ups. Mr Dwyer said the Local Authority enforce waste management.

Councillor Frank Dolan said it is not the responsibility of the Council to clean up litter, it is up to every individual to be responsible of how they dispose of their waste, in a proper and safe manner.

**MM.120.22 Motion from Councillor Padraig Fallon - Tenant Purchase Scheme**

**To consider the following Notice of Motion submitted by Councillor Pádraig Fallon;**

"I ask if any further correspondence relating to the purchase of homes by elderly tenants or pensioners, has been received, that will enable a tenant receiving the state pension to buy their home? Has the income level been reduced from €15,000 to €12,500?"

**Report by Director of Services, Housing and Community, Corporate Services, Cultural and Emergency Services**

"Changes in relation to the operation of tenant purchase scheme came into effect on 1st February this year following the release of Housing Circular 01/2022. One of the main changes states that "The minimum income required for an applicant to be eligible to apply under the scheme has been revised downward from €15,000 p.a. to €12,500 p.a. This change will ensure persons whose pension is their primary source of income can now apply under the scheme."

This statement led to questions concerning the type of pension payment that would be considered and after seeking clarification, Leitrim County Council were advised by the Department of Housing, Local Government & Heritage that a Guidance Document would be prepared and issued to address all related queries.

Leitrim County Council have contacted the Department in relation to this on a number of occasions and have been advised that the Minister was currently seeking legal advice in relation to the "type" of Social Welfare Payments that can be considered as a primary source of income. Leitrim County Council currently aren't advancing applications, however a list of names of people who have expressed an interest in the tenant purchase scheme has been compiled and each applicant has been advised that upon receipt of the Guidance Document their eligibility for the scheme will then be determined."

Councillor Pádraig Fallon said there has been a number of motions raised on this topic in the past, seeking changes to the tenant purchase scheme. Most changes have been made and he welcomed this, but the issue of the social welfare criteria seems to be dragging on.

Councillor Pádraig Fallon asked that a letter issue to the Minister, requesting the Guidelines document to be issued without further delay. Cllr Fallon said he has received a number of questions from people in this regard.

Ms Mary Quinn confirmed this will be followed up with the Department.

**MM.121.22 Motion from Councillor Felim Gurn - Housing Shortages**



**To consider the following Notice of Motion submitted by Councillor Felim Gurn;**

"I propose that Leitrim County Council call on the Department of Social Protection to remove all financial penalties that prevent old age pensioners, including those that live alone, from sharing their home with persons in need of accommodation. This would address the urgent housing shortages in the country, and reduce isolation, loneliness, and safety concerns for the older population by having someone live with them. Currently an old person living alone will lose their living alone allowances, i.e. tv license and fuel allowances, if they share their home or a home that is empty as result of participation in the fair deal scheme."

Councillor Felim Gurn proposed that Leitrim County Council call on the Department of Social Protection to remove all financial penalties that prevent old age pensioners, from sharing their home with persons in need of accommodation.

This was supported by Councillor Sean McDermott and Councillor Des Guckian.

On the **PROPOSAL** of Councillor Felim Gurn  
**SECONDED** by Councillor Sean McDermott

It was **AGREED** that Leitrim County Council call on the Department of Social Protection to remove all financial penalties that prevent old age pensioners, including those that live alone, from sharing their home with persons in need of accommodation. This would address the urgent housing shortages in the country, and reduce isolation, loneliness, and safety concerns for the older population by having someone live with them. Currently an old person living alone will lose their living alone allowances, i.e. tv license and fuel allowances, if they share their home or a home that is empty as result of participation in the fair deal scheme.

**MM.122.22** **Motion from Councillor Ita Reynolds Flynn - Breast Checks**

**To consider the following Notice of Motion submitted by Councillor Ita Reynolds Flynn;**

"I wish to request that Leitrim County Council write to the HSE requesting that Breast Check is available in Carrick on Shannon. Presently, Sligo is the only centre in this HSE region available to Leitrim women."

Cathaoirleach, Councillor Ita Reynolds Flynn said it is necessary to request the HSE that a mobile "Breast Check" unit is made available in Carrick-on-Shannon as it is very unfair on people in Carrigallen, Cloone, Ballinamore and Drumshanbo that they have to travel to Sligo. Councillor Ita Reynolds Flynn highlighted that the breast check screening should be available from the age of 40 to 70 and not from the age of 50.

On the **PROPOSAL** of Councillor Ita Reynolds Flynn  
**SECONDED** by Councillor Finola Armstrong McGuire

It was **AGREED** to write to the HSE requesting that Breast Check is available in Carrick on Shannon. Presently, Sligo is the only centre in this HSE region available to Leitrim women. Breast Check screening should be made available from the age of 40 through to 70.

**MM.123.22** **Motion from Councillor Mary Bohan and Motion from Councillor Enda McGloin - Grant Aid for purchase and refurbishment of houses in all rural areas**

**It was agreed by the Members that Motion No 18 in the name of Councillor Mary Bohan and Motion No 19 in the name of Councillor Enda McGloin be taken concurrently as they relate to the same issue.**

**To consider the following Notice of Motion submitted by Councillor Cllr Mary Bohan;**

"I propose that Leitrim County Council call on the Government as a matter of urgency to extend the recent grant aid introduced for the purchase and refurbishment of houses in towns to all rural areas. The clause regarding population should be removed and all towns and villages should be included in the scheme."

**To consider the following Notice of Motion submitted by Councillor Enda McGloin;**

"To support homeownership and increase access to affordable homes for first time buyers living in rural Ireland, Leitrim County Council calls on the Government to consider a grant or a tax incentive scheme for couples or single persons (who are first time home buyers) to refurbish empty properties in the rural countryside that have, or are about to, fall into dereliction. The emphasis of the scheme should ensure the house improves its energy rating and must be lived in by the applicants after the refurbishment."

Councillor Mary Bohan said all our Towns and Villages are equally important and she called on the Government to deal with this matter immediately and assist young people who want to refurbish houses. She called for the clause concerning population to be removed from the grant eligibility criteria: all towns and villages should be included in the scheme.

Councillor Sean McDermott supported the motion.

Councillor Gerry Dolan said he raised this issue recently at the Ballinamore MD stating a population limit should not be included in the scheme.

Councillor Justin Warnock said he spoke recently to Minister O'Brien and Senator Robbie Gallagher, and he is quietly confident an announcement will be made in this regard.

Councillor Enda McGloin said it is important that support for this proposal comes from the Members of Leitrim County Council as a whole.

Councillor Brendan Barry supported the motion.

On the **PROPOSAL** of Councillor Mary Bohan  
**SECONDED** by Councillor Sean McDermott

It was **AGREED** that Leitrim County Council call on the Government as a matter of urgency to extend the recent grant aid introduced for the purchase and refurbishment of houses in towns to all rural areas. The clause regarding population should be removed and all towns and villages should be included in the scheme.

On the **PROPOSAL** of Councillor Enda McGloin  
**SECONDED** by Councillor Brendan Barry

It was **AGREED** that Leitrim County Council calls on the Government to consider a grant or a tax incentive scheme for couples or single persons (who are first time home buyers) to refurbish empty properties in the rural countryside that have, or are about to, fall into dereliction. The emphasis of the scheme should ensure the house improves its energy rating and must be lived in by the applicants after the refurbishment in order to support homeownership and increase access to affordable homes for first time buyers living in rural Ireland.

**MM.124.22** **Motion from Councillor Paddy O'Rourke - Electric Vehicles**

**To consider the following Notice of Motion submitted by Councillor Paddy O'Rourke;**

"What is the position regarding the provision of charging points for electric vehicles? There is an increasing demand for this service and communities who don't have a charging point are in danger of being left behind, with motorists being drawn towards centres where the service is available, bringing their business and spreading power with them."

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

"Leitrim County Council is part of the Faster project which will provide fast charging points for electric vehicles in the border counties. Louth Co is the lead authority for this project. At present the proposal is to provide fast chargers in the new town centre car park in Carrick on Shannon and the car park at the Fire Station in Manorhamilton. The charging point in Manorhamilton was moved from the new town centre car park because the cost of providing a power connection at this location was too expensive.

Louth Co intends to go to tender for the installation of these chargers shortly and it is expected that they will be installed in 2023. The cost of the installation will be borne by the contract. The maintenance/operation costs will be paid by Leitrim Co but the exact details of this have not been decided yet.

At present Leitrim Co has no plans for further charging points in the county. However, other charging points have been made available in the County through other service providers on public property or property that public have access to."

Councillor Paddy O'Rourke said there is a growing demand for this service and communities that do not have the proper infrastructure in place will be left behind and people will avoid smaller rural areas and stay in bigger towns and bring their spending power with them to the larger areas.

Mr Joseph Gilhooly referred to the reply and said at the moment the proposal is to put in faster charging points in Carrick-on-Shannon and Manorhamilton and there are no further plans for charging in this county. There are other EV charging points available in the county through other service providers on public property or property that the public have access to. Mr. Gilhooly said the provision, operation and maintenance costs associated with EV charging points is significant. Mr Gilhooly said a national programme needs to be put in place in this regard.

Councillor Sean McDermott supported the motion.

Councillor Enda McGloin said the Minister for Energy and Communications should be contacted and informed that this infrastructure is needed.

**MM.125.22 Motion from Councillor Paddy Farrell - Ambulance Service**

**To consider the following Notice of Motion submitted by Councillor Paddy Farrell;**

"I call on Leitrim County Council to contact the Minister for Health, Stephen Donnelly TD, to take action with regard to the failing Ambulance Service in County Leitrim. There have been several cases in Leitrim of critical ill patients were waiting for over two hours before an ambulance reached them."

Councillor Paddy Farrell paid tribute to the ambulance service, and he referred to a stroke victim that had to wait 2 hours for an ambulance stating it is not good enough.

Councillor Felim Gurn supported the motion and he said he was aware of an incident where a patient in Manorhamilton was waiting for over an hour and a half for an ambulance. Councillor Gurn said when there was an ambulance base in Manorhamilton and it provided a better service than the existing setup.

Councillor Brendan Barry supported the motion and said there are not enough of ambulances to cover the size of the area, and he said there are also delays at the hospitals, in getting people from the ambulances into hospitals.

Councillor Sean McGowan supported the motion stating there is a need for a spare ambulance in Carrick-on-Shannon.

Councillor Des Guckian said he broadly supported the motion, and he paid tribute to the ambulance staff on behalf of himself and his family who have had experience of the service. Councillor Guckian said a better system should be put in place at A&E in Sligo University Hospital and ambulances should not have to queue up and this would free ambulances to respond to more calls.

Councillor Paddy Farrell said the ambulance staff are excellent -it is the system that is the problem.

On the **PROPOSAL** of Councillor Paddy Farrell  
**SECONDED** by Councillor Felim Gurn

It was **AGREED** that Leitrim County Council to contact the Minister for Health, Stephen Donnelly TD, to take action with regard to the failing Ambulance Service in County Leitrim. There have been several cases in Leitrim of critical ill patients were waiting for over two hours before an ambulance reached them.

**MM.126.22** **Motion from Councillor Enda Stenson - Day Care Centres**

**To consider the following Notice of Motion submitted by Councillor Enda Stenson;**

"I'm asking for members support in requesting the HSE to immediately open our day care centres. It's no longer acceptable to keep those essential services closed, citing COVID-19 as an excuse."

Councillor Enda Stenson proposed that the HSE be called upon to re-open the Day care centres. Councillor Stenson highlighted the excellent day care centres in Carrick-on-Shannon, Mohill and Ballinamore. Councillor Stenson said this service is needed particularly in rural Leitrim.

Councillor Justin Warnock and Councillor Thomas Mulligan supported the motion.

On the **PROPOSAL** of Councillor Enda Stenson  
**SECONDED** by Councillor Justin Warnock

It was **AGREED** that the HSE immediately open our day care centres. It's no longer acceptable to keep those essential services closed, citing COVID-19 as an excuse.

**MM.127.22    Motion from Councillor Justin Warnock - Legal Aid System**

**To consider the following Notice of Motion submitted by Councillor Justin Warnock;**

"I ask for the support of the elected members in calling on An Taoiseach Micheál Martin TD, and the Minister for Justice Helen McEntee TD, to have our Legal Aid system overhauled as it is not fit for purpose. Tens of millions of taxpayers' money is being spent on legal aid for criminal cases annually and this is being exploited by career criminals with the revolving door system which currently exists, to the detriment of victims and our society."

Councillor Justin Warnock gave the background to his motion and said the existing free legal aid system is not fit for purpose.

On the **Proposal** of Councillor Justin Warnock  
**Seconded** by Councillor Enda Stenson

It was **AGREED** that Leitrim County Council calls on An Taoiseach Micheál Martin TD, and the Minister for Justice Helen McEntee TD, to have our Legal Aid system overhauled as it is not fit for purpose. Tens of millions of taxpayers' money is being spent on legal aid for criminal cases annually and this is being exploited by career criminals with the revolving door system which currently exists, to the detriment of victims and our society."

**MM.128.22    Motion from Councillor Gerry Dolan - TB Testing**

**To consider the following Notice of Motion submitted by Councillor Gerry Dolan;**

"I call on Leitrim County Council to write to the Minister of Agriculture, Food and the Marine to abandon plans to introduce mandatory 6 months testing for TB on bovine herds. This is placing an unnecessary burden and cost on farmers and should not be imposed."

Councillor Gerry Dolan gave the background to his motion, and he called on the Minister for Agriculture, Food, and the Marine to abandon plans to introduce mandatory 6 months testing for TB on bovine herds.

Councillor Paddy O'Rourke supported the motion and said this measure is a considerable cost and inconvenience to farmers.

Councillor Brendan Barry supported the motion and said this will force cattle through the factories rather than marts.

All members supported the motion.

On the **PROPOSAL** of Councillor Gerry Dolan  
**SECONDED** by Councillor Paddy O'Rourke

It was **AGREED** that Leitrim County Council write to the Minister of Agriculture, Food, and the Marine to abandon plans to introduce mandatory 6 months testing for TB on bovine herds. This is placing an unnecessary burden and cost on farmers and should not be imposed.

This concluded the business of the meeting at 3.11 pm

**Signed:**

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Councillor Ita Reynolds Flynn**  
**Cathaoirleach**

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Kieran Brett**  
**Meetings Administrator**

**Dated: Monday, 7<sup>th</sup> November 2022**