

**Minutes of Leitrim County Council meeting held in the Council Chamber, Áras an Chontae,
Carrick on Shannon, Co. Leitrim on Monday, 6 March 2023**

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 Pádraig Fallon
Councillor Paddy Farrell
Councillor Des Guckian
Councillor Felim Gurn
Councillor Thomas Mulligan **via online**
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
Terry McGovern, Senior Engineer
Bernard Greene, Senior Planner
Pio Byrnes, Senior Executive Planner
Pauline Brennan, County Librarian
Emer Connolly, Senior Executive Officer
Sinead Flynn, Administrative Officer
Kieran Brett, Meetings Administrator
Kathleen Ellis, Assistant Staff Officer

At the outset of the meeting the Cathaoirleach, Councillor Ita Reynolds Flynn invited Councillor Finola Armstrong McGuire to speak in relation to International Women's Day. Councillor Finola Armstrong McGuire outlined that she was the Leitrim Representative on

the Women's Regional Caucus and that a short meeting has been arranged for 3pm that afternoon in the Council Chamber which will give an overview of the Caucus' aims and objectives. The meeting will also reverse the current gender balance of elected reps within Leitrim. She outlined that women from the 3 municipal areas, spanning a range of ages and cultures have been invited to the meeting.

MM.27.23 Votes of Sympathy

The Members extended a vote of sympathy to the following:

- Bridie Cox, Antfield, Aughamore, Carrick-on-Shannon on the death of John Cox, RIP
- Pat Faughnan, Derrycarne, Aughamore, Carrick-on-Shannon on the death of Angela Faughnan, RIP
- Noel McDermott, Clooncarne, Bornacoola, Co Leitrim on the death of Pauline McDermott, RIP
- Mrs Detta McNiffe, Drumkeel, Dromahair, Co Leitrim on the death of John Joe McNiffe, RIP
- Margaret McCartain & Family, Drumucker, Carrigallen, Co Leitrim on the death of Seamus McCartain, RIP
- Geraldine & John Moran & Family, Aughnagallop, Drumshanbo, Co Leitrim on the death of Ronan Moran, RIP
- Sean & Bernadette Heslin, Clooncorrick, Carrigallen on the death of Grainne Heslin, RIP

MM.28.23 Adoption of Minutes

MM.28.23a Minutes of Council meeting held 9th January 2023

On the **PROPOSAL** of Cllr. Caillian Ellis
SECONDED by Cllr. Sean McDermott

It was **AGREED** to adopt the Minutes of 9th January 2023.

MM.28.23b Minutes of Special Meeting held on Co Development Plan on 7th February 2023

On the **PROPOSAL** of Cllr. Sean McDermott
SECONDED by Cllr. Sean McGowan

It was **AGREED** to adopt the minutes of the Special Meeting held on the County Development Plan on 7th February 2023.

Councillor Des Guckian proposed that the following amendment be made to minute no MM.26.23 to read as follows "Councillor Des Guckian said he opposed the adoption of the Plan as inputs from Councillors were ignored and the plan left a gap open for speculators to take over the county."

The members agreed to this amendment.

MM.29.23 Disposals under Section 183(1) of the Local Government Act, 2001

MM.29.23a Notice of Intention to Dispose by way of Leasehold of property known as Carrick Business Campus at Attifinlay, Carrick-on-Shannon

Councillor Des Guckian sought clarification on the following:

- Who is on the board of the DAC Company?
- Would it not be better for the Rural Regeneration and Development Fund be used to help farmers and the environment?
- What are the Financial Considerations of this initiative?
- Why is a rent free period included in the proposal?

Councillor Enda Stenson supported the proposal and said the Carrick Campus is needed to be fully operational as soon as possible so as to get employment into the County.

Councillor Des Guckian said he was not against the Carrick Campus, however he was seeking answers to questions.

Councillor Finola Armstrong McGuire seconded the proposal. Councillors Paddy Farrell and Sean McGowan also supported the proposal.

In response to Cllr Guckian's queries, Mr Joseph Gilhooly, Director of Services responded as follows:

To facilitate the achievement of the full potential of the Campus as a significant economic generator for the County and the Region, it is proposed to lease it to the Leitrim Economic Growth and Capital Development DAC (the company) which is a wholly owned Leitrim County Council subsidiary company. All directorships will be Council staff and reporting to the Chief Executive. The lease valuation process has been carried out which has informed the terms and conditions.

The rationale behind the establishment of the Company is to equip the Council to have an entity in place that can operate in a fully commercial way and provide the necessary operational agility to assist the Council in responding to opportunities as they present for the economic betterment of the county. The taking on by the DAC Company of the full operation and management responsibility, through this proposed lease of the Carrick Business Campus, clearly fits within this rationale and provides the best opportunity for the potential of the Campus to be realised into the future.

Through due diligence in advance of the purchase and since acquiring the building, the

Council has thoroughly assessed the Campus. The building has many strengths and is in excellent condition having had an advance design when developed. However, it is proposed that part of the building will undergo a workspace revamp, delivered in the short-term. This concept was prepared as part of the funding application and support has been approved for its delivery through the Rural Regeneration and Development Fund. In addition, it is also proposed that a full building energy usage appraisal will be carried out and relevant interventions, including the use of renewable energy sources, will be undertaken in conjunction with securing external grant aid towards these costs. It is anticipated that both projects will be carried out by the Company through this lease arrangement, but it is expected that the cost will be supported by the Council through some financial considerations which will be determined in due course with the Company, once the full extent of these initiatives have been scoped out and agreed. The rent free period is included to allow the Company to become established. The Members will be updated further on the operation of the company in due course.

Mr Gilhooly said the RRDF funding has to be used on the project that The Department of Rural & Community Development have already approved.

Councillor Des Guckian said he would support the proposal having been updated on the above.

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

It was **AGREED** that Leitrim County Council consent to the Transfer of property known as Carrick Business Campus Attifinlay, Carrick on Shannon, Co. Leitrim 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.

Particulars of the property to which County Council proposes to dispose:

Transfer of the property by way of a 20-year lease to Leitrim Economic Growth and Capital Development DAC (Reg. No. 681225) (LEGCD), a wholly owned Leitrim County Council designated activity company incorporated on 5 November 2020. The Company was incorporated to facilitate potential investment and development opportunities for the County. The leasing of this property to the LEGCD is for operational, development and management purposes and is in keeping with the objective behind the incorporation of the LEGCD.

The existing clients occupying the property are unaffected by this lease and the terms of the European Communities (Protection of Employees on Transfer of Undertakings) Regulations will apply.

The Consideration proposed in respect of the disposal:

The lease is based on commercial terms and will involve an annual lease fee of €300,000, subject to lease fee abatement based on levels of vacancy, with an initial 2 year rent free period (followed by a phased approach to rent if commercially necessary) and subject to review after 2, 5, 10 and 15 years. The LEGCD will be responsible for identifying and entering into Licence Agreements with suitable potential clients for occupation of the property.

MM.30.23 Consider the adoption of the North West Homelessness Action Plan

On the **PROPOSAL** of Cllr. Frank Dolan
SECONDED by Cllr. Brendan Barry

It was **AGREED** that the North West Homelessness Action Plan be adopted.

Councillor Guckian said there is little substance in the report and he opposed the adoption of the report.

Councillor Paddy O'Rourke said Cllr Guckian had the opportunity to influence policies such as this by joining an SPC committee but choose not to so do.

MM.31.23 Receive Annual Report from the Audit Committee 2022

The Annual Report, 2022 from the Audit Committee to Leitrim County Council, submitted in accordance with the provisions of Section 122 of the Local Government Act, 2001, as amended by Section 5 of the Local Government (Business Improvement Districts) Act 2006, as circulated to each Member appears as **Appendix 1** to the Minutes of this Meeting in the Minute Book.

The report was noted by the Members.

MM.32.23 Note the Rate Collection Report for 2022 and Schedule of Uncollected Rates

The 2022 Rate Demands issued in March 2022 to a total of 1,134 customers at a value of €6,619,153. Following appeals to Valuation Tribunal in 2022, a number of commercial properties had a lesser valuation applied. This resulted in the overall value of the 2022 Rate Demands being reduced to €6,525,465 when the revised valuations were retrospectively applied to the relevant properties. This resulted in a 'retraction' of the Rates Book of €93,968 which is a loss of income from commercial rates to the Council.

In recognition of the ongoing impact that COVID19 was having on businesses, a targeted commercial rates waiver was applied to specified businesses for Quarter 1, 2022. The value of the waiver was the equivalent of 25% of the annual rate demand for 2022. The broad categories of businesses that benefitted from the rates waiver for Quarter 1, 2022 were as follows: Hospitality, including Restaurants and Cafes; Leisure; Miscellaneous Entertainment

and certain Tourism related categories. A total of €204,227 as a 'credit-in-lieu' of rates was applied to 205 properties under the Rates Waiver Scheme for Quarter 1, 2022.

The report was noted by the Members.

MM.33.23 **Note report on the operation of Leitrim County Council's Litter Management Plan during 2022**

Report from Environmental Awareness Officer, dated 27th February 2023 in relation to the measures taken during 2022 in relation to the prevention and control of litter, as circulated to each Member, appears as **Appendix 2** to the Minutes of this Meeting in the Minute Book.

The report was noted by the Members.

MM.34.23 **Note Annual Report 2022 from Leitrim Joint Policing Committee**

Report dated 3rd January 2023, as circulated to the Members, appears as **Appendix 3** to the Minutes of this meeting in the Minute Book.

The report was noted by the Members.

MM.35.23 **Management Reports Dec 2022 and Jan 2023**

The Monthly Management Reports for December 2022 and January 2023, as circulated, were noted by Members.

Councillor Des Guckian noted the following:

- He welcomed the upgrade to the watermain in Mohill.
- He sought clarification on the Carrick Masterplan.
- Careful consideration needs to be taken in regard to the Public Realm Works in Mohill as there were a lot of problems experienced in Carrick-on-Shannon.
- He welcomed the replacement of the water pipeline from Gowel to Kilnagross.
- He welcomed the new footpath at Annaduff that will link the school with the village.

Mr Joseph Gilhooly responded to the above as follows:

- The Carrick Masterplan is a key objective for the future development and planning aspect of the town.
- Mohill Public Realm tender documents are currently being assessed. The project will be monitored to ensure proper workmanship.

MM.36.23 **Commitments**

Mr Joseph Gilhooly informed the members that under the ORIS application Leitrim County Council have been approved €114,929.30 for the following projects:

- Acres Lake – New Carpark
- Mass Rock at Sliabh Iarainn– Enhanced car park
- Shannon Erne Blueway

Councillor Paddy O'Rourke and Councillor Enda McGloin welcomed the funding.

MM.37.23 Report from Corporate Policy Group

Ms Mary Quinn, advised that the Corporate Policy Group had considered the following items at their online meeting held on the 3rd March 2023:

- The members noted correspondence from the President of the AILG, recommending that each local authority invite their local Garda Crime Prevention Officer to deliver an address/presentation to Elected Members focusing on Elected Member Personal Security. It was agreed that the executive contact the local Garda Crime Prevention Officer with a view to delivering a presentation to the members at each of the three municipal district meetings or alternatively at a Joint Policing Committee meeting.
- The members noted the updates from the following SPC's:
 - Planning, Economic Development & Infrastructure SPC
 - Housing Policy, Social & Cultural Development SPC.
- It was agreed that the May Plenary Council Meeting will be held on 2nd May 2023 in The Island Theatre, Ballinamore at 11 am.
- Members considered the attendance at upcoming conferences, training events, seminars including the Cathaoirleach's visit to New York for the St. Patrick's Day festivities in March 2023 and Cllr Sean McGowan's visit to Liverpool for the Purple Flag Award for Carrick-on-Shannon in March 2023.
- Members considered the items for Council Meeting 6th March 2023

MM.38.23 Attendance at conferences/training

On the **PROPOSAL** of Cllr Caillian Ellis
SECONDED by Cllr Mary Bohan

It was **AGREED** that the attendance of Councillor Ita Reynolds Flynn at the Co Leitrim Society of New York Dinner dance and the St Patrick Day Celebrations in New York from 8th March 2023 to 23rd March 2023 inclusive be approved.

On the **PROPOSAL** of Cllr Caillian Ellis

SECONDED by Cllr Mary Bohan

It was **AGREED** that the attendance of Councillor Sean McGowan at the Purple Flag Awards in Liverpool on the 22nd to 24th March 2023 be approved.

On the **PROPOSAL** of Cllr Caillian Ellis
SECONDED by Cllr Mary Bohan

It was **AGREED** that the attendance of Cllr Padraig Fallon and Councillor Gerry Dolan at the AILG Annual Conference 2023 on 19th April to 20th April 2023 be approved.

On the **PROPOSAL** of Cllr Caillian Ellis
SECONDED by Cllr Mary Bohan

It was **AGREED** that the attendance of Cllr Padraig Fallon, Councillor Enda McGloin, Councillor Frank Dolan, Councillor Sean McDermott, Councillor Thomas Mulligan, and Councillor Paddy Farrell at the AILG training on the “Electoral Reform Act” on the 25th February 2023 in the Radisson Blue Hotel, Limerick be retrospectively approved.

On the **PROPOSAL** of Cllr Caillian Ellis
SECONDED by Cllr Mary Bohan

It was **AGREED** that the attendance of Cllr Paddy O’Rourke, Cllr Caillian Ellis, Cllr Paddy Farrell, Cllr Sean McDermott, Cllr Enda McGloin, Cllr Sean McGowan, Cllr Frank Dolan, and Cllr Enda Stenson at the LAMA Spring Seminar “Apprenticeship & Future Building Initiatives Recruitment” on the 2nd to 4th March 2023 be retrospectively approved.

On the **PROPOSAL** of Cllr Caillian Ellis
SECONDED by Cllr Mary Bohan

It was **AGREED** that the attendance of Cllr Ita Reynolds Flynn at the I.P.B. Special Awards in the Clayton Hotel, Burlington Road, Dublin on the 21st January 2023 be retrospectively approved.

On the **PROPOSAL** of Cllr Caillian Ellis
SECONDED by Cllr Mary Bohan

It was **AGREED** that the attendance of Cllr Paddy Farrell and Councillor Ita Reynolds Flynn at the Association of Irish Regions “Regions in Focus 2023” Training, in Monaghan on the 7th to 9th February 2023 be retrospectively approved.

MM.39.23 Meeting Correspondence

1. Resolution received 3rd January 2023 from Meath County Council calling on the Government to amend the Electricity Regulation Act and associated legislation to allow for the consideration and possible implementation of nuclear power generation in Ireland.
2. Email of 6th January 2023 from the Office of the Minister for Housing acknowledging receipt of Resolution passed by Leitrim County Council expressing no confidence in Irish Water.
3. Email of 18th January 2023 acknowledging receipt of Vote of Sympathy from Councillor Des Guckian.
4. Letter of 20th January 2023 from the HSE regarding the NowDoc service.

Councillor Brendan Barry expressed his disappointment with the reply received and he said there is no commitment given and this will result in a reduction in services in Carrick-on-Shannon.

Councillor Des Guckian said the reply is too general and there is a drift towards privatisation and this will lead to an expensive service from NowDoc.

5. Resolution from Tipperary County Council dated 20th January 2023 relating to the control of Dogs Act Legislation in Ireland.
6. Resolution from Cavan County Council regarding the effects of Covid 19.
7. Email 25th January 2023 from the TII in regard to the proposed 52km Shannon Erne Greenway from Leitrim Village to Belturbet.
8. Letter of acknowledgement from An Taoiseach dated 27th January 2023 regarding Resolution passed by Leitrim County Council in relation to the HSE.
9. Letter of acknowledgement from An Taoiseach dated 27th January 2023 regarding Resolution passed by Leitrim County Council to Nationalise the banks.
10. Letter of acknowledgement from An Taoiseach dated 27th January 2023 regarding the referendum on voting rights for Irish Citizens abroad.
11. Letter from the Department of Housing and Local Government dated 31st January 2023 regarding the URDF.
12. ICBAN January 2023 Newsletter.

13. February 2023 Newsletter from the Co Leitrim Society of New York.
14. Resolution from Wicklow County Council dated 14th February 2023 regarding Coillte's Decision to partner with a UK based investment fund Gresham House.
15. Resolution from Sligo County Council dated 22nd February 2023 calling on the Government to include a provision for those on the working family payment scheme to avail of the Fuel Allowance Payment Scheme.

Councillor Pádraig Fallon supported this resolution.
16. Resolution from Sligo County Council dated 22nd February 2023 asking the Minister for Health, Taoiseach and Tanaiste as to why the surgical hub is not considered for Sligo General Hospital.
17. Resolution from Sligo County Council regarding Regional Roads and to address realignment and other safety issues.
18. Resolution from Sligo County Council dated 22nd February 2023 regarding the disability grants scheme.

Councillor Sean McGowan supported this resolution.
19. Resolution from Kerry County Council dated 23rd February 2023 regarding the award of medals to the veterans of Jadotville.
20. Letter dated 23rd February 2023 from the National Transport Authority regarding the Irish Hackney Pilot Scheme.
21. Resolution from Cavan County Council dated 24th February 2023 regarding the Gresham House Fund.
22. Email of the 27th February 2023 from the Office of the Minister for Finance in regard to the current inflationary environment.
23. Email from Senator Boyhan regarding appointment of Chair of the Citizens Assembly on Drug Use.

Councillor Paddy O'Rourke highlighted the difficulties people are experiencing in moving their accounts from the Ulster Bank and the lack of assistance being provided by Ulster Bank. Councillor Enda Stenson, Councillor Paddy Farrell, Councillor Brendan Barry, and Councillor Sean McGowan also outlined their support in this regard.

MM.40.23 Presentation on the Library Service

The Cathaoirleach, Councillor Ita Reynolds Flynn welcomed Pauline Brennan, County Librarian to the meeting and she gave a presentation to the Members on the array of services available to members of the public through the branch Library network.

The Cathaoirleach, Councillor Ita Reynolds Flynn and the members thanked Ms Brennan for the presentation.

The members raised the following:

Councillor Sean McDermott praised the work of the Library in Kiltyclogher and highlighted the positive impact it has on the surrounding area.

Councillor Finola Armstrong McGuire sought further information on the My Open Library Project and the opening hours of branches and how will they be staffed.

Councillor Justin Warnock queried if there is anything proposed in the library programme for a Library in Kinlough.

Councillor Mary Bohan paid tribute to the Local Studies library and she said it would be great to see this open to all and she paid tribute to the Dromahair Library and she said it is a great asset and the Council have been supportive of this at Budget time.

Councillors Enda Stenson and Sean McGowan paid tribute to the new Library in Mohill.

Councillor Brendan Barry raised the issue of the library books being dumped from Ballinamore Library highlighting the image portrayed for an otherwise good service.

Councillor Des Guckian paid tribute to the library service available to people with disabilities and he asked does the library service provide a service to National Schools.

Councillor Ita Reynolds Flynn said she would like to see the Local Studies service expanded as it is currently by appointment only.

In reply, Ms Brennan responded to the members queries as follows:

- The My Open Library project will give library members access to the library branch using their membership number and PIN code, outside of normal staffing hours, up until 10 pm, 7 days per week. Initially it will be introduced in Drumshanbo and the new library in Dromahair and will eventually be rolled out to all branch libraries.
- The development of a Library in Kinlough will be considered in the preparation of the new Library Development Plan.
- Leitrim County Council is taking a lease on Cox's Pharmacy building on Bridge St. Carrick-on-Shannon and Carrick Library will be moving to this location towards the end of March.

- In Ballinamore, the books and material in the skip had been dumped because the material was unusable, out of date reference material and was not suitable to be given to people or schools as the items were damaged. Any material of benefit is always offered to the community in the first instance. The material in the skip was being sent for recycling.
- The library service engages with national schools through the Block Loan programme and also the provision of class novels and technology.
- The Local Studies material will be made more widely available. The collection will be opened and people wishing to access material will be facilitated where possible. Accessing the material by appointment remains the best option for the public, as staff will have more time allocated to offer assistance as needed.

MM.41.23 Motion from Councillor Mary Bohan - Re-instating Regional Health

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

"I propose that Leitrim County Council call on the Minister for Health and the Government to consider abolishing the HSE and reinstating regional Health Boards to deliver the country's health services."

Councillor Mary Bohan gave the background to her motion and said a very large amount of money is being spent per head of population in comparison with other countries and she proposed that there would be more accountability in the delivery of health services with a Regional Structure.

Councillor Padraig Fallon supported the motion stating he supported the proposed break up of the HSE, as per the motion, and said the expenditure needs to be examined, as the budget is increasing year on year and people are waiting for services and this situation cannot continue.

Councillors Felim Gurn, Justin Warnock, Sean McGowan, Caillian Ellis, Sean McDermott, Brendan Barry and Enda Stenson all supported the motion.

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

It was **AGREED** Leitrim County Council call on the Minister for Health and the Government to consider abolishing the HSE and reinstating regional Health Boards to deliver the country's health services.

Councillor Mary Bohan thanked the Members for their support, and she said the system is not working and clarified that the intention is not to criticise the staff working in the HSE.

MM.42.23 Motion from Councillor Thomas Mulligan - Housing Scheme for Elderly

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

"With regard to the housing scheme for the elderly, the condition whereby an applicant must produce a letter of refusal from their house insurance company stating that the necessary repairs are not covered by their existing policy is causing difficulties for applicants and in some cases cannot be acquired by the applicants. A level of discretion is necessary as the insurance business has become faceless and removed and are not prepared to respond to this type of request."

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

"When applicants are seeking the Housing Aid for Older People Grant the applicant is required to submit a Declinature letter from their insurance company stating that these repairs are not covered under their insurance policy. The Housing section has to date not found that Insurance companies are unwilling to provide the Declinature letter once requested. The Housing section does note however that some applicants do require extra assistance in order to convey this exact request to their insurance company and LCC housing staff are happy to assist any applicant in this regard."

Councillor Thomas Mulligan said the condition whereby an applicant must produce a letter of refusal from their house insurance company stating that the necessary repairs are not covered by their existing policy is proving difficult for elderly and disabled people.

Councillor Enda McGloin supported this.

MM.43.23 Motion from Councillor Des Guckian - Speculation

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

"That we Councillors disapprove of the massive amount of speculation currently happening, concerning large areas of farmland and, also development lands near towns. While it is not illegal, it is morally wrong and must be publicly opposed by us."

Councillor Des Guckian gave the background to his motion and said the County Development Plan has left the door open for speculators to buy both farmland and development land near towns and villages, in Leitrim.

Councillor Enda Stenson asked for examples of where this has happened.

Councillor Brendan Barry supported the motion and said large tracts of land in Leitrim are owned by speculators already. Suckler and sheep farmers are being priced out of buying additional land that comes up for sale.

Councillor Justin Warnock said he would like to support most of the motion, and he said land grab continues in Leitrim and very few Leitrim farmers plant their own land. The majority of the land planted under forestry in Leitrim is done by outside interests.

Councillor Gerry Dolan supported the motion.

MM.44.23 Motion from Councillor Caillian Ellis - Drainage Grant

To consider the following Notice of Motion submitted by Councillor Caillian Ellis;

"I propose that Leitrim County Council write to the Minister for Agriculture and Food to introduce a drainage grant of 80 percent for disadvantage areas over a number of years to help young farmers improve the quality of their land."

Councillor Caillian Ellis proposed that a drainage grant for disadvantaged areas be introduced, especially for young farmers, to encourage them to remain in farming and help to increase the output from their land and also help people in full time farming.

Councillor Sean McGowan said it is a very timely motion and he said this would encourage young farmers and would be a huge advantage to the countryside.

Councillor Enda McGloin said the grant should be confined to marginal land, it should be introduced on a pilot basis and extended thereafter.

Councillor Des Guckian supported the motion but said he feared this motion will not be accepted by the present coalition government.

Councillor Brendan Barry said a similar motion was raised in this regard previously and he said it is government policy to rewet the land and he referred to the current ACRES scheme and a condition in the scheme is to prevent people from draining land.

Councillor Justin Warnock said 57% of farmers are approved into the ACRES Scheme and the balance of 43% can drain their land.

Councillors Paddy O'Rourke, Sean McDermott, Gerry Dolan, Mary Bohan, Paddy Farrell, and Thomas Mulligan also supported the motion.

On the **PROPOSAL** of Cllr Caillian Ellis
SECONDED by Cllr Sean McGowan

It was **AGREED** Leitrim County Council write to the Minister for Agriculture and Food to introduce a drainage grant of 80 percent for disadvantaged areas over a number of years to help young farmers improve the quality of their land."

MM.45.23 Motion from Councillor Pdraig Fallon - Cleaning Products

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

"I propose that this Local Authority write to HSE management, CHO Area 1, seeking an assurance that cleaning products being used are safe and don't pose a risk to staff, patients or visitors. Concerns have been raised by staff working in care settings. These products are labelled dangerous, can cause skin irritation, serious eye damage, and very toxic to aquatic life."

Councillor Padraig Fallon gave the background to his motion and said these cleaning products are for industrial use and not for use in the domestic settings.

Councillors Felim Gurn and Des Guckian supported the motion.

On the **PROPOSAL** of Cllr Padraig Fallon

SECONDED by Cllr Felim Gurn

It was **AGREED** this Local Authority write to HSE management, CHO Area 1, seeking an assurance that cleaning products being used are safe and don't pose a risk to staff, patients or visitors. Concerns have been raised by staff working in care settings. These products are labelled dangerous, can cause skin irritation, serious eye damage, and very toxic to aquatic life."

MM.46.23 Motion from Councillor Enda McGloin - Residential Tenancy Board

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

"I seek the support of the members in calling on the Minister for Housing, Local Government & Heritage to review the workings of the Residential Tenancy Board with a view to providing more resources to deal with the current inefficiencies, particularly around customer service."

Councillor Enda McGloin gave the background to his motion, and he said last year new procedures were introduced and it is very difficult to make contact with a customer service agent and he proposed that extra resources be put in place to deal with this issue.

On the **PROPOSAL** of Cllr Enda McGloin

SECONDED by Cllr Sean McDermott

It was **AGREED** that Leitrim County Council call on the Minister for Housing, Local Government & Heritage to review the workings of the Residential Tenancy Board with a view to providing more resources to deal with the current inefficiencies, particularly around customer service.

MM.47.23 Motion from Councillor Sean McGowan - Residential Zoned Land Tax

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

"I seek the support of members in calling on the Minister of Finance and the Minister of Housing, Local Government & Heritage to re-examine the Residential Zoned Land Tax legislation so that its application is limited to those counties containing cities and regional growth centres identified in the National Planning Framework, to include their defined commuting catchments as opposed to applying across the entire country, including County Leitrim, where it is not feasible for developers and builders to construct houses to the standards now required, while bringing houses to the market at an affordable price."

Councillor Sean McGowan acknowledged that there is a serious housing crisis in the country, and he said Leitrim County Council have put in a lot of effort over the last 18 months in preparing the County Development Plan. The Residential Zoned Land Tax is a situation for larger cities and larger towns but in Leitrim it has no impact but a charge on land.

Councillor Paddy O'Rourke supported the motion, and he said this tax is necessary in pressurized zones and this is not the case in Leitrim, and this will have to be reconsidered for County Leitrim.

Councillor Thomas Mulligan supported the motion and agreed that this is needed in urban communities, but it is irrelevant to smaller towns and rural areas.

Councillor Enda Stenson sought clarification if this will be discussed when the Carrick Plan is being considered.

Councillor Enda McGloin said that there is an appeals process and it is likely that much land will be rezoned.

Councillors Sean McDermott, Brendan Barry, Gerry Dolan, Felim Gurn, Paddy Farrell and Des Guckian supported the motion.

Mr Bernard Greene, Senior Planner advised that 40 submissions have been received on this issue and there are 3 months to make the decision. There are a number of submissions to have the land rezoned, and these will come before the Elected Members and can then be appealed to An Bord Pleanala.

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

It was **AGREED** that Leitrim County Council call on the Minister of Finance and the Minister of Housing, Local Government & Heritage to re-examine the Residential Zoned Land Tax legislation so that its application is limited to those counties containing cities and regional growth centres identified in the National Planning Framework, to include their defined commuting catchments as opposed to applying across the entire country, including County

Leitrim, where it is not feasible for developers and builders to construct houses to the standards now required, while bringing houses to the market at an affordable price.

MM.48.23 Motion from Councillor Sean McDermott - Evasive Species

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

"What strategy has Leitrim County Council regarding the elimination of evasive species such as Japanese Knotweed that is growing along our roads?"

Report by Capital Projects Office

"Leitrim County Council Roads Department have programs in place to deal with evasive species such as Japanese Knotweed on National and Regional roads. For the National road network we have a contractor employed who carried out a survey of all roads and treats the affected areas on an annual basis over a four-year period. For regional roads, affected areas were also identified by a survey circa 4 years ago, and these areas are treated each year in autumn using a Herbicide by local roads crews. It should be noted that we only treat affected areas on public property – we do not enter private property."

Councillor Mc Dermott acknowledged that the Local Authority is working on the problem. Councillor Justin Warnock outlined the need to protect native species.

Mr Terry McGovern, Senior Engineer advised the members that the roads department have programmes in place to treat areas affected by Japanese Knotweed on public property.

MM.49.23 Motion from Councillor Justin Warnock - Downsizing scheme for the elderly

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

"I ask Leitrim County Council to introduce the home "downsizing scheme for the elderly", as this scheme has been successfully introduced by many Local Authorities across the country."

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

"The preparation of a Private Rightsizing scheme is included under Section 8 of the Leitrim Age Friendly Strategy with Objective 8.3 being to Develop and Implement a Rightsizing Policy to ensure people's homes adjust to meet their current needs by the end of 2023. It should be noted that the existing Private Rightsizing schemes includes a significant discount on the value of the property when the Local Authority agree to purchase a property. Admission to the Private Rightsizing schemes currently operational is only offered to a homeowner where the Local Authority wishes to purchase a homeowner's property and is able to source a vacancy in Older Person's accommodation for the applicant. The matter will be considered by the Housing SPC at its next meeting."

Councillor Justin Warnock proposed the introduction of a downsizing scheme for the elderly. Councillor Des Guckian supported the proposal.

Ms Mary Quinn, Director of Services advised that this will be considered by the Housing SPC.

MM.50.23 Motion from Councillor Brendan Barry - Re-wet farmland on peat soils

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

"I request that Leitrim County Council call on the Government not to proceed with its plans to re-wet farmland on peat soils. How could Government think it's a good idea to flood farmland, while draining and replanting trees in peat soils for forestry? If Government want to restore bogs, forestry land and unproductive land should be considered first."

Councillor Brendan Barry gave the background to his motion and sought the support of the members to call on the Government not to proceed with it's plans to rewet farmland. Councillor Barry said there are plans for 90,000 acres to be rewetted and he hopes agricultural land is not included in this figure.

Councillor Justin Warnock supported this.

On the **PROPOSAL** of Cllr Brendan Barry
SECONDED by Cllr Justin Warnock

It was **AGREED** that Leitrim County Council call on the Government not to proceed with its plans to re-wet farmland on peat soils. How could Government think it's a good idea to flood farmland, while draining and replanting trees in peat soils for forestry? If Government want to restore bogs, forestry land and unproductive land should be considered first.

MM.51.23 Motion from Councillor Felim Gurn - Replacement of Clay pipes

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

"Have Irish Water/ Úisce Éireann any plans to replace the clay pipes that remain in use in our towns and villages for the last 100 years and before their deterioration causes serious problems with our water quality and supply?"

Report by Head of Finance & Water Services

"There are no 'Clay' pipes in the water network in County Leitrim, that we are aware of, but they are to be found in wastewater networks in most old towns around the county. The public Wastewater pipes are typically concrete or pvc but the connections from properties into the public sewer can be clay pipes."

Councillor Justin Warnock supported the motion.

MM.52.23 Motion from Councillor Enda Stenson - Double grant for upgrade of Septic Tanks

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

"I ask the support of the members to request the Minister for Housing, Local Government & Heritage to immediately and at least, double the grant available for upgrade of septic tanks. Otherwise, households are no longer able to carry out upgrades as requested."

Councillor Enda Stenson said inspections are taking place and people cannot afford to replace/upgrade their septic tanks where required. He outlined that the current maximum grant of €5,000 is not sufficient and he proposed that the grant be doubled.

Councillor Paddy Farrell said if our Minister for the Environment is serious about water quality, he needs to do something on this matter now rather than later.

Councillor Frank Dolan said grant aid is only applicable to people who have been inspected and turned down.

Councillors Justin Warnock and Finola Armstrong McGuire, Sean McDermott, Gerry Dolan, and Pdraig Fallon all supported the motion.

Councillor Brendan Barry said that people who have not yet registered their septic tanks should also be included in the grant scheme.

On the **PROPOSAL** of Cllr Enda Stenson
SECONDED by Cllr Paddy Farrell

It was **AGREED** that Leitrim County Council request the Minister for Housing, Local Government & Heritage to immediately and at least, double the grant available for upgrade of septic tanks. Otherwise, households are no longer able to carry out upgrades as requested.

MM.53.23 Motion from Councillor Paddy O'Rourke - OT Reports

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

"I ask that Leitrim County Council ask the HSE to provide additional personnel to carry out the necessary OT reports for persons seeking grant aid to improve their homes under the HAP grants. The huge delay in having OT reports provided to support their applications is causing great hardship to many applicants as a result of the lengthy delays. People only apply when they need this support often after hospitalisation of a fall taken at home, and need as fast a turn around for their application as possible."

Councillor Paddy O'Rourke gave the background to his motion and proposed that the HSE

provide additional personnel to carry out the necessary OT reports for persons seeking grant aid to improve their homes under the HAP grants.

On the **PROPOSAL** of Cllr Paddy O'Rourke
SECONDED by Cllr Mary Bohan

It was **AGREED** that Leitrim County Council ask the HSE to provide additional personnel to carry out the necessary OT reports for persons seeking grant aid to improve their homes under the HAP grants. The huge delay in having OT reports provided to support their applications is causing great hardship to many applicants as a result of the lengthy delays. People only apply when they need this support often after hospitalisation of a fall taken at home and need as fast a turn around for their application as possible.

MM.54.23 Motion from Councillor Paddy Farrell - CORU

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 T.D., to speed up the waiting time for graduates to get registered with CORU, the regulator for health and social care professionals, so that they can get into the much-needed work force."

Councillor Paddy Farrell proposed that the process of registering health care professionals be speeded up.

On the **PROPOSAL** of Cllr Paddy Farrell
SECONDED by Cllr Justin Warnock

It was **AGREED** that Leitrim County Council contact the Minister for Health, Stephen Donnelly T.D., to speed up the waiting time for graduates to get registered with CORU, the regulator for health and social care professionals, so that they can get into the much-needed work force.

MM.55.23 Motion from Councillor Gerry Dolan - Meat Exports

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 to have a specialised group of representatives to negotiate with China for greater meat exports to it, in light of imports being banned from Brazil. This is a major chance for export deals to be done."

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

It was **AGREED** that Leitrim County Council write to the Minister of Agriculture to have a specialised group of representatives to negotiate with China for greater meat exports to it,

in light of imports being banned from Brazil. This is a major chance for export deals to be done.

This concluded the business of the meeting at 1.40 pm

Signed:

Councillor Ita Reynolds Flynn
Cathaoirleach

Kieran Brett
Meetings Administrator

Dated: Tuesday, 2 May 2023