

**Minutes of Leitrim County Council meeting held in the Council Chamber, Áras an Chontae,
Carrick on Shannon, Co. Leitrim on Monday, 4 September 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 Paddy O'Rourke
Councillor Pdraig Fallon
Councillor Paddy Farrell
Councillor Des Guckian
Councillor Felim Gurn
Councillor Thomas Mulligan
Councillor Sean McDermott
Councillor Ita Reynolds Flynn
Councillor Enda Stenson

Councillor Justin Warnock (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
Bernard Greene, Senior Planner
Terry McGovern, Senior Engineer
Pio Byrne, Senior Executive Planner
Kathryne Bohan, Administrative Officer
Kieran Brett, Meetings Administrator
Kathleen Ellis, Assistant Staff Officer
Aideen Kelly, Assistant Staff Officer

At the outset of the meeting, Councillor Sean McGowan paid tribute to the late Gerry McGee former Elected Member of Leitrim County Council and recently deceased. Councillor Sean McGowan and the members commended the late Gerry McGee for his contribution to public office. The Late Gerry McGee was an Elected Member of Leitrim County Council from

1985 to 1991 and the members commended him for the legacy he left as a public representative and extended their sympathy to his wife Ann, daughters, grandchildren, and extended family.

Mr Lar Power, Chief Executive on his own behalf, and on behalf of the staff and management team, also extended his sympathy to his wife Ann and family.

On the **Proposal** of Councillor Sean McGown
Seconded by Councillor Thomas Mulligan

It was **AGREED** Leitrim County Council adjourn the meeting for 15 minutes as a mark of respect to the late Gerry McGee, recently deceased, former Elected Member of Leitrim County Council.

The members extended a vote of sympathy to Mrs Bridie McLoughlin, Station Road, Carrick-on-Shannon, Co Roscommon on the death of Dermot McLoughlin RIP.

MM.110.23 Adoption of Minutes

MM.110.23a Minutes Annual Meeting 30th June 2023

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

It was **AGREED** to adopt the Minutes of the Annual Meeting 30th June 2023

MM.110.23b Minutes 3rd July 2023

On the **PROPOSAL** of Cllr. Paddy O'Rourke
SECONDED by Cllr. Ita Reynolds Flynn

It was **AGREED** to adopt the Minutes of 3rd July 2023

Councillor Des Guckian proposed that the following amendment be included in the minutes in regard to Carrick on Shannon winning the Best Kept Town in Ireland award in 2023.

“Councillor Des Guckian also praised the Tidy Towns Committee for their work and fine achievement in helping to win this award.”

The members agreed to this amendment and the Meetings Administrator confirmed amendment to the minutes of the 3rd July 2023 accordingly.

MM.111.23 Note resignation of Chief Executive

The Cathaoirleach, Councillor Justin Warnock stated that it is with regret that he notes the resignation of Mr. Lar Power as Chief Executive of Leitrim County Council. Cathaoirleach Councillor Justin Warnock paid tribute to Mr. Power for his service to County Leitrim and stated that he had been an excellent Chief Executive who actively promoted the development of the County.

The members congratulated Mr. Power on his appointment as Chief Executive of Kilkenny County Council. They paid tribute to him for his vision for an ambitious capital programme and the imprint this has left on the development of the County and the way it has contributed to the enhancement of life for citizens and to further growth in County Leitrim over the coming years. The members paid tribute to Mr Power for his sociable, approachable manner, his good listening skills and for the professional manner in which he carried out his role as Chief Executive of Leitrim County Council. The Members wished Mr. Power and his family well for the future.

Mr. Power thanked the Members for their support, assistance, and courtesy during his time as Chief Executive. He paid tribute to the Members, the management team and staff of Leitrim County Council for their hard work and commitment and he said Leitrim was the best Council he has worked with.

On behalf of the executive, Mr. Joseph Gilhooly paid tribute to Mr. Lar Power, Chief Executive, for his contribution, vision, leadership, and his commitment to and resourcing of the organization. He wished Mr. Power and his family well for the future.

MM.112.23 Note appointment of Mr Joseph Gilhooly as Chief Executive temporarily with effect from 18th Sept 2023 until permanent appointment is made

The Members noted the appointment of Mr Joseph Gilhooly as Chief Executive temporarily with effect from 18th September 2023 until such time as a permanent appointment is made.

MM.113.23 Note that the Carrick-on-Shannon Municipal District shall decide on all aspects of the making of the joint Carrick-on-Shannon Local Area Plan.

Mr. Bernard Greene, Senior Planner presented a report to the Members outlining Carrick on Shannon Municipal District shall decide on all aspects of the making of the joint Carrick on Shannon Local Area Plan.

Councillor Enda Stenson queried if the Carrick on Shannon Elected Members will have the same input into the Joint Carrick-on-Shannon Local Area Plan as the Members had in the making of the Leitrim County Development Plan.

Mr Greene confirmed it is a shorter process i.e. 9 months and it will be easier to convene elected members at Municipal District level. Co-ordination and consensus will be sought

between Carrick on Shannon Municipal District and Boyle Municipal District Elected Members in developing the plan, as the plan will incorporate the area of Cortober which is contained within the Boyle MD area of County Roscommon.

On the **PROPOSAL** of Councillor Enda Stenson
SECONDED by Councillor Sean McGowan

It was **AGREED** that the Carrick on Shannon Municipal District shall decide on all aspects of the making of the joint Carrick on Shannon Local Area Plan pursuant to the provisions of Section 131a(1)(b) of the Local Government Act 2001 as amended which outlines reserved functions that may be performed in respect of a Municipal District by members or by the Local Authority.

MM.114.23 Note Road Safety Strategy & Action Plan

The County Leitrim Road Safety Strategy & Action Plan for 2023 -2030 was presented to the Members as set out in **Appendix 1** to the minutes of the meeting.

Mr Terry McGovern, Senior Engineer outlined that Leitrim's Road Safety Strategy and Action Plan has been developed and adopted in line with the Government's Road Safety Strategy and aims to ensure a co-ordinated, collaborative, and consistent approach to improving road safety for all road users. The County Leitrim Road Safety Strategy 2023 -2030 will include 3 Action plans as follows:

County Leitrim Phase 1 Road Safety Action Plan 2023-2024
County Leitrim Phase 2 Road Safety Action Plan 2025-2027
County Leitrim Phase 3 Road Safety Action Plan 2028-2030

The targets in the National Strategy are:

15% reduction in fatalities by 2024
10% reduction in serious injuries by 2024
50% reduction in fatalities by 2030
50% reduction in injuries by 2030

Ms Kathryne Bohan advised that there are 68 actions in the Plan and road safety is the responsibility of all road users and all road users must play their part in making our roads safer.

Councillor Des Guckian said the report was very long and not very realistic. Councillor Guckian said a big investment is needed from the Government, lower speed limits in key places should be introduced, the naming of black spots should be reintroduced. and he sought details of the emergency plan for the Dromod Rooskey bypass.

Councillor Mary Bohan welcomed the plan and said it is good to be ambitious and strive to

achieve the best outcome. Councillor Bohan referred to hedge cutting in rural areas and acknowledged that it is the landowners' responsibility. She acknowledged the Council cut vegetation at dangerous junctions and she called on the Council to be more proactive at this activity. Cllr Bohan said the high drop off on road margins is very dangerous, particularly on side roads.

Chairperson of the Planning, Economic Development and Infrastructure Strategic Policy Committee, Councillor Sean McDermot, expressed his concern regarding deaths on the roads and said people need to be very mindful of the speed they are travelling at.

Councillor Brendan Barry supported the safety strategy and expressed his disappointment with all of the tragic accidents that have occurred. Cllr Barry welcomed the very ambitious plan and hoped it would reduce the number of accidents.

In response to the comments from Elected Members, Mr Terry McGovern outlined that the targets come from the National Road Safety Strategic Plan 2021-2030 and he acknowledged these targets will be difficult to achieve. Mr McGovern said capital investment in roads infrastructure in County Leitrim is now at €25m, up from €16m in 2017. Mr McGovern outlined a speed limit review will be considered in the coming months. The Dromod Rooskey bypass is designed in line with national engineering standards. Hedge cutting funding and grant applications for same have increased greatly in recent years. Landowners to whom hedge cutting notices have been issued will be pursued further.

Councillor Pdraig Fallon highlighted that some roads have a 6 to 7 inch drop off between the road surface and the roadside margin, and he highlighted that this large drop off on roads results in cars getting damaged and he proposed that pull in points should be put in place.

Councillor Fallon said hedge cutting notices are not effective and there has to be a plan put in place in this regard.

Councillor Paddy O'Rourke said the hedge cutting scheme is relatively successful, it is an incentive mainly used by people who would be cutting their hedges in any event.

Councillor Ellis said a lot of young people are driving high powered cars and it should be a case that young people cannot drive high powered cars until they reach a certain age.

Councillor Felim Gurn proposed that students in transition year should be taught how to drive.

Councillor Des Guckian said secondary schools have enough to do than provide driving lessons. Councillor Guckian thanked Mr McGovern for his presentation and asked if there was an emergency plan in place for the N4 Dromod Rooskey bypass.

Cathaoirleach, Councillor Justin Warnock proposed that money be put aside for hedge cutting in the interests of safety of school buses etc.

Mr Terry McGovern advised as follows:

- Restoration Improvement Grants look after roadside margins where the road is higher.
- Laybys are put in place on narrow roads.
- The Council will be more proactive on hedge cutting notices.
- Hedges at regional road junctions are cut for safety reasons.
- Driving Safely training is rolled out to Transition Year Students, with an upcoming event scheduled for Mohill Community College.
- A Major Emergency Plan for the county is adopted and in place. Details of same will be provided to Councillor Guckian.

Councillor Sean McGowan said he was saddened to hear of all the fatalities over the past few days and he sympathised with all the families involved. Councillor McGowan proposed that road margins should be backed up before roads are surfaced.

Councillor Gerry Dolan said hedge cutting needs to be carried out on the road from Drumshanbo to Dowra.

Councillor Paddy Farrell proposed that some money should be invested in the Council having their own hedge cutting plant and equipment.

In response to Cllr Farrell, Mr Terry McGovern said it is cheaper to hire contractors to carry out hedge cutting.

On the PROPOSAL of Councillor Mary Bohan
SECONDED by Councillor Enda Stenson

It was **AGREED** that the County Leitrim Road Safety Strategy & Action Plan be adopted.

MM.115.23 Management Reports - June & July 2023

The Monthly Management Reports for June and July 2023 as circulated, were noted by members.

Councillor Des Guckian queried the following:

- Hartley Bridge –has there been any advancement made on this?
- Housing acquisitions – reservations in relation to impact on first time buyers.
- Potential CAS Project –update requested on CAS project in Carrick-on-Shannon.

Ms Mary Quinn advised that when considering housing acquisitions, the Local Authority ensure that the Council is not in competition with 1st time buyers. Ms Quinn advised that a number of meetings have taken place in regard to the CAS project in Carrick on Shannon and an update will be provided to Cllr Guckian in this regard.

Mr Joseph Gilhooly said considerable time has been spent on Hartley Bridge to date, a new planning application had to be initiated and the application is with An Bord Pleanala for decision.

MM.116.23 Commitments

There were no commitments to be noted.

MM.117.23 Consider time of November Council Meeting

Ms Mary Quinn advised members that the November Council Meeting will take place on the Monday, 6th November 2023 at 4 pm to facilitate those members who wish to attend the annual commemorative mass for the deceased members and staff of Leitrim County Council at 8 pm in St Mary's Church, Carrick-on-Shannon.

On the **PROPOSAL** of Cllr Enda McGloin
SECONDED by Cllr Sean McGowan

It was **AGREED** the November Meeting of Leitrim County Council will take place on the Monday, 6th November 2023 at 4 pm.

MM.118.23 Consider date and time of Annual Budget meeting

Mr Vincent Dwyer advised Members that the Annual Budget Meeting will take place on the Monday, 13th November 2023 at 11 am.

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

It was **AGREED** the Annual Budget meeting of Leitrim County Council will take place on the Monday, 13th November 2023 at 11 am.

MM.119.23 Report from Corporate Policy Group

Ms. Mary Quinn, advised that the Corporate Policy Group had considered the following items at their meeting held on 1st September 2023

- Noted resignation of the Chief Executive
- Noted appointment of Mr Joseph Gilhooly as Chief Executive with effect from 18th Sept 2023 on a temporary basis
- Received updates from SPC's.

- Received an update from IPA Research Division on review of Strategic Policy Committees (SPCs)
- Considered items for Council meeting 4th September 2023

Ms Mary Quinn advised the members that the Public Meeting of Leitrim Joint Policing Committee will take place on Wednesday 13th September 2023 in the Community Room of Mohill Library. The theme of the meeting will be Awareness of Domestic Violence.

This update was noted by the Members.

MM.120.23 Attendance at conferences/training

On the **PROPOSAL** of Cllr Mary Bohan
SECONDED by Cllr Enda McGloin

It was **AGREED** that the attendance of Cllr Mary Bohan at the AILG Training on the 19th October 2023 in the Hotel Kilmore, Cavan on “Personal Security – Positive Home, Workplace and Mobile Security Practices” by approved.

On the **PROPOSAL** of Cllr Mary Bohan
SECONDED by Cllr Enda McGloin

It was **AGREED** that the attendance of Cllr Mary Bohan, Cllr Ita Reynolds Flynn, Cllr Enda McGloin, Cllr Frank Dolan and Cllr Sean McDermott at the AILG Training on “Elected Members Personal Security – Positive Home, Workplace and Mobile Security Practices” on the 21st October 2023 in the Rose Hotel, Tralee be approved.

On the **PROPOSAL** of Cllr Mary Bohan
SECONDED by Cllr Enda McGloin

It was **AGREED** that the attendance of Cllr Enda McGloin and Cllr Frank Dolan at the AILG Training on “Government Legislation Policy Programme 2023” on the 18th November 2023 in the Clayton Hotel, Galway be approved.

On the **PROPOSAL** of Cllr Mary Bohan
SECONDED by Cllr Enda McGloin

It was **AGREED** that attendance of Councillor Paddy Farrell, Councillor Finola Armstrong McGuire, Councillor Ita Reynolds Flynn, Councillor Sean McGowan and Cllr Thomas Mulligan at the AILG Autumn Training on the 13th to 14th September 2023 in the Sligo Park Hotel, Sligo be approved.

On the **PROPOSAL** of Cllr Caillian Ellis

SECONDED by Cllr Sean McGowan

It was **AGREED** that the attendance of Councillor Mary Bohan at the MacGill Summer School 2023 on the 16th to 19th August 2023 in Donegal be retrospectively approved.

MM.121.23 Meeting Correspondence

1. Resolution from Wexford County Council dated 29th June 2023 calling for the ceasing of using the term “Halting Sites” in the County and beginning to renaming with a name more appropriate to the area.
2. Acknowledgement from the Office of the Minister for Justice on 6th July 2023 acknowledging resolution passed by Leitrim County Council in regard to violence against women.
3. Resolution from South Dublin County Council dated 12th June 2023 supporting the call for a Fossil Fuel Non-Proliferation Treaty and urging the Irish Government to support the initiative for a Fossil Fuel Non-Proliferation Treaty.
4. Email received 6th July 2023 from the Office of the Minister for Housing in receipt of a Resolution passed by Leitrim County Council in regard to the level of current domestic wastewater treatment system grants funded by the Department.
5. Resolution from Clare County Council dated 11th July 2023 calling for support to have a stained-glass image of St Brigid adopted as the official image of the saint in the context of the new St Brigid’s Day public holiday.
6. Email from the Office of the Minister for Finance dated 12th July 2023 acknowledging receipt of resolution passed by Leitrim County Council on the abolishment of the USC charge.
7. Email from the Office of the Minister for Transport dated 12th July 2023 acknowledging receipt of resolution passed by Leitrim County Council regarding the Leitrim Community Car Scheme.
8. Email from the Office of the Minister for Agriculture, Food and the Marine dated 12th July 2023 acknowledging receipt of resolution passed by Leitrim County Council regarding Acres Scoring.
9. Email from the Office of the Minister for Health dated 12th July 2023 acknowledging receipt of Resolution passed by Leitrim County Council regarding Community Car Scheme.

10. Email from the Office of the Minister for Health dated 12th July 2023 acknowledging receipt of Resolution passed by Leitrim County Council regarding respite places.
11. Email from the Office of the Minister for Housing dated 31st July 2023 acknowledging receipt of Resolution passed by Leitrim County Council regarding Vacant Property Refurbishment Grant query.
12. Email from the Office of the Minister for Agriculture, Food, and the Marine dated 31st July 2023 in regard to the existing national commitments with regard to rewetting of lands.
13. Email from the Office of the Minister for Justice dated 24th July 2023 acknowledging receipt of resolution passed by Leitrim County Council regarding Part 4 of the Public Health Acts Amendment Act, 1890.
14. Email from the Office of the Minister of State for Disabilities dated 19th July 2023 acknowledging receipt of resolution passed by Leitrim County Council regarding the provision of additional respite places.
15. Email from the Office of the Minister for Justice dated 18th July 2023 in regard to violence against women.
16. Email from the Office of the Minister for Public Expenditure & Reform dated 13th July 2023 acknowledging receipt of resolution passed by Leitrim County Council in regard to the Universal Social Charge.
17. Resolution from Waterford City & County Council dated 27th July 2023 in regard to Active Travel Funding.
18. Email from the Office of the Minister for Transport dated 10th August 2023 in regard to the Community Centre Car Scheme.

Councillor Des Guckian acknowledged the number of replies received in relation to the Community Car Scheme, but outlined that no solution has been identified. The scheme closed in May due to a funding problem and he said the reply received from Minister Ryan is passing the book to the NTA. Councillor Guckian said the funding should be €60,000 and this service is needed.

Councillor Pdraig Fallon proposed that further contact be made with Minister Ryan in relation to the Community Car Scheme.

Councillor Sean McGowan expressed his disappointment with the reply received on this matter.

19. Email of the 18th August 2023 from the Office of the Minister for Agriculture in regard to the deadline for the submission of scorecards for the ACRES.
20. Notice from the Department of Housing Local Government and Heritage appointing Mr Joseph Gilhooly, Chief Executive of Leitrim County Council temporarily commencing 18th September 2023 until a permanent appointment is made.

Other items raised under Meeting Correspondence

Councillor Finola Armstrong McGuire said she would be leaving the meeting at 1 pm to attend the Launch of the Robotic Life Buoy which is now in place at the River Shannon in Carrick on Shannon. This is a battery-operated apparatus which cost €8,000 and she welcomed the initiative and all to the launch.

Members agreed to adjourn the meeting after the Rural Link presentation to attend the launch.

MM.122.23 Receive presentation from Local Link

The Cathaoirleach, Councillor Justin Warnock welcomed Fiona O'Shea & John Carr of Local Link Transport to the meeting. Ms Fiona O'Shea gave a presentation to the Members on Local Link Transport as set out in **Appendix 2** to the minutes of the meeting.

Cathaoirleach, Councillor Justin Warnock and the members thanked Ms Fiona O'Shea for the presentation.

The following points/questions were raised by the members:

- A pilot scheme to service the nighttime economy in rural villages is needed. Friday and Saturday night services would generate a huge boost from both an economic and social perspective.
- Smaller buses would be more economical on many routes.
- A hackney service not a runner as limitations exist to the distance a driver can operate within. The distance for operation must be expanded.
- Timetables not available at all bus stops and should be put in place.
- Is the voluntary car service part of Rural Link operations?
- Expansion and more frequent service in and out of Carrigallen and other destinations required.
- Need for more Bus Stops, Bus Shelters and facilities where people with disabilities can access the service.

Ms Fiona O'Shea responded as follows:

- More services will be in operation in the next 2 weeks- tendering process with bus contractors currently in the cooling off period.
- Big buses are required to cater for demand that exists, and they provide low floor access.
- Rural hackney service is not part of the Local Link Service.
- Voluntary car service is not part of the Local Link Service
- A pilot service is being put in place to serve the nighttime economy in Manorhamilton.
- The provision of bus shelters has been put out to tender for Mohill, Carrick on Shannon and Dromod
- Will revert back to members when review is complete on the Leitrim Project Integrated Model

MM.123.23 Motion from Councillor Padraig Fallon - Tenant Purchase

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

"I ask Leitrim County Council, Housing Section, if the list of houses eligible for tenant purchase has been finalised and if the excluded list is finalised."

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

"SI 484/2015 sets out the classes of houses that are excluded from sale under tenant purchase stating:

A housing authority shall not sell under Part 3, a house that—

- has been specifically designed for occupation by one or more than one elderly person,
- has been provided to facilitate the transition from institutional care to community-based living of persons with an enduring physical, sensory, mental health, or intellectual impairment,
- has been specifically designed for occupation by travellers, where more than one such house or dwelling is provided on the land concerned,
- is a caravan, mobile home or a structure or a thing, whether on wheels or not, that is capable of being moved from one place to another, whether by towing, transport on a vehicle or trailer, or otherwise,
- has been transferred to a planning authority in accordance with an agreement under section 96 of the Planning and Development Act 2000 (No. 30 of 2000), including a house provided on land or on a site so transferred, where the transfer is made for the purpose of providing housing referred to in section 94(4)(a)(i) of the said Act and the house is on the land the subject of the planning application to which the

agreement relates,

- in the opinion of the authority, should not be sold for reasons of proper management of the authority's stock of housing accommodation or on account of the house's structural condition, or
- should not be sold for the time being on account of proposals the authority has to carry out reconstruction or improvement works under section 12 of the Housing Act 1988 or for the regeneration of the area in which the house is located.

The list of excluded properties is currently being updated in the context of housing units added to the Council stock since 2015 through build and acquisition having regard to the above provisions."

Councillor Pdraig Fallon gave the background to his motion, and he proposed that this issue be considered for discussion at the next meeting of the Housing SPC.

Ms Mary Quinn advised that this matter will be discussed at the next Housing SPC meeting.

MM.124.23 Motion from Councillor Felim Gurn & Motion from Councillor Sean McGowan - To extend the 9% VAT Rate on food related businesses to the end of 2024

It was agreed to take Motion No. 15 in the name of Councillor Felim Gurn and Motion No. 19 in the name of Councillor Sean McGowan concurrently as they relate to the same issue.

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

"I seek the support of the members of Leitrim Council in calling on the Minister for Finance to retain and extend the 9% VAT rate on food related businesses to the end of 2024."

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

"I seek the support of the members in calling on the Minister for Finance, Mr. Michael McGrath & the Government to support the campaign by the Restaurants Association of Ireland to retain the VAT rate of 9% for food related businesses and to extend the 9% vat rate to the end of 2024."

Councillor Felim Gurn gave the background to his motion and called on the support of the members to contact the Minister for Finance to retain and extend the 9% VAT rate to the end of 2024.

Councillor Sean McGowan said he has been contacted by the Restaurants Association of Ireland to retain the 9% VAT rate to the end of 2024. Councillor McGowan said where there

is a lot of foot fall the vat rate will not have the same impact as in rural areas. Councillor McGowan said this increase will have a knock-on effect and he said there is a chance to change it at budget time.

All members supported the motion.

On the **PROPOSAL** of Cllr. Felim Gurn
SECONDED by Cllr. Sean McGowan

"It was **AGREED** that Leitrim County Council seek the support of the members of Leitrim Council in calling on the Minister for Finance to retain and extend the 9% VAT rate on food related businesses to the end of 2024."

On the **PROPOSAL** of Cllr. Sean McGowan
SECONDED by Cllr. Felim Gurn

"It was **AGREED** that Leitrim County Council seek the support of the members in calling on the Minister for Finance, Mr. Michael McGrath & the Government to support the campaign by the Restaurants Association of Ireland to retain the VAT rate of 9% for food related businesses and to extend the 9% vat rate to the end of 2024."

MM.125.23 Motion from Councillor Des Guckian - Flooding

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

"That Council officials and engineers be asked to explain how and why they are cooperating with other agencies in flooding back farmland all along the Shannon and its tributaries. This is being done without the agreement of injured parties and without compensation for losses incurred. The Council has no right to be interfering in this way with the constitutional rights of farmers to use and to enjoy their properties."

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

"The Office of Public Works (OPW) is the lead organisation for flood risk management on the Shannon system. Leitrim County Council is not involved in "flooding back farmland all along the Shannon and its tributaries." It's worth noting that the region experienced significant rainfall throughout July 2023 and as a result water levels on the Shannon were equivalent to what we would normally experience in many winter months.

Leitrim County Council is working in co- operation with the OPW in relation to various flood relief schemes within the county. In particular, Leitrim County Council in conjunction with the OPW and Roscommon County Council is progressing a Flood Relief Scheme for Carrick on Shannon and Cortober. Work is continuing on the Option Assessment, Scheme Development and Design stage with a Public Consultation event held on the 20th of July in the Landmark hotel, where the public and those residents directly and indirectly affected by historic flooding in the Carrick on Shannon and surrounding areas were facilitated to have

their say on all potential option presented on the day aimed at mitigating flooding in the Carrick on Shannon and surrounding areas. The outcome of this consultation will also form part of the ongoing work of this stage of the process."

Councillor Des Guckian gave the background to his motion, and he sought an explanation as to why the Council is cooperating with other agencies in flooding back farmland all along the Shannon and its tributaries.

Mr Joseph Gilhooly advised that the Council is not involved in flooding back farmland along the Shannon and its tributaries, and he advised Leitrim County Council is working in co-operation with the OPW in relation to various flood relief schemes within the County. Mr Gilhooly said that the level of rainfall that fell throughout the summer was significant, and the flooding is starting to recede due to the current dry spell and this is welcome.

Councillor Des Guckian asked if the Council were in discussions with IFA and the farmers in relation to water levels at Lough Rynn.

Mr Joseph Gilhooly clarified that discussions took place with IFA and farmers at Lough Rynn around a particular event that was scheduled and there was no buy in from the farmers. No action was necessary due to the level of rainfall before the event took place.

Mr Gilhooly said if anyone wants to make any further comments regarding the Flood Relief Scheme for the Carrick on Shannon and Cortober they can do so.

Councillor Thomas Mulligan said the Home International Rowing event held in Lough Rynn was a fabulous event and it has brought a lot of people into the area, and he paid tribute to the famers who facilitated this event.

Councillor Des Guckian said he has lost faith in public consultation and there was no buy in from the local farmers.

Mr Joseph Gilhooly said he wanted to clarify the wording "buy in" stating there was a reluctance to take action to increase water levels.

MM.126.23 Motion from Councillor Enda Stenson - Vacant/Derelict Housing Grant

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

"I ask what level of interest there has been in the Vacant/Derelict housing grant in Leitrim and are there any further incentives that we can offer as a Local Authority, to encourage more young couples, to at least consider the prospect of living in Leitrim. We need to get more people back into our county and, in particular, to rural Leitrim."

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

"To date 80 applications have been received by Leitrim County Council for the Croí Cónaithe

Refurbishment Grant of which 48 have been approved. Of the total received 21 applications have been received for rental properties. Currently 2 applications have been withdrawn and only 1 application has been rejected. The remaining 29 applications are being assessed with additional supporting documentation sought.

Leitrim County Council recently carried out an Affordable Housing Survey in order to ascertain the level of interest in potential Affordable Housing schemes within Co. Leitrim and this encompasses the demographic in the motion. Affordable Housing Schemes are designed to assist households within income brackets that are not eligible for Social Housing Supports, but who are also unable to secure sufficient mortgage funding to purchase a property on the Open Market. Where the need has been established a future Affordable Housing scheme developed by the Local Authority would be sold to qualifying 'first time' or 'fresh start' buyers at a significant reduction on open market prices with the local authority retaining an equity share in the property equal to that discount. The findings of the survey is being compiled and will be made available upon request.

Leitrim County Council is constantly striving to attract more people to live, work, invest in and visit Leitrim through various initiatives, including hosting of recruitment expo in both 2022 and 2023, partners in the IDA led North West in the City initiative held in Dublin in February 2023, provision of prestige working space through the Carrick Business Campus, facilitating and promoting the roll out of multiple working hubs and community connection points, a comprehensive service to small and medium sized enterprises to establish, grow or improve sustainability through the services of the Council's Local Enterprise Office, delivery of a range of vibrant PR/Marketing Campaigns for the County from an economic, regeneration or tourism perspective, the development of company retreat or taster events later in 2023 and finally the Council is continuing to implement an ambitious capital investment programme which is delivering a range of infrastructural or other projects that continue to enhance the appeal and attributes of the County to visitors, investors or potential residents."

Councillor Enda Stenson welcomed the reply, and noted the number of applications received are very good and he hoped that Leitrim County Council will continue to promote this scheme as it is important to get people into rural Leitrim.

Councillor Sean McGowan said he would like to see more of an uptake of the schemes in towns. Councillor McGowan insisted that we promote these schemes as this would be a huge boost to towns.

Councillor Brendan Barry proposed that a letter issue to the Minister and the Department of Housing to have the funding paid on a phased basis in advance of works commencing in order to pay for materials etc. as doing so would make the scheme more attractive.

Councillor Enda Stenson agreed to this.

Councillor Thomas Mulligan acknowledged that smaller towns are particularly slow in uptake of the Croí Cónaithe Scheme, and he proposed that signs be erected on the main streets of towns in the County to encourage people to join the scheme.

Councillor Des Guckian expressed the opinion that planning permission for housing is being denied to sons and daughters of landowners in the county.

Councillor Enda Stenson said he would not accept Councillor Guckian's assertion and that it should not be discussed by the Members as it is not true.

Cathaoirleach, Councilor Justin Warnock welcomed the fact that there have been 80 applications received to date for the Croí Cónaithe Refurbishment Grant.

MM.127.23 Motion from Councillor Enda McGloin - New Bye-Laws for the Shannon Catchment Area

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

"That Leitrim County Council call on Waterways Ireland and Minister Malcolm Noonan to carry out a public consultation, in line with January 2019 Government guidance, before considering the introduction of the proposed new bye-laws for the Shannon catchment area which, reduce mooring times from 5 to 3 days, removes winter mooring, imposes a tax on all business operating on the Shannon, all of which puts the upper Shannon region and its waterways at a disadvantage to attract boaters & visitors. These byelaws will reduce both overnight stays and visitors and will have a detrimental effect on all towns and villages in the County."

Councillor Enda McGloin acknowledged his motion is out of date as a meeting has now been scheduled to take place on this. Cllr McGloin said the concerns are that if these byelaws are introduced it will have an impact on businesses and he said they did not get a proper opportunity to voice their concerns.

Councillor Finola Armstrong McGuire supported the motion.

Councillor Enda McGloin said the byelaws are reviewed and prepared by Waterways Ireland and receive final signoff off by the Minister.

Councillor Des Guckian said this matter should be directed to the relevant Minister.

Councillor Pdraig Fallon proposed that the motion be also sent to the Minister in question to advise him that these new byelaws will be coming before him and requesting him to give due consideration in making in his decision.

Councillor Enda McGloin agreed to the proposal.

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

"It was **AGREED** that Leitrim County Council call on Waterways Ireland and Minister Malcolm Noonan to carry out a public consultation, in line with January 2019 Government guidance, before considering the introduction of the proposed new bye-laws for the Shannon catchment area which, reduce mooring times from 5 to 3 days, removes winter mooring, imposes a tax on all business operating on the Shannon, all of which puts the upper Shannon region and its waterways at a disadvantage to attract boaters & visitors. These byelaws will reduce both overnight stays and visitors and will have a detrimental effect on all towns and villages in the County."

MM.128.23 Motion from Councillor Paddy O'Rourke - Payments for NCT appointments.

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

"I ask Leitrim County Council to contact Applus+ and the Road Safety Authority with a view to having them review and reverse their decision to discontinue accepting cash payments for NCT appointments. This policy decision is going to severely impact older persons and the elderly and place them in a situation where they could be taken advantage of by devious persons purporting to help them make NCT Appointments."

Councillor Paddy O'Rourke said some people don't have the facility to pay online and prefer to pay by cash for services. Councillor O'Rourke proposed that this decision be reversed to facilitate the needs of the citizens of the country.

Councillor Mary Bohan supported the motion.

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

It was **AGREED** that Leitrim County Council contact Applus+ and the Road Safety Authority with a view to having them review and reverse their decision to discontinue accepting cash payments for NCT appointments. This policy decision is going to severely impact older persons and the elderly and place them in a situation where they could be taken advantage of by devious persons purporting to help them make NCT Appointments.

MM.129.23 Motion from Councillor Finola Armstrong McGuire - Ash Tree Conservation Project

To consider the following Notice of Motion submitted by Councillor Finola Armstrong-McGuire;

"I ask that this Council engage in supporting the "Ash Tree Conservation" project initiated recently in County Leitrim.

This is an opportunity by all to take action and achieve a very positive outcome. The support needs to be led by Dept. of Environment here in Leitrim and motion circulated so that it is

noted by all local authorities."

Councillor Finola Armstrong McGuire said this Ash Tree Conservation programme has been initiated by John Gaffney and she stated that it good to see an initiative being progressed in Leitrim on this issue.

Councillor Des Guckian said the project is very optimistic and he is aware that Ash Die back is progressive and can take years for it to show and he didn't hold out much hope for the project.

Councillor Brendan Barry supported the motion, stating it is good to support the Ash Tree Conservation Project for our native tree in Leitrim, as Leitrim was the county where it was first diagnosed in Ireland.

Councillors Paddy Farrell, Justin Warnock, and Thomas Mulligan also supported the motion.

On the **PROPOSAL** of Cllr. Finola Armstrong McGuire
SECONDED by Cllr. Brendan Barry

It was **AGREED** that Leitrim County Council engage in supporting the "Ash Tree Conservation" project initiated recently in County Leitrim.

MM.130.23 Motion from Councillor Sean McDermott - Provision of additional bicycle storage on all trains on the Dublin to Sligo Route.

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

"I ask Leitrim County Council to contact Iarnród Éireann and request them to provide additional bicycle storage on all trains on the Dublin to Sligo route, as cycling holidays have become very popular in Leitrim."

Councillor Sean McDermott said it is good to have more space for bikes on all trains on the Dublin to Sligo route, as cycling holidays have become very popular in Leitrim.

Councillor Felim Gurn and Councillor Des Guckian supported the motion.

On the **PROPOSAL** of Cllr. Sean McDermott
SECONDED by Cllr. Felim Gurn

It was **AGREED** that Leitrim County Council contact Iarnród Éireann and request them to provide additional bicycle storage on all trains on the Dublin to Sligo route.

MM.131.23 Motion from Councillor Paddy Farrell - Urgent Fodder Support

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

"I seek the support of the members to call on the Department of Agriculture and the Minister Charlie McConalogue to provide urgent fodder support in this very difficult year. Many farmers have harvested no fodder yet due to poor ground conditions and restrictions. Some fodder that has been made in the last two months is of very poor feed value and will lead to severe animal welfare issues in the winter months."

Councillor Farrell acknowledged that it has been a very difficult year weather wise for farmers and he proposed that the Minister provide urgent fodder support to farmers.

Councillors Gerry Dolan, Mary Bohan and Thomas Mulligan supported this.

Councillor Thomas Mulligan called for a time extension on the deadline for slurry spreading.

On the **PROPOSAL** of Cllr. Paddy Farrell
SECONDED by Cllr. Gerry Dolan

It was **AGREED** that Leitrim County Council call on the Department of Agriculture and the Minister Charlie McConalogue to provide urgent fodder support in this very difficult year. Many farmers have harvested no fodder yet due to poor ground conditions and restrictions. Some fodder that has been made in the last two months is of very poor feed value and will lead to severe animal welfare issues in the winter months.

MM.132.23 Motion from Councillor Justin Warnock - Social Housing Construction

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

"Landlords and greed are driving our young and mostly qualified professional people in their thousands out of this country annually, due to the spiralling cost of renting a room, an apartment or a house and this is all exasperated by the Government paying over €500,000,000 of taxpayers' money to private landlords to provide 50,000 housing units under HAP or RAS, these families and individuals need social housing. Therefore, I ask the elected members to call on the Taoiseach Leo Varadkar and the Tanaiste Michael Martin to focus on funding for social housing construction in the upcoming budget."

In giving the background to his motion, Cathaoirleach, Councillor Justin Warnock said people want to own their own house or have an opportunity to buy a house in the future, however houses are no longer affordable to most people on the average industrial wage.

Councillors Mary Bohan and Felim Gurn supported the motion.

On the **PROPOSAL** of Cllr. Justin Warnock
SECONDED by Cllr. Mary Bohan

It was **AGREED** that Leitrim County Council call on the Taoiseach Leo Varadkar and the Tanaiste Michael Martin to focus on funding for social housing construction in the upcoming budget. Landlords and greed are driving our young and mostly qualified professional people in their thousands out of this country annually, due to the spiralling cost of renting a room, an apartment or a house and this is all exasperated by the Government paying over €500,000,000 of taxpayers' money to private landlords to provide 50,000 housing units under HAP or RAS, these families and individuals need social housing.

MM.133.23 Motion from Councillor Brendan Barry - Deal with long waiting lists for driving tests.

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

"I request that Leitrim County Council call on ministers Eamon Ryan, Jack Chambers and the Road Safety Authority to deal with the long waiting time for driving tests in County Leitrim and across the country. The current wait time in Carrick on Shannon is over 7 months."

Councillor Brendan Barry proposed that an amnesty be put in place so that driving test drivers should be able to confirm if the driver is safe or not to drive. Councillor Barry said this is having a serious impact on young drivers for insurance purposes.

Councillor Pdraig Fallon supported the motion and said it is unbelievable that there is a waiting list of 7 to 10 months in Leitrim and he acknowledged this may occur in bigger population areas.

All members supported the motion.

On the **PROPOSAL** of Cllr. Brendan Barry
SECONDED by Cllr. Pdraig Fallon

It was **AGREED** that Leitrim County Council call on ministers Eamon Ryan, Jack Chambers and the Road Safety Authority to deal with the long waiting time for driving tests in County Leitrim and across the country. The current wait time in Carrick on Shannon is over 7 months.

MM.134.23 Motion from Councillor Gerry Dolan - Change of dates for farm payments 2023

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

"I call on Leitrim County Council to call on the Minister for Agriculture to strongly reconsider his planned change of dates to Farmers ANC, BISS, CRISS and Eco-Scheme payments for 2023. Delaying payments this year would be detrimental for the farming sector and rural communities.

This year farmers are under increased levels of stress and financial pressure due to the bad weather, forecasted fodder shortage, factories slashing livestock prices and continual high prices for meal and diesel. So again, I ask for him to do all in his power to change these delays."

Councillor Gerry Dolan gave the background to his motion and he sought the support of the members to call on the Minister for Agriculture to change the dates to farmers for ANC, BISS, CRISS and Eco-Scheme payments for 2023.

Councillor Pdraig Fallon supported the motion outlining he had written to Minister Clare Kirrane last week on this matter.

Councillor Brendan Barry and Councillor Felim Gurn supported the motion.

On the **PROPOSAL** of Cllr. Gerry Dolan
SECONDED by Cllr. Pdraig Fallon

It was **AGREED** that Leitrim County Council call on the Minister for Agriculture to strongly reconsider his planned change of dates to Farmers ANC, BISS, CRISS and Eco-Scheme payments for 2023. Delaying payments this year would be detrimental for the farming sector and rural communities. This year farmers are under increased levels of stress and financial pressure due to the bad weather, forecasted fodder shortage, factories slashing livestock prices and continual high prices for meal and diesel. So again, I ask him to do all in his power to change these delays.

MM.135.23 Motion from Councillor Mary Bohan - Day Care Services at our Lady's Hospital, Manorhamilton

Motion from Councillor Mary Bohan - Day Care Services at our Lady's Hospital, Manorhamilton

Cathaoirleach, Councillor Justin Warnock asked the members for their agreement to allow Councillor Bohan raise this motion as she was unable to submit her motion before the deadline date for receipt of motions to be placed on the agenda.

Members agreed to this.

"I propose that Leitrim County Council call on the Minister for Health, Stephen Donnelly, T.D. and the HSE to re-open the Day Care Services at our Lady's Hospital, Manorhamilton as a matter of urgency. This is an essential service for the people in the area."

Councillor Mary Bohan said day care services in Manorhamilton, which covers Leitrim & West Cavan, and were taken away during the COVID-19 pandemic need to be reinstated

urgently.

On the **PROPOSAL** of Cllr. Mary Bohan
SECONDED by Cllr. Sean McDermott

It was **AGREED** that Leitrim County Council call on the Minister for Health, Stephen Donnelly, T.D. and the HSE to re-open the Day Care Services at our Lady's Hospital, Manorhamilton as a matter of urgency. This is an essential service for the people in the area.

This concluded the business of the meeting at 3.10 pm

Signed:

Councillor Justin Warnock
Cathaoirleach

Kieran Brett
Meetings Administrator

Dated: Monday, 6 November 2023