

**Minutes of Leitrim County Council meeting held in the Council Chamber, Áras an Chontae,
Carrick on Shannon, Co. Leitrim on Monday, 8 January 2024**

Members Present: Councillor Mary Bohan
Councillor Finola Armstrong McGuire
Councillor Enda McGloin
Councillor Sean McGowan
Councillor Brendan Barry
Councillor Frank Dolan
Councillor Caillian Ellis
Councillor Pádraig Fallon
Councillor Paddy Farrell
Councillor Des Guckian
Councillor Felim Gurn
Councillor Thomas Mulligan
Councillor Sean McDermott
Councillor Paddy O'Rourke
Councillor Ita Reynolds Flynn (Via Online)
Councillor Enda Stenson

Councillor Justin Warnock (Cathaoirleach) presiding

Apologies: Councillor Gerry Dolan

Officials Present: Joseph Gilhooly, Chief Executive (Interim)
Mary Quinn, Director of Services, Housing, Corporate Services,
Community and Cultural Services
Justin Fannon, A/Director of Services, Economic Development,
Planning and Infrastructural Services
Terry McGovern, Senior Engineer
Emer Connolly, Senior Executive Officer
Gillian Tilson, Financial Management Accountant
Kieran Brett, Meetings Administrator
Kathleen Ellis, Assistant Staff Officer

MM.1.24 Votes of Sympathy

The Members extended a vote of sympathy to the following:

- Mr Kieran Brett, Sligo on the death of Mr John McDonagh, RIP
- Bernadette McGovern, Farthing, Green Lane, Stoke Poges, Bucks S124JQ on the death of Tony McGovern R.I.P.
- Martin Kelly, Gurtnacarkogue, Killargue, Dromahair, Co Leitrim on the death of Mary Alice Kelly RIP
- Mary Feehily, Cloonlougher, Manorhamilton, Co Leitrim on the death of Paudge Feehily RIP
- John Nolan, Corryard, Drumshanbo, Co Leitrim on the death of Sean Nolan RIP

- Virgil & M.T Lynch, Ballinwing, Carrick-on-Shannon, Co Leitrim on the death of Keillian Lynch RIP
- The Boyle Family, Treanmore, Mohill on the death of James Boyle, RIP
- The Scott Family, Kildoo, Mohill on the death of Stanley Scott, RIP
- Brigid Looby, Curraghatawney, Ballinamore PO on the death of Peter Prior, RIP
- The McCabe Family, Kiltyhugh, Ballinamore, Co Leitrim on the death of Frank McCabe, RIP
- Mrs Patricia Kiernan, Drumbreanlis, Carrigallen, Co Leitrim on the death of Tommy Kiernan, RIP.

MM.2.24 Adoption of Minutes

MM.2.24a Adoption of Minutes 6th November 2023

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

It was **AGREED** to adopt the minutes of the meeting of the 6th November 2023.

MM.2.24b Adoption of Budget Minutes 13th November 2023

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

It was **AGREED** to adopt the minutes of the Budget meeting of the 13th November 2023.

Councillor Des Guckian referred to the matter of the 75% abatement of commercial rates on vacant properties and he highlighted that he considered 25% commercial rates charge on vacant properties to be excessive.

MM.3.24 Disposals under Section 183(1) of the Local Government Act, 2001

MM.3.24a Consider for approval disposal of land at 6A Sheena, Drumkeerin

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

It was **AGREED** that Leitrim County Council consent to the disposal of land 0.011 hectares that is located along side house at 6A Sheena, Drumkeerin (registered in the name of Leitrim County Council – Folio No LM 812) 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:

The Property: Land circa 0.011 hectares that is located along side house at 6A Sheena, Drumkeerin (registered in the name of Leitrim County Council – Folio No LM 812)

The Consideration proposed in respect of the disposal:

The purchase price for the Disposal of the property is €300.00. The purchaser will be responsible for the purchasers own legal fees associated with this disposal. The Property being disposed of is being disposed in its present condition. The disposal of this property is conditional upon the contract for sale being completed within 3 months of this disposal being approved by the Members of Leitrim County Council.

MM.4.24 Consider the Leitrim County Council Annual Service Delivery Plan

The Draft Annual Service Delivery Plan, 2024 as circulated to the members appears as **Appendix 1** to the Minutes of this meeting in the Minute Book.

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

It was **AGREED** that Leitrim County Council’s Annual Service Delivery Plan 2024 be adopted.

Councillor Des Guckian raised the following

- No targets for transportation and safety
- Derelict sites: is there a proposal to pursue the developers of Lis Cara?
- How are the number of visitors to amenities sites, such as Derrycarne Wood, measured?
- No mention of the development of an Orienteering Trail at Lough Rynn
- Land Drainage Costs – funding is too small
- Provision of additional telephone line to improve response to calls from outside the organisation.
- Change existing music on main switchboard phone system of Leitrim County Council
- Flood levels on the Shannon are high and other LA’s should be asked to release flood waters to alleviate this problem.

Ms Quinn responded to Councillor Des Guckian as follows in regard to the above

- Targets for Transportation and Safety are set down by TII in conjunction with NOAC Service Indicators
- Options for addressing the site at Lis Cara will be considered.
- Counters are located at tourism locations to record number of visitors.
- Drainage was discussed in detail at the Budget meeting in November.
- Comments made in relation to the telephone system and the changing of the existing music will be considered.

Mr Joseph Gilhooly responded to Cllr Guckian’s comments as follows:

- The trail proposed for Lough Rynn is delayed due to an Environmental Screening study that has to be carried out.
- Coillte have a counter in place at Derrycarne Wood to record visitor numbers.
- High water levels are due to the high rain fall over the last number of weeks. Leitrim County Council engages with other LA's, agencies and bodies to ensure that water levels are kept at an appropriate level.

Councillor Barry proposed that the welcome message on the main phone system should be recorded by a member of staff rather than the automated message that is currently in use.

Councillor Thomas Mulligan welcomed the major development that is currently going through the planning process for Lough Rynn Hotel.

MM.5.24 Receive progress report on the Corporate Plan

The progress report on the Corporate Plan as circulated to the Members appears as **Appendix 2** to the Minutes of this meeting in the Minute Book.

The report was noted by the Members.

Councillor Des Guckian noted the following:

- Commitments to address the decline of towns does not mean much, especially to towns like Mohill.
- Test results form historical landfills should be published.
- Complimented Leitrim on the number of refugees taken into the county, however our services are not sufficient to support any more.

Councillor Thomas Mulligan said he did not agree with Councillor Guckian comments on Mohill. He complimented the contractor who is carrying out the Public Realm works in Mohill. Councillor Mulligan said the situation at the Lower Main Street is a more difficult situation.

Mr Gilhooly said there are 3 projects underway in Mohill and there is quite an amount of investment to regenerate the town and attract more business and people to the area. Mr Gilhooly said resources are being deployed to improve Mohill and Leitrim County Council will continue to work with the Town Team in Mohill.

MM.6.24 Consider the extension of the existing Leitrim Diaspora Strategy until 2025

Ms Emer Connolly advised Leitrim's Diaspora Strategy was adopted in 2019 for the period to 2023. Due the COVID-19 pandemic that prevailed for much of 2020 and 2021, many of the actions identified in the strategy were not pursued. In recent months, the Economic Development Department has actively commenced the implementation of this Strategy. A Diaspora Working Group has been established in Leitrim County Council which meets on a

quarterly basis in order to progress the actions identified in this strategy. An Action Plan has been developed which identifies the actions to be implemented on a short, medium and longer term basis. As previously envisioned in the Leitrim Diaspora Strategy, a Steering Group is also being established. It will consist mainly of external stakeholders who will work with the staff of Leitrim County Council to progress Actions contained within the strategy. It is proposed that the Steering Group will meet on a biannual basis or more often as required. Based on the fact that implementation of the Diaspora Strategy was delayed for 2 years as a result of the pandemic, it is proposed that the Strategy be extended to end of 2025 in order to allow actions contained therein to be implemented.

Councillor Des Guckian expressed his disappointment that the Steering Group will meet on a biannual basis.

Cathaoirleach, Councillor Justin Warnock asked if the Elected Members would be included in the Diaspora Strategy Steering Group?

Ms Connolly said the Membership of the group would include Elected Members.

On the **PROPOSAL** of Cllr. Enda Stenson
SECONDED by Cllr. Mary Bohan

It was **AGREED** that the extension of the existing Leitrim Diaspora Strategy until 2025 be approved.

MM.7.24 Management Reports - October & November 2023

The Monthly Management Reports for October & November 2023 as circulated, were noted by members.

Councillor Des Guckian raised the following;

- Why is there a delay in developing the flood relief schemes.
- Why is there an increase in size of building at the Acres Lake development. Residents in the area are still annoyed, and issues raised by residents should be taken into account.

Mr Justin Fannon responded to Councillor Des Guckian as follows:

The design of the Carrick on Shannon Flood Relief Scheme is ongoing. Any significant amendment to the proposed development by Failte Ireland would require further engagement with the planning process.

Councillor Enda McGloin said there is ongoing engagement with the Engineering staff and residents on this development.

The members noted the October and November management reports.

MM.8.24 Commitments

There were no commitments to be noted.

MM.9.24 Note update to Membership of Local Traveller Accommodation Consultative Committee

Ms. Mary Quinn advised that there has been a change in the membership of the Local Traveller Accommodation Consultative Committee and this has been noted by the Corporate Policy Group.

On the **PROPOSAL** of Cllr. Finola Armstrong McGuire
SECONDED by Cllr. Sean McGowan

It has been **AGREED** that Ms Ann Stokes is to be appointed as a member of the Local Traveller Accommodation Consultative Committee.

MM.10.24 Report from Corporate Policy Group

Ms. Mary Quinn, advised that the Corporate Policy Group considered the following items at their meeting held on 5th January 2024:

- Updates from SPC's
- Noted change to membership of the Local Traveller Consultative Committee.
- Agreed the draft training programme for elected members for 2024.
- Considered Members attendance at Upcoming conferences, training events and seminars
- Considered the date and venue for the March Plenary Council Meeting
- Considered the date and time for special meeting to consider Leitrim Climate Action Plan
- Considered the agenda Items for the Council meeting of the 8th January 2024
- Agreed that a presentation on Irish language and the need for an Irish officer would be progressed through the normal committee structures such as the Heritage Committee and then the Housing Policy, Community and Cultural SPC.
- Members were notified of changes to the Councillors Gratuity Scheme
- Members were advised to new reporting requirements by Revenue in relation to Travel and Subsistence. It was noted that Elected Members would be advised of any impact in this regard
- Members were advised of the submission date for Ethics Declaration and Disclosure of Donations.
- Members received an update on the Diaspora Strategy Steering Group

Ms Quinn advised members that representatives from Leitrim Joint Policing Committee were visiting Castlerea Prison on 17th January 2024 at 10.30 am on a study visit. Ms Quinn advised that the invitation was extended to all Elected Members and if they wished to attend to contact the Meeting Administrator.

The update from the CPG was noted by the Members.

MM.11.24 Consider date and time for special meeting to consider Leitrim Climate Action Plan

Councillor Des Guckian proposed that this meeting be left over to the March Plenary meeting.

Ms Quinn confirmed that this meeting has to take place prior to the March Plenary meeting in order to meet statutory deadlines. Ms Quinn advised that this meeting could be an online meeting if necessary.

On the **PROPOSAL** of Cllr. Sean McGowan
SECONDED by Cllr. Paddy Farrell

It was **AGREED** that a special meeting to consider Leitrim Climate Action Plan takes place on Monday, 19th February 2024 at 11 am.

MM.12.24 **Consider date, time and venue for March plenary meeting.**

Ms Mary Quinn proposed to the members that the March Plenary Meeting take place on the Monday 4th March 2024 in Kinlough at 11 am.

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

It has been **AGREED** that the March Plenary meeting of Leitrim County Council will take place in Kinlough on Monday, 4th March 2024 at 11 am.

MM.13.24 Attendance at conferences/training

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

“That the attendance of Cllr Enda Stenson, Cllr Paddy Farrell, Cllr Mary Bohan, Cllr Sean McGowan, Cllr Paddy O’Rourke, Cllr Caillian Ellis, Councillor Frank Dolan, Cllr Sean McDermott, Councillor Thomas Mulligan and Councillor Enda McGloin at the LAMA Conference on the 19th January to 20th January 2024 in the Abbey Hotel, Donegal be approved.”

“That the attendance of Cllr Caillian Ellis, Cllr Ita Reynolds Flynn, Cllr Paddy O’Rourke, Cllr Enda McGloin, Cllr Enda Stenson and Cllr Paddy Farrell at the Regions in Focus Training on the 7th February 2024 in the Woodlands House Hotel, Adare, Co Limerick be approved.”

“That the attendance of Cllr Enda Stenson, Cllr Paddy Farrell, Cllr Mary Bohan, Cllr Caillian Ellis, Councillor Frank Dolan, Cllr Sean McDermott, Councillor Thomas Mulligan and Councillor Enda McGloin at the AILG Training on the 14th February to 15th February 2024 in the Arklow Bay Hotel Arklow be approved.”

“That the attendance of Cllr Paddy O’Rourke, Cllr Caillian Ellis, Councillor Frank Dolan, Cllr Sean McDermott, and Councillor Enda McGloin at “The Irish Housing Crisis – A sustainable Option Conference” on the 2nd to 4th February 2024 in the O’Donovan’s Hotel, Clonakilty, Cork be approved.”

“That the attendance of Cllr Justin Warnock at the St Patrick’s Day Celebrations from the 7th March 2024 to 18th March 2024 in New York be approved.”

“That the attendance of Cllr Justin Warnock at the Leitrim London Association Dinner Dance in London from the 23rd to 25th February 2024 be approved.”

“That the attendance of Cllr Paddy Farrell at the Suck Valley Conference held on the 5th & 6th April 2023 in the Abbey Hotel, Galway Road, Roscommon be retrospectively approved”.

MM.14.24 Meeting Correspondence

1. Letter dated 31st October 2023 from Iarnrod Eireann in response to Resolution passed by Leitrim County Council in regard to bicycle storage on trains.
2. Newsletter from the County Leitrim Society of New York.
3. Resolution dated 14th November 2023 from Clare County Council in regard to the introduction of primary medical certificates to all individuals with physical disabilities.
4. Email of the 21st November 2023 from the Office of the Minister for Health in

relation to resolution passed by Leitrim County Council in regard to Psychological Assessment Services.

5. Email of the 21st November 2023 from the Office of the Minister for Agriculture acknowledging receipt of resolution passed by Leitrim County Council regarding Ash Die Back.
6. Email of the 21st November 2023 from the Office of the Minister for Health acknowledging receipt of resolution passed by Leitrim County Council regarding Psychological Assessment services for children.
7. Email of the 22nd November 2023 from the Office of the Minister for Transport acknowledging receipt of resolution in regard to Ash Die Back.
8. Email of the 22nd November 2023 from the Office of the Minister for Education acknowledging receipt of resolution passed by Leitrim County Council in regard to psychological assessments for school children requiring same.
9. Email of the 22nd November 2023 from the Office of the Minister for Housing, Local Government, and Heritage acknowledging receipt of resolution passed by Leitrim County Council regarding Croí Cónaithe.
10. Email of the 22nd November 2023 from the Office of the Minister for Transport acknowledging receipt of resolution passed by Leitrim County Council regarding the rural social scheme.
11. Email of the 22nd November 2023 from the Office of the Minister for Transport acknowledging receipt of resolution passed by Leitrim County Council in regard to rural social scheme.
12. Commencement matter CM 702/23 21st November 2023
13. Email of the 23rd November 2023 from the Office of the Minister for Transport acknowledging receipt of Resolution passed by Leitrim County Council in regard to NCT.
14. Email of the 21st November 2023 from the Office of the Tanaiste acknowledging receipt of resolution passed by Leitrim County Council in regard to Rural Social Scheme.
15. Letter dated 22nd November 2023 from the Office of the Minister for Social Protection acknowledging receipt of resolution passed by Leitrim County Council in regard to the Rural Social Scheme.
16. Letter dated 22nd December 2023 from the Office of the Taoiseach acknowledging receipt of resolution from Leitrim County Council in regard to the cease fire in GAZA.

17. Letter dated 22nd November 2023 from the Office of the Taoiseach acknowledging receipt of resolution from Leitrim County Council in regard to the residential zones land tax.
18. Letter dated 22nd November 2023 from the Office of the Taoiseach acknowledging receipt of Resolution passed by Leitrim County Council in regard to the rural social scheme.
19. Letter dated 21st November 2023 from the Office of the Tanaiste acknowledging receipt of resolution passed by Leitrim County Council in regard to Israel and Gaza.
20. Email of the 1st December 2023 from the Office of the Minister for Transport acknowledged receipt of Resolution passed by Leitrim County Council in regard to Lennox Bridge project.
21. Letter dated 29th November 2023 from the Department of Social Protection in regard to Resolution passed by Leitrim County Council in regard to increasing the income threshold for applicants of the Rural Social Scheme.

Councillor Pádraig Fallon said that travelling expenses cannot be classed as income in this regard.

All members supported this.

22. Letter dated 4th December 2023 from Professor Orla Feely, President of UCD acknowledging receipt of letter of congratulations from Leitrim County Council on her election as President of UCD.
23. Co Leitrim Society of New York December 2023 Newsletter.
24. Email of the 12th December 2023 from Office of the Minister for Housing in regard to the vacant property refurbishment grant.
25. Email of the 12th December 2023 from the Office of the Minister for Education in regard to psychological assessment services in County Leitrim.

Councillor Des Guckian expressed his disappointment with this reply and he proposed that a further letter issue to the Minister for Education stating that psychologists are available and it is not fair for a schools Board of Management to have to make decisions around psychological assessment. This decision should be made by the professional psychologists.

Councillor Pádraig Fallon supported this.

26. Resolution from Clare County Council dated 12th December 2023 calling on the Housing Minister to review Part V obligations placed on private housing developers and focus on the obligation on the development of affordable housing and housing for people with disabilities.
27. Resolution from Clare County Council dated 12th December 2023 calling on the Minister for Justice and the Garda Commissioners to revisit the current model of policing.
28. Resolution from Clare County Council dated 12th December 2023 calling on the Minister for Housing, Local Government and Heritage to publish the 2022-2025 Multi Annual Rural Water Programme without delay.
29. Resolution from Limerick City and County Council dated 12th December 2023 calling on the Minister for the Environment, Climate and Communication asking when the wind energy development guidelines will be revised and updated.
30. Email of the 13th December 2023 from the Office of the Minister for State, Jack Chambers in regard to the National Car Testing Service.
31. ICBAN Update December 2023
32. Email of the 20th December 2023 from Donegal County Council regarding Resolution calling on the Minister for Transport to meet a delegation from Donegal and Leitrim County Councils in regard to Lennox Bridge.

Other matters raised under meeting correspondence

- Councillor Enda McGloin proposed that an update on the percolation study being carried out in conjunction with Trinity College be presented to the Elected Members.
- Councillor Thomas Mulligan sought clarification if all of County Leitrim is included on the septic tank's improvements locator.

Mr Justin Fannon said he would revert to Cllr Mulligan in this regard.
- Members complimented the staff of Leitrim County Council and all the agencies who helped in Leitrim Village after the mini tornado recently.
- Members welcomed the display of the Proclamation and the Leitrim Crest in the Council Chamber.

MM.15.24 Motion from Councillor Des Guckian - Choice Based Letting

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

"That County Leitrim Housing Department be requested to obtain government assistance to obtain many more social houses to accommodate the ever-increasing demand, and that the idea of Choice Based Letting be abandoned as, clearly, it is no longer useful."

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

"Housing for All is the Government's plan to increase the overall supply of housing over the next decade. A key action of Housing for All is that Local Authorities developed Housing Delivery Action Plans to include details of their proposed social and affordable housing delivery. The Plans sets out details of both social and affordable housing delivery as appropriate over the period 2022-2026, in line with targets set under Housing for All.

Leitrim County Council's Housing Delivery Plan presented to all Municipal Districts in December 2021, has a target to deliver 139 units over the lifetime of the plan. The target to deliver 20 additional social housing units in 2022 was achieved and the 2023 target was exceeded to deliver (28) units (original target (26) units). The Department of Housing, Local Government & Heritage provide capital funding on an annual basis to fund the programme.

In addition to the new social housing units delivered under the Housing Action Plans, there are also other housing supports provided by the Housing Department to applicant household(s) deemed qualified for and in need of social housing support. Such supports include the following - tenancies allocated under the Rental Accommodation Scheme (R.A.S) and the Social Housing Leasing Initiative (SHLI), support provided by the Housing Assistance Payments (H.A.P), the Mortgage to Rent Scheme (M.T.R), referral to the Housing Agency for the Cost Rental Tenant in Situ Scheme and the allocation of tenancies from casual vacancies where previously occupied Local Authority Dwellings become available for re-letting. Nominations can also be made to the Approved Housing Bodies for any vacancies arising in their housing stock in Leitrim.

The allocation of all social housing dwellings is determined in accordance with the Council's Social Housing Allocation Scheme which was adopted by the Elected Members on 18th July, 2018. The Allocation Scheme provides for the allocation of dwellings under the Choice Based Letting Scheme (CBL). Choice Based Letting is a system that allows applicants on the Housing Waiting List to express their interest in available and suitable Social Housing properties. Vacancies are advertised on the council's website and applicants can submit a 'bid' if they are interested in being considered for a property advertised under the CBL Scheme. The allocation of the property is based on the Council's Scheme of Letting Priorities.

The CBL Scheme benefits households on the waiting list, in that, applicants can apply for dwellings which they would like to live in, which offers more choice and involvement for applicants in selecting a new home by letting them have a say in where they want to live. Choice Based Letting is utilised in the allocation of social housing in all Areas of Choice in

Leitrim except for properties available for letting in the Carrick-on-Shannon Municipal District Area due to the high demand for accommodation in this area. The allocation of properties by CBL has increased the acceptance rate of dwellings allocated and the Council will continue to make properties available for allocation under the Choice Based Letting Scheme.

There was a total of 198 households deemed qualified for social housing support on the recent Summary of Social Housing Assessments completed in November 2023. This figure does not include households already receiving social housing supports e.g., Housing Assistance Payment (HAP) or accommodated under RAS and those that have applied for a transfer from an existing form of social housing support including existing local authority tenants."

Councillor Des Guckian gave the background to his motion he called on the Executive to approach the Minister for more funding and extra resources as there is a need for greater investment in this county given the number of refugees that are accommodated in Leitrim. He said Choice Based Letting is not working and is not suitable for the needs of our Housing applicants.

Ms. Mary Quinn went through the reply given above and said housing projects are identified, funding is sourced, and Leitrim County Council try and meet the demands of the Council's housing waiting list.

Councillor Brendan Barry said he would not like to see the Choice Based Letting Scheme abandoned. Councillor Barry welcomed refugees coming to the county, filling houses that are vacant and are not being used instead of having them sleeping in tents. Councillor Barry noted that Air B&B lets are bringing substantial money into the Leitrim economy. Councillor Barry said a balance is needed in this regard and he welcomed the Croí Cónaithe scheme and said payments should be made on a phased basis. He added that Leitrim County Council need to purchase more land and build more apartments/housing units.

Councillor Enda McGloin concurred with Councillor Barry and said €2.1m has been brought into this county through the Community Recognition fund. Various other funding schemes such as RRDF, URDF, Clár and Croí Cónaithe, have also greatly benefited our towns and villages.

Councillor Pdraig Fallon said the Housing SPC Committee and staff of Leitrim County Council are ambitious in their desire to provide more housing. The Choice Based Letting Scheme is discussed and deliberated at length by the SPC. Councillor Fallon supported the Choice Based Letting Scheme and said the scheme works well compared to what existed previously.

Councillor Mary Bohan complimented the staff of the Housing Department and the maintenance staff for getting houses turned around quickly. Councillor Mary Bohan concurred with Councillor McGloin that a huge amount of money has been spent in the county, but more is needed. She said Leitrim County Council need to resume purchasing land for building and more funding is needed to provide more homes. She concurred with

Cllr Barry's comments that the payment method of Croí Cónaithe should be revisited.

Councillor Enda Stenson said the Choice Based Letting Scheme works well and he supported the comments that there is a need for more land on which to build Local Authority housing.

Cathaoirleach, Councillor Justin Warnock said the Choice Based Letting Scheme is working well. Leitrim County Council doesn't have enough land to build on in Kinlough, given the growth of the population there. Cathaoirleach, Cllr Justin Warnock said if we have the land, we will get funding to build housing.

MM.16.24 Motion from Councillor Enda McGloin - Social Housing

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

"I ask Leitrim County Council to outline plans regarding the affordable housing programme to ensure that people who do not qualify for social housing and are currently unable to access the current housing market because of pricing are facilitated and considered in such a plan."

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

"Under Housing for All, there are a number of measures to support housing affordability and home ownership. The First home scheme which is a shared equity scheme, aims to make home ownership achievable for individuals and families by bridging the gap for first-time buyers and other eligible homebuyers between their deposit and mortgage, and the price of their new home.

The Help to Buy (HTB) scheme is an incentive for first-time property purchasers. It can assist with the deposit or to reduce the overall mortgage amount, making it easier for eligible buyers to enter the property market.

The Local Authority Home Loan Scheme offers affordable mortgages with competitive interest rates to eligible buyers (first time buyers and 'fresh start' applicants). This scheme provides an opportunity for first-time buyers to secure financing and purchase a home without excessive financial strain. It can be used to purchase a new or second-hand property or for self-build.

In addition, the Local Authority Affordable Purchase Scheme makes local authority-provided homes available at a reduced price for first-time buyers, and Fresh Start applicants, whose combined mortgage and deposit will not cover the market price of the newly built home. The scheme is targeted at applicants who do not have the ability to buy in the housing market.

Initially in December 2021, when preparing the Housing Delivery Action Plan, Leitrim did not meet the affordability housing constraint as determined by the Department.

However, more recently, we have undertaken an analysis of the Housing Market in Carrick on Shannon and subsequently sought expressions of interest to identify the demand for affordable housing across the County. It is now proposed to proceed with a further expression of interest to ascertain supply opportunities for the provision of affordable housing. Any proposal to develop an affordable housing scheme will require Departmental approval."

Councillor Enda McGloin welcomed the reply. Cllr McGloin said that there is a cohort of people who do not qualify for local authority housing and are unable to obtain funding from other resources.

Councillor Enda Stenson said family houses that are affordable are needed now and he said if we had additional new jobs coming to Leitrim, there is insufficient housing, and it is too long since there was a new housing development.

Councillor Mary Bohan supported the motion.

Councillor Felim Gurn said the Council must buy more land on which to develop housing.

Councillor Des Guckian said that Leitrim County Council must put pressure on the Government for more funding.

Councillor Pdraig Fallon said the difficulty in Leitrim is that construction costs are increasing, but market conditions in Leitrim mean that it is not viable to build houses for sale. Councillor Fallon said we need to see income thresholds for social housing increased this year and he proposed that a letter issue to the Minister and the 3 Government Party Leaders on this issue.

Councillor Enda McGloin said there is an anomaly and this needs to be highlighted to the Department.

Councillor Sean McDermott and Councillor Justin Warnock supported the motion.

MM.17.24 Motion from Councillor Felim Gurn and Motion from Councillor Pdraig Fallon - International Protection

It was agreed by the Members to take Motion No 17 in the Name of Councillor Felim Gurn and Motion No 18 in the Name of Councillor Pdraig Fallon concurrently as they relate to the same issue.

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

"There has been a lot of stress in communities in Ireland, with regard to International Protection applicants being located in communities. There is regularly a lack of infrastructure and stretched resources in terms of health care, schools and community

facilities, and a lack of consultation with community groups on this issue. I call on the Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth to engage in much greater detail on this issue with the local communities involved, so that successful solutions and satisfactory infrastructure and resources can be delivered to meet the needs of the community."

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

"The Department of the Taoiseach has developed a new model of engagement to develop more effective co-ordination across Government Departments, agencies, local authorities, and communities regarding the movement of people in and out of accommodation centres and ensure coherent messaging and strong communications on migration. It is understood that this team will engage with the community and key stakeholders once an accommodation centre has been identified. The information note as circulated to all members outlines that key tasks of the CET will include - Liaising and working with local authorities, elected representatives, NGO's, Community Fora, PPN's etc. in advance of opening accommodation centres of scale; proactively engaging with local leaders and facilitating information sharing to and from local groups. The team is supported by a cross-Government team with administrative support in DCEDIY. Contact details for the CET is: community@equality.gov.ie.

Leitrim County Council in conjunction with many agencies and community groups provide a range of supports to refugees living in the county and specifically work with new arrivals. The Council administers and chairs the Ukrainian Community Response Forum which comprises of agencies, community, and voluntary organisations active locally, dealing with accommodation, health, education, employment, and integration issues. Approximately 1,900 refugees are currently accommodated in County Leitrim through commercial arrangements between private operators and the DCEDIY and in properties throughout the County under the 'Offer a Home' scheme.

All Local Authorities are now required to establish Local Authority Integration Teams (LAIT) to co-ordinate the provision of integration supports to all new arrivals including IP's, Programme Refugees and Ukrainians (BOTP's) and recruitment is currently ongoing in this regard. The LAITs are not intended to replace mainstream service provision but to support IP applicants, Programme Refugees and BOTP in accessing mainstream services when accommodated in the County."

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

"I ask the Local Authority if any extra supports are made available, or will be made available, by Government Departments to help accommodate and integrate those seeking International Protection refuge in County Leitrim. There is a greater need for supports to be made available to communities where such individuals or families are located."

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

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Councillor Felim Gurn gave the background to his motion and Councillor Padraig Fallon gave the background to his motion. Cllr Fallon said he is not a fan of direct provision and has limited experience of the process, but a housing crisis affects everybody in the county by competing for services. The warehousing of people is wrong, and he said communication with communities is a major issue and he highlighted that communities need to be resourced about what is planned for their areas.

Councillor Mary Bohan supported both motions, Councillor Bohan said she meets with the local community, who are sending emails every day, but it appears as if there is a breakdown of communication within the Government Department. She acknowledged this situation is replicated across the country Councillor Bohan asked if it is fair for people to come into this country when we don't have housing in which to accommodate them. Councillor Bohan said more services are required to be available for people when they come into an area, such as doctors or school places, and for the community to receive misinformation from the Department is disgraceful.

Councillor Des Guckian supported both motions.

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

It was **AGREED** that Leitrim County Council call on the Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth to engage in much greater detail on this issue with the local communities involved, so that successful solutions and satisfactory infrastructure and resources can be delivered to meet the needs of the community. There has been a lot of stress in communities in Ireland, with regard to International Protection applicants being located in communities. There is regularly a lack of infrastructure and stretched resources in terms of health care, schools and community facilities, and a lack of consultation with community groups on this issue.

MM.18.24 Motion from Councillor Sean McDermott - Hedge Cutting

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

"I raise the serious hedge cutting issues that occurred in North Leitrim areas late last year. Many suggestions were made at a Manorhamilton Municipal District meeting, one being that the relevant Strategic Policy Committee would discuss this issue. The present hedge cutting system is not working for many roads in the county, especially local roads. Improvements can be seen on roads that avail of the hedge cutting grants. Many landowners who are notified to cut their hedges don't respond which makes the roads very dangerous."

Report by Economic Development

"An overview of the existing Hedge Cutting Grant available from Leitrim County Council and the potential revisions to the grant scheme was provided at the November Planning, Economic and Infrastructure SPC. The proposed revisions focussed on very limited funding being set aside from the allocated hedgecutting budget for genuine emergency situations, with strict eligibility criteria being applied concerning the loss of essential services. Running concurrently Leitrim County Council will increase activity in pursuing landowners that do not act upon advisory hedge cutting notices in order to increase visibility around enforcement of same for the general public. A revision of the Hedge Cutting Grant Scheme will be presented at the first SPC meeting of 2024 for discussion and approval."

Councillor Sean McDermott asked if a policy on this issue can be put in place. He said it is important that vehicles on our roads are not getting scratched and there needs to be a solution provided to this ongoing issue.

Mr Justin Fannon said this issue is being dealt with through the SPC.

Councillor O'Rourke expressed his disappointment with the current system and he proposed that a pilot scheme needs to be put in place, with photos taken of the pilot location before and after hedge cutting has taken place, which will show best practice and how hedge cutting should be carried out.

Councillor Gurn, Councilor Mulligan and Councillor Mary Bohan supported the motion.

Councillor Des Guckian said where hedges are not cut by private landowners and Coillte they should be taken to court.

Councillor Pdraig Fallon said a further letter should be sent to the Minister in relation to funding being given to landowners for removing trees affected by Ash Die Back.

Councillor Sean McGowan said the Department of Agriculture needs to give some funding in this regard.

Councillor Paddy Farrell highlighted that some of the Broadband teams should carry out a tidier job with hedges, as when wind comes debris is blown out onto the road and making it dangerous for motorists.

MM.19.24 Motion from Councillor Justin Warnock - R280

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

"The R280 between Lennox's Bridge and Carrick-on-Shannon town is like a patchwork blanket, with sections of the road that are of a good standard and other sections substandard. I ask Terry McGovern, Senior Roads Engineer; a) how many kilometres of realignment works are necessary to make this road fit for purpose, and b) could a 5 year program of works be developed, and the necessary funding sought. The R280 is of paramount importance for the economic development of our county."

Report by Economic Development

"Leitrim County Council is acutely aware of the importance of the R280 as the main arterial route through County Leitrim. Notwithstanding the importance of the road to County Leitrim, the classification of the road as a Regional Road limits the scope of securing significant central government capital funding to tackle any substandard sections of the route. Leitrim County Council successfully applies to the Department of Transport each year for Specific Improvement Grants along the R280 to improve specific substandard elements however these are minor in nature in the context of the overall route. The Department of Transport recently appointed a consultant to develop a Road Model assessment tool for all regional roads in the Country. This model will provide a baseline risk profile to highlight the sections of the R280 regional road that is most in need of geometric improvement. The Department of Transport has informed LCC that they expect that the output from this modelling will be available towards the end of 2024. This information when provided will assist Leitrim County Council in seeking Strategic Improvement Grant funding for the R280 and ultimately develop an impactful programme of works for the R280."

Councillor Sean McDermott and Councillor Pdraig Fallon supported the motion.

Councillor Brendan Barry said a plan needs to be in place to do parts of the R280 every year,

as it is the spine of the county, and it is important to seek funding every year for the next 5 years.

Councillor Gurn, Councillor Bohan, Councillor Farrell, Councillor McDermott and Councillor Guckian supported the motion.

MM.20.24 Motion from Councillor Paddy Farrell - Pathologist for Sligo Hospital

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

"I call on Leitrim County Council to call on the HSE to hire another Pathologist for Sligo Hospital, as in some circumstances, where a sudden death has occurred, bereaved families can be waiting for two or three days before a post-mortem can be carried out."

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

It was **AGREED** that Leitrim County Council call on the HSE to hire another Pathologist for Sligo Hospital, as in some circumstances, where a sudden death has occurred, bereaved families can be waiting for two or three days before a post-mortem can be carried out.

MM.21.24 Motion from Councillor Brendan Barry - National Ambulance Service

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

"I request that Leitrim County Council call on the HSE and the National Ambulance Service to provide additional ambulance and crews in County Leitrim and provide information on the percentage of life-threatening calls that were attended to within 19 minutes and what was the longest time it took for an ambulance to arrive on the scene within the county for a life-threatening call?

What percentage of critical calls were responded to within 19 minutes and what was the longest time for a person to wait in a critical incident within the county?"

Councillor Brendan Barry asked that the figures for the full year of 2023 be requested.

Councillor Des Guckian supported the motion, and he said an additional bed capacity should be put in place at Sligo Hospital.

On the **PROPOSAL** of Cllr Brendan Barry
SECONDED by Cllr Des Guckian

It was **AGREED** that Leitrim County Council call on the HSE and the National Ambulance Service to provide additional ambulance and crews in County Leitrim and provide

information on the percentage of life threatening calls that were attended to within 19 minutes and what was the longest time it took for an ambulance to arrive on the scene within the county for a life threatening call for the full year of 2023?

What percentage of critical calls were responded to within 19 minutes and what was the longest time for a person to wait in a critical incident within the county for the full year of 2023?"

MM.22.24 Motion from Councillor Sean McGowan - Water Treatment Plant in Carrick

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

"That we call on Úisce Éireann / Irish Water to immediately provide additional production capacity at the Water Treatment Plant in Carrick on Shannon. There has been huge pressure on the plant over the past couple of months with the supply having to be restricted at night to businesses, homeowners & farmers in the lead up to Christmas. The supply from the treatment plant is unable to keep up with the demand. There are water schemes & homeowners who are constantly without mains water."

Councillor Sean McGowan gave the background to his motion and he called on Úisce Éireann / Irish Water to increase capacity at Carrick -on-Shannon water treatment plant as it is a basic need for households, farmers and to attract further investment to the area.

Councillor Paddy Farrell supported the motion.

Councillor Brendan Barry said an electrical issue arose before Christmas and also earlier in 2023, due to power outages and he asked that Úisce Éireann / Irish Water be contacted and asked if the systems have been upgraded.

Councillor Des Guckian queried as to why these power outages occurred.

Councillor Enda McGloin said water from this facility supplies homes in Ballinamore and surrounding areas. It impacts on decision making within the county and extra pressure should be put on Úisce Éireann / Irish Water to supply a more robust plant.

Councillor Paddy O'Rourke supported this motion.

Ms Quinn said Úisce Éireann will be contacted on this matter.

On the **PROPOSAL** of Cllr Sean McGowan

SECONDED by Cllr Paddy Farrell

It was **AGREED** that Leitrim County Council call on Úisce Éireann / Irish Water to immediately provide additional production capacity at the Water Treatment Plant in Carrick on Shannon. There has been huge pressure on the plant over the past couple of months with the supply having to be restricted at night to businesses, homeowners & farmers in the

lead up to Christmas. The supply from the treatment plant is unable to keep up with the demand. There are water schemes & homeowners who are constantly without mains water."

MM.23.24 Motion from Councillor Mary Bohan - Special Funding for Drainage in Leitrim

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

"I propose that Leitrim County Council call on the Government to provide a special allocation of funding for drainage in Leitrim. In particular at Corrasra on the R280 and areas around the Bonet river."

Councillor Mary Bohan said that 2023 has been the wettest year on record and she said this can be seen from the R280 at Corrasra and areas around the Bonet river and she called on the support of the Members to call on the Government and the OPW to provide a specific allocation of funding for drainage in Leitrim .

Councillor Padraig Fallon supported this motion.

Councillor Des Guckian said consideration should be given to bringing back the Drainage Boards.

Councillor Paddy O'Rourke agreed with this comment.

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

It was **AGREED** that Leitrim County Council call on the Government and the OPW to provide a special allocation of funding for drainage in Leitrim. In particular at Corrasra on the R280 and areas around the Bonet river.

MM.24.24 Motion from Councillor Paddy O'Rourke - Cash Transactions

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

"I ask that Leitrim County Council write to the Minister for Finance, Michael McGrath TD, asking him to inform all state agencies to maintain systems which accommodates cash transactions between them and citizens. Surely Government has learned something from the closure of the rural post offices and Garda stations, and they can't contribute further to the isolation of elderly people who are the ones most likely to lose out with the creeping agenda to cease cash transactions. Already, we are hearing of elderly people who have been taken advantage of by persons purporting to assist them with online transactions."

Councillor Paddy O'Rourke gave the background to his motion and called on the support of

the members to call on the Minister for Finance, Michael McGrath TD, asking him to inform all state agencies to maintain systems which accommodates cash transactions between them and citizens.

Councillor Mary Bohan, Councillor Sean McGowan, Councillor Paddy Farrell, and Councillor Guckian supported this motion.

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

It was **AGREED** that Leitrim County Council write to the Minister for Finance, Michael McGrath TD, asking him to inform all state agencies to maintain systems which accommodates cash transactions between them and citizens. Surely Government has learned something from the closure of the rural post offices and Garda stations, and they can't contribute further to the isolation of elderly people who are the ones most likely to lose out with the creeping agenda to cease cash transactions. Already, we are hearing of elderly people who have been taken advantage of by persons purporting to assist them with online transactions.

This concluded the business of the meeting at 1.29 pm

Signed:

Councillor Justin Warnock
Cathaoirleach

Kieran Brett
Meetings Administrator

Dated: Monday, 4th March 2024