

**LONGFORD COUNTY COUNCIL**

**COMHAIRLE CHONTAE LONGFOIRT**

**Minutes of July Monthly Meeting of Longford County Council**

**held in the Council Chamber, Aras an Chontae, Great Water Street, Longford on**

**Wednesday, 9th July 2014 at 4.00 p.m.**

**PRESIDING**: Councillor Mark Casey, Cathaoirleach.

**MEMBERS PRESENT**: Councillors – Paraic Brady, John Browne,

Seamus Butler, Mick Cahill, Micheál Carrigy,

John Duffy, Gerard Farrell, Padraig Loughrey,

Luie McEntire, Martin Mulleady, Colm Murray, Pat O’Toole, P.J. Reilly, Paul Ross, Mae Sexton and Gerry Warnock.

**IN ATTENDANCE:**  Mr. Tim Caffrey, Chief Executive.

Mr. Barry Lynch, Head of Finance/Director of Services.

Mr. Jack Kilgallen, Director of Services.

Mr. Frank Sheridan, Director of Services.

**APOLOGY:** Councillor Peggy Nolan.

**MEETINGS**

**ADMINISTRATOR**: Ms. Anne Lee.

Councillor S. Butler, Leas Cathaoirleach, took the Chair pending the arrival of the Cathaoirleach, Councillor M. Casey.

**ADOPTION OF MINUTES.**

On the proposal of Councillor C. Murray seconded by Councillor M. Sexton, the Minutes of Meeting of Longford County Council held on the 18th June 2014 were confirmed and adopted.

MATTERS ARISING FROM MINUTES.

Organisational Review for Longford Local Authorities.

Councillor S. Butler referred to his request at the June meeting regarding the circulation of the report commissioned by the Council, through the Institute of Public Administration.

The Meetings Administrator to refer this issue to the Director of Services for H.R.

CORPORATE POLICY GROUP MINUTES.

The adopted Minutes of Corporate Policy Group Meeting held on the 1st May 2014, which had been circulated, were noted.

CHIEF EXECUTIVE ORDERS.

The Chief Executive Orders, which had been circulated, were noted.

**MONTHLY MANAGEMENT REPORT.**

Mr. Tim Caffrey, Chief Executive, referred to Section 136(2) of the Local Government Act 2001, as inserted by Section 51 of the Local Government Reform Act 2014, which requires the Chief Executive to prepare monthly management reports. He stated that the structure of the report will be an evolving process and will change as the various policy initiatives come to fruition.

Mr. Caffrey outlined the details of the first Monthly Management Report under the following headings -

* Executive Orders signed during the month of June 2014.
* Finance -
  + Abolitions of Town Councils.
  + Budget Process.
* Capital Programme.
* Economic Development.
* Infrastructure.

The Members requested that any grant allocations received by the Local Authority be included in the monthly Management Report.

**Housing Voids**.

Mr. B. Lynch, Head of Finance, outlined the details of funding approved in 2014 for bringing vacant houses back into use, including the €150K announced last week.

**FINANCE & INFORMATION SYSTEMS, HOUSING & BUILDING.**

**Public Liability Claims.**

It was noted that one public liability claim was received since the last meeting of the Council.

**Representational Payment for Councillors and Extension of Grace Period.**

Circular Letter LG 16/2014 dated 5th June 2014 received from the Department of the

Environment, Community and Local Government regarding Representational Payment for

Councillors and Extension of Grace Period from 31st August 2014 to 30 June 2015 in respect

of the Payment of Gratuities to Certain Former Elected Members was noted.

**Section 32 of the Local Government Reform Act 2014 – Duty to inform rating authority of transfer of relevant property.**

Mr. B. Lynch informed the members that there is an obligation on property owners, or their agents, to notify the Local Authority where an interest in a rateable property is transferred and the person liable for rates changes*.*

The person transferring the property, either the owner or occupier, must discharge all rates for which he/she is liable at the date of transfer.

Failure to notify Longford County Council of a change in interest within 14 days of the transfer date, may result in a penalty for non-compliance in that, the owner becomes liable for an amount which is equivalent to the level of outstanding liabilities (up to a maximum of 2 years liability). This obligation came into effect on 1st July, 2014.

A comprehensive P.R. campaign will be undertaken with advertisements being placed with Shannonside Radio, Longford Leader and details will be forwarded to all rate payers and solicitors in the county. It was further agreed that all Auctioneers in the County be notified.

On arrival at the meeting, the Cathaoirleach, Councillor M. Casey, took the Chair

**Local Property Tax (Local Adjustment Factor) Regulations 2014.**

Mr. B. Lynch stated that the Finance (Local Property Tax) Act 2012 (as amended), makes specific provision that elected members of a local authority may pass a formal resolution to vary the basic rate of the Local Property Tax for their administrative area by a percentage known as the local adjustment factor. At a meeting which will be scheduled by Longford County Council to consider this matter, the members may set a local adjustment factor within the range of /- 15% of the basic rate, or, may decide not to adjust the basic rate. The Council will meet in September 2014 to consider the setting of a local adjustment factor.

On the proposal of Councillor M. Carrigy seconded by Councillor S. Butler it was unanimously agreed that an advertisement be placed in the Longford Leader inviting written submissions from the public on this matter, specifically covering the potential effects of varying the basic rate of the Local Property Tax on businesses, individuals and on local authority services.

The members reiterated the necessity for an equalisation policy in the distribution of exchequer funds to local authorities.

The Cathaoirleach informed the members that he has sent a letter to the Cathaoirligh of Councils which have eighteen members seeking to form an alliance to campaign for equalisation in the distribution of exchequer funds to local authorities

**ECONOMIC AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT, CORPORATE,**

**CULTURAL & RECREATIONAL SERVICES, HUMAN RESOURCES,**

**PLANNING & BUILDING CONTROL.**

**Planning Applications**

The list of Planning Applications received since the last meeting of the Council was submitted and noted.

Councillor M. Mulleady requested an up-to-date report on planning applications received since January 2014.

**Annual Report 2013.**

The adopted 2013 Annual Report, which was circulated at the meeting, was noted.

**Establishment of a sub-committee to commemorate the 1916 Rising.**

It was agreed that this item be referred to the Municipal District meetings and that two members be nominated from each Municipal District.

**Establishment of Audit Committee**.

Mr. F. Sheridan stated that, following consultation with the Cathaoirleach and the Corporate Policy Group, the following are the proposed members of the Audit Committee –

Mr. Gerry Brady and Mr. Michael Connellon - appointed at Annual Meeting of the Council.

Mr. Paddy Groarke, Mr. Pat O’Brien and Ms. Ciara Gillen.

On the proposal of Councillor S. Butler seconded by Councillor M. Carrigy the membership of Audit Committee, as detailed above, was agreed.

**Establishment of Local Community Development Committee (LCDC).**

Mr. F. Sheridan, Director of Services, referred to the guidelines issued by the Department of the Environment, Community & Local Government and detailed the proposed membership of the Local Community Development Committee.

Councillor M. Sexton proposed and Councillor G. Warnock seconded the establishment of the Local Community Development Committee.

Following a discussion regarding the local authority representation on the LCDC, the members requested that a letter be forwarded to the Department requesting that the local authority representation be increased to six on the Committee.

**Standing Orders.**

Draft Standing Orders will be presented at the September meeting of the Council.

**Annual Meeting 2014.**

Clarification regarding appointment of four members tothe Education and Training Board.

Mr. F. Sheridan referred to correspondence received from Mr. Christy Duffy, C.E.O., Longford Westmeath Education and Training Board, regarding the nomination of four members from Longford County Council to the Longford and Westmeath Education and Training Board. Mr. Duffy confirmed that following consultation with the Department of Education and Skills, there is a legal requirement on Longford County Council to nominate two male and two female board members. No other configuration of membership is legally acceptable. Mr. Sheridan also referred to legal advice received from Mr. Frank Gearty, Council Solicitor, regarding this issue which concurs with Mr. Duffy’s advice.

Mr. Sheridan informed the meeting that in the absence of such a legally acceptable nomination it will not be possible for the Longford Westmeath Education and Training Board to validly hold a first meeting of the Board on July 23rd 2014.

Councillor M. Carrigy stated that there is an anomaly between the Local Government Act and the directive issued by the Department of Education and that he will be seeking further legal advice on the issue.

Councillor S. Butler proposed and Councillor M. Mulleady seconded that that

Councillors Mae Sexton, Pat O’Toole, Seamus Butler and Peggy Nolan be nominated to

the Longford Westmeath Education and Training Board.

**Nomination to Board of Backstage.**

On the proposal of Councillor S. Butler seconded by Councillor M. Carrigy, the following were nominated by Longford County Council to the Board of Backstage Theatre  -

* Councillors Peggy Nolan, Padraig Loughrey, Mae Sexton.
* Mr. Tony Flaherty.

**INFRASTRUCTURAL, ENVIRONMENTAL & EMERGENCY SERVICES.**

**Notice of Motion.**

Election Posters**.**

The following Notice of Motion was proposed by Councillor J. Duffy and seconded by Councillor M. Sexton -

“That Longford County Council introduces a bye-law which would restrict election candidates erecting posters to a maximum of one poster per km of road.”

It was agreed that Councillor Duffy’s Motion be referred to the Strategic Policy Committee for consideration and recommendation.

**General Items**.

Correspondence.

Letter dated 12th May 2014 received from the Department of Social and Family Affairs regarding changes to the Jobseeker’s Allowance scheme was noted.

**Conferences -**

Councillor M. Carrigy proposed and Councillor M. Mulleady seconded the attendance of Members at Seminar organised by the Department of Environment, Northern Ireland and the Department of the Environment, Community and Local Government - “The Role of Development and Area Plans in Economic Growth and Regeneration.”

**A.O.B.**

Northern Ireland Cattle Buyers

Councillor P.J. Reilly stated that the future of mart sales in County Longford is being undermined by anti-competitive restrictions on the cross border trade of livestock.

Councillor Reilly explained that the when buyers from the North come to southern Ireland to buy cattle, the cattle are then classed as foreign cattle which means the farmers do not get the full UK market price.

All members supported Councillor Reilly regarding this issue and it was agreed that a letter be sent to the Minister Simon Coveney.

Closure of Ulster Bank in Granard.

The member expressed concern regarding the proposed closure of Ulster Bank in Granard.

Councillor M. Casey, Cathaoirleach, proposed and Councillor P.J. Reilly seconded that a letter be forwarded to Ulster Bank requesting a meeting with the members from the Granard Municipal District and also that a letter be forwarded to Bank of Ireland requesting that a commitment be given to the reinstatement of full services in Bank of Ireland in Granard.

**VOTES OF SYMPATHY**.

The members of the Council expressed sincere sympathy to the families of Jessica Jeeti, her mother Pat and Princess Queenent Amenaghawaon Olige-Esezobor and Fanny Oraweme Akenbor who lost their lives in a tragic accident on the N4.

This concluded the business of the meeting.



**Signed: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

**Anne Lee,**

**Meetings Administrator.**

**Confirmed and adopted at Monthly Meeting of Longford County Council held on the**

**10th September 2014.**

**Signed: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

**Cathaoirleach.**