**Minutes of Meeting of Longford County Council**

**held via Microsoft Teams on**

**Wednesday, 12th May 2021 at 3.00 p.m.**

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**PRESIDING**: Councillor Paul Ross, Cathaoirleach.

**MEMBERS PRESENT**: Councillors – Paraic Brady, John Browne, Seamus Butler, Mick Cahill, Mark Casey, Colin Dalton,

Gerard Hagan, Martin Monaghan,

Garry Murtagh, Turlough McGovern, Peggy Nolan,

Pat O’Toole, P.J. Reilly, Uruemu Adejinmi, Colm Murray and Gerry Warnock.

**APOLOGIES:** Councillor Gerard Farrell.

**IN ATTENDANCE:**  Mr. Paddy Mahon, Chief Executive.

Mr. John McKeon, Head of Finance/Director of Services.

Mr. John Brannigan, Director of Services.

Ms. Barbara Heslin, Director of Services.

Ms. Nora O’Farrell, Senior Executive Officer.

Ms. Lorraine O’Connor, Regeneration Staff.

Mr. Eanna Rowe, Waterways Ireland.

Mr. Damien Mc Weeney, Waterways Ireland.

**MEETINGS**

**ADMINISTRATOR**: Ann Marie Mc Keon

**PRESENTATION FROM WATERWAYS IRELAND ON THE SHANNON TOURISM MASTERPLAN**

Damien Mc Weeney and Eanna Rowe from Waterways Ireland attended the meeting and updated the members on the Shannon Tourism Masterplan as follows: -

**Background**

* Waterways Ireland, in association with Fáilte Ireland and the 10 Local Authorities within the region agreed to formulate and develop a Tourism Masterplan for the Shannon.
* The first time a single, holistic and dedicated plan of any type is being undertaken on the Shannon and Shannon Erne

**Identify and deliver a co-ordinated strategy and proposals that;**

* Reposition the Shannon and Shannon Erne as a key tourism destination
* Identify world class visitor experiences
* Establish a framework for tourism development
* Define the areas unique tourism offering
* Formulate a Destination Vision
* Establish key Themes and products for the area
* Identify key Strategic Initiatives to realise the tourism offering

**Key pillars in Formulation**

* Environment
* Industry
* Community
* Visitor

**Multiple Ways to Interact with the Shannon & Shannon Erne Waterways**

* Shannon’s Culture
* On-the water
* Unspoilt hinterlands
* Through activities and adventures
* By the waterside

**Shannon Discovery Zones**

* 360 Linear Km
* 3 Large lakes
* 3 distinct discover zones

**Strategic Initiatives**

* Seven interlinking strategic initiatives.
* Catalyse the recommendations
* Inform implementation

**Strategic Initiatives 1**

* A Shannon Integrated Interpretation Strategy and Design Guide
* Shannon Signature Points Project
* An Interpretation Plan aligned to the Integrated Interpretation Strategy
* A Shannon Visitor Experience and Interpretation Toolkit
* A Shannon Environmental Code of Conduct
* Additional marketing resources to support the objectives in this masterplan

**Strategic Initiatives 2**

* Enhancing the On-Water Visitor Experience

**Strategic Initiatives 3**

* Enhancing the Waterside Visitor Experience

**Strategic Initiatives 4**

Shannon Towns and Villages

* Killaloe/Ballina
* Portuma 2030
* Clondara/Termonbarry
* Lanesborough/Ballyleague
* Carrick-on-Shannon
* Drumshanbo

**Strategic Initiatives 5**

* Protecting and Enhancing the Shannon Environments

**Strategic Initiatives 6**

* Improving Connectivity

**Strategic Initiatives 7**

* Building Enterprise & Community Networks

**Regional Steering Group**

* To provide the strategic direction for the Hidden Heartlands and to oversee the implementation of the Shannon Tourism Masterplan and the Regional Tourism Plan.

**Destination Development Working Groups**

* To prepare and oversee the implementation of a Visitor Experience Development Plan for the destination and to steer the Business Networks.

**Business Development Networks**

* To provide a commercially focussed, cross-county network of tourism businesses to encourage cross-promotion and cross-selling.

Cathaoirleach Paul Ross complimented Eanna and Damien on their presentation. The following were raised by the members and responded to:

* What incentive in place to encourage businesses
* Provision for camper vans at Clondra
* Increase in signage
* Fantastic work done at Red bridge, can Ballymahon be connected to Red Bridge
* Boardwalks
* Access to islands
* Bridle paths
* Infrastructure in place for those with disabilities
* Diverse ethnical groups

Eanna agreed to further investigate and consider some of the points raised and suggestions made by the Elected Members. He also undertook to bring back some of the suggestions to NPWS and his colleagues in the Eastern Region.

Paddy Mahon thanked the staff from Waterways Ireland for their thorough presentation and highlighted the excitement that this plan would bring to the County. Paddy noted the great co-operation over the years between the Council and Waterways Ireland and the great leadership shown by all parties. This truly is a fantastic asset to the County and will stand to us to come and we all look forward to seeing boats at the Red Bridge.

**ADOPTION OF MINUTES**

On the proposal of Councillor John Browne seconded by Councillor Seamus Butler, the Minutes of Monthly Meeting of Longford County Council held on the 14th April 2021, as circulated, were confirmed and adopted.

On the proposal of Councillor Seamus Butler seconded by Councillor Pat O’Toole, the Committee Minutes of Longford County Council held on the 14th April 2021, as circulated, were confirmed and adopted.

**MATTERS ARISING FROM MINUTES.**

None.

**DECLARATION OF INTEREST BY MEMBERS.**

Councillor Uruemu Adejinmi declared an interest in Item number 6(d) on the agenda (inter-cultural grants scheme).

**CHIEF EXECUTIVE REPORT**

The Chief Executive Report, as circulated, was noted.

Civic Centre

Councillor Seamus Butler noted that it was excellent to see the publication of the expression of interest for the Civic Centre and it’s great to move forward and to ensure that this will be done promptly with widespread interest.

**MINUTES OF CORPORATE POLICY GROUP MEETING HELD ON THE**

**9th MARCH 2021 - CIRCULATED**

The adopted Minutes of Corporate Policy Group Meetings held on the 9th March 2021, as circulated, were noted.

**COMMUNITY, CORPORATE AND ENTERPRISE.**

**Adopted Minutes of meeting of Placemaking Strategic Policy Committee held on the 1st February 2021 as circulated were noted.**

**AGM DATES.**

Longford County Council 30th June 2021

Granard Municipal District 22nd June 2021

Longford Municipal District 23rd June 2021

Ballymahon Municipal District 24th June 2021

On the proposal of Councillor Peggy Nolan, seconded by Councillor Colm Murray the dates for the Annual General Meeting were agreed.

**CUSTOMER SERVICE CHARTER UPDATE**

Nora O’Farrell gave a high-level presentation on the customer service charter update and responded to questions raised by the members.

Our Public Service 2020 built on 3 Pillars:

* Delivering for our Public
* Innovating for our Future
* Developing our People & Organisations

Specific Action under the ‘Delivering for our Public’ is to:

* Improve Services for our Customers

Customer Experience:

* 67% trust in Government is determined by Customer Experience
* Customer Experience is a powerful tool that can contributes to:
* achieving our mission outcomes
* building overall trust in Council

Fundamental Framework that gives our customers:

* a clear & comprehensive statement of service they can expect from the Council
* means to engage more effectively with service areas

Customer Service Charter

* Prioritises & Supports Customer Service commitments in our Corporate Plan
* Serves as reminder of importance to keep our customers at the front of service delivery
* Displays to Customers the Council’s commitment to excellence & accountability

What we have done to date

* Customer Services Working Group established
* Agreed Work Programme
* Draft Customer Service Charter prepared & approved by MT
* Customer Feedback & Complaint Processes developed
* Consultation 3 phases completed

Where we are now

* Final Customer Services Charter will be published in Plain English
* Engaging with NALA on conversion
* Launch & Publish in June

Implementation

* Will achieve a Corporate consistency in our Customer Services
* Working Group Members will lead change that will drive enhancements to the customer experience
* Charter will include dedicated Contact emails for sections
* Customer Services remains periodic item on MT agenda

Moving Forward

* Implementation will drive continuous improvement using our customer insights
* Working Group will make recommendations to MT from a section and organisational view
* Any customer complaints will be handled in accordance with adopted complaints procedure
* Corporate Services in Partnership with IT - Pilot Customer Relationship Management System

The members welcomed the update.

**2021 INTER-CULTURAL GRANTS SCHEME – CIRCULATED**

On the proposal of Councillor Seamus Butler seconded by Councillor Peggy Nolan the 2021 Inter-Cultural Grants as circulated were approved.

**Notices of Motions, submitted by Councillors, as listed hereunder –**

**European Charter for Equality between Women and Men in Local Life**

The following Notice of Motion was proposed by Councillor Uruemu Adejinmi and seconded by Councillor Peggy Nolan

I call on Longford County Council to sign up to the European Charter for Equality between Women and Men in Local Life. In doing so, the Local Authority, Executives and Members, make a formal public commitment to the principle of equality of women and men, and to implement the commitments set out within the charter: <https://charter-equality.eu/>

**Reply**

Longford County Council will research the requirements associated with signing up to the European Charter for Equality between Women and Men in Local Life.  The Council will also consider the resources which would be required to implement the commitments set out in the charter.

**Finance & Regeneration.**

**The adopted Minutes of the Governance Strategic Policy Committee meeting held on the 2nd February 2021 – as circulated were noted.**

**Item referred from Governance Strategic Policy Committee Meeting held on the 20th**

**April 2021 – Longford County Councils Draft Policy on Strategic Vision on Rural Working Hubs - circulated.**

Lorraine O’Connor gave a very detailed presentation on the Draft Policy on Strategic Vision on Rural working hubs and responded to questions raised by the members.

On the proposal of Councillor Mick Cahill, seconded by Councillor Uruemu Adejinmi the Draft Policy on Strategic Vision on Rural Working Hubs as circulated was approved.

**ANNUAL FINANCIAL STATEMENT FOR YEAR ENDED 31ST DECEMBER 2020 – AS CIRCULATED.**

John Mc Keon gave a comprehensive presentation on the Draft Annual Financial Statement 2020 and replied to queries raised by the members.

On the proposal of Councillor Seamus Butler, seconded by Councillor PJ Reilly the Annual Financial Statement 2020 as circulated, was adopted by the members. subject to audit by the Local Government Auditor.

**ADDITIONAL EXPENDITURE UNDER S104(7) OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 2001.**

On the proposal of Councillor Seamus Butler, seconded by Councillor PJ Reilly,

it was unanimously agreed to approve additional expenditure under S104(7) of the

Local Government Act 2001, as circulated to the members.

**Notices of Motions, submitted by Councillors, as listed hereunder -**

**Boardwalk at Ballyleague**

The following Notice of Motion was proposed by Councillor Mark Casey and seconded by Councillor Colm Murray.

That this council gives an update on the correspondence with Roscommon County Council in relation to the tendering of the proposed feasibility study for a board walk around the inner lake of Lough Ree in Lanesborogh/Ballyleague and give an update on the actions that have been carried out since the April meeting on a path forward for Longford going ahead with Longford’s own feasibility study that was proposed and seconded at the April meeting.

**Reply**

As advised at the April meeting; Roscommon County Council received funding under Strand 1 of the Just Transition Fund in September 2020 for the preparation of a feasibility study for a boardwalk at Ballyleague.

Longford County Council does not have funding in place for a feasibility study for a boardwalk on the inner lake, but we will await the outcome of the feasibility study currently being carried out by Roscommon County Council before considering the matter further.

In November 2019, Longford County Council, in partnership with our colleagues in Roscommon County Council, agreed to fund and develop an Economic and Enterprise Development Strategy (EEDS) for Lanesborough – Ballyleague.

This strategy is now nearing completion and will outline a number of strategic objectives for the future economic development of the area following the closure by the ESB of the Lanesborough Power Station in December 2020.

**STRATEGIC INFRASTRUCTURE AND CLIMATE CHANGE**

**Planning Applications**

The list of Planning Applications received since last meeting of the Council were noted.

**The adopted Minutes of the Climate Action and Planning Strategic Policy**

**Committee meeting held on the 3rd February 2021 were noted.**

**The adopted Minutes of meeting of Strategic Infrastructure Strategic Policy**

**Committee meeting held on the 4th February 2021 were noted.**

**Item referred from Strategic Infrastructure Strategic Policy Committee Meeting held**

**on the 22nd April 2021 – Draft Tenancy Agreement as circulated**

On the proposal of Councillor Turlough Mc Govern, seconded by Councillor Pat O’Toole the Draft Tenancy Agreement as circulated was approved.

**Decarbonisation Zone**

John Brannigan recognised that Ireland's Climate action Plan outlines Irelands energy and climate policies in detail for the period from 2021 to 2030 and looks onwards to 2050. The objective of the Plan is to enable Ireland to meet its EU targets to reduce its carbon emissions by 30 per cent between 2021 and 2030 and lay the foundations for achieving net zero carbon emissions by 2050. Action 165 of the Plan sets Local Authorities the challenge of identifying and developing Decarbonising Zones in each local authority in Ireland and implementation of this action is being led by this Department. Action 165 specifically requires identification of one location or area in each local authority that would be subject to a plan for a Decarbonising Zone.  Longford County Council has identified Longford Town as the location, and we are now tasked with developing implementation plans which will be prepared by the end of Quarter four of 2021.

Ireland National Memorial Forest

Councillor Padraic Brady outlined to the meeting a proposal which was sent to Bord Na Mona to create Ireland’s National Memorial Forest for the loved ones lost to COVID-19. Councillor Padraic Brady proposed that Longford County Council assist with this project and Councillor Paul Ross seconded this proposal. John Brannigan will speak to Councillor Brady separately on the matter.

**Notices of Motions, submitted by Councillors, as listed hereunder –**

**Domestic Waste Disposal**

The following Notice of Motion was proposed by Councillor Gerry Warnock and seconded by Councillor Martin Monaghan

“I am requesting that Longford County Council write to the Minister for Housing, Local Government & Heritage to consider making provision, through an amendment of Section 31 of the Housing (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 2009, empowering Local Authorities to incorporate charges pertaining to domestic waste disposal onto the rents of Local Authority Tenants on the proviso that a suitable scheme is adopted by resolution of the members of the Local Authority.”

On the proposal of Councillor Gerry Warnock, seconded by Councillor the members unanimously agreed to write to the Department.

**Residents Committee**

The following Notice of Motion was proposed by Councillor Martin Monaghan and seconded by Councillor PJ Reilly

That a residents committee be set up on all new developments supplied by the county council no later than 3 months after the last unit is occupied and liaise with our estate team regarding any issues that occur.

**Reply**

The Estates Management Team works with Council tenants in a number of ways in order to ensure that estates are well maintained and to provide support to the Council’s tenants. Tenants are required to participate in Pre-Tenancy Meetings prior to receiving the keys of the property that they have been allocated. When the tenancies in a new estate are being allocated the tenants are encouraged to form a Residents Committee and the benefits of doing so are outlined to the tenants. Forming a Residents Committee is not mandatory and for various reasons some tenants are reluctant to become involved in forming or joining such groups, particularly in the first few months after they move into a new area.

**Refuse Collection**

The following Notice of Motion was proposed by Councillor Martin Monaghan and seconded by Councillor Uruemu Adejinmi

That Longford County Council could investigate the option of providing bins at a reduced rate compared to current market prices to all new tenants and existing tenants where possible. As the biggest landlord in the county, I would hope it would be possible to secure a competitive rate from a service provider, this rate could then be incorporated into the rental payment.

**Reply**

The possibility of running a pilot initiative in relation to Waste Collection Services is being considered at present by the Environment and Housing Departments. There are a range of issues that need to be considered and for that reason no firm decision has yet been taken regarding the introduction of the pilot. Domestic Waste Collection Services are provided by a number of private companies and the Council cannot legally become involved in influencing market rates for waste collection services. Individual tenants or a Residents Group could approach service providers to seek discounted rates. In many cases there are a mixture of privately owned and Council owned properties in estates which could also complicate matters.

**Correspondence – as circulated**

Correspondence dated 20th April 2021 received from Mr. Peter Burke T.D., Minister for Planning and Local Government – Reply to Notice of Motion submitted by Councillor Garry Murtagh was noted

Correspondence dated 21st April 2021 received on behalf of Minister for the

Environment, Climate and Communications Eamon Ryan, T.D. – Reply to Notice of Motion submitted by Councillor Colm Murray was noted.

Correspondence dated 21st April 2021 received from the Office of the Minister for Housing, Local Government and Heritage – Reply to Notice of Motion submitted by Councillor Gerry Warnock was noted.

**Votes of Sympathy**

Councillor C. Murray proposed a vote of sympathy to the Flanagan family, Derryadd, Kenagh on the death of Tommy.

Councillor PJ Reilly proposed a vote of sympathy to the Reynolds family, Dublin on the death of Kathleen.

**R392 Alignment**

Councillor Pat O’Toole called for an update on the R392, John Brannigan stated that the consultants have not submitted their final report, however, the report will conclude that there should be a localised improvement at the Abbeyshrule junction on the bend and no further works. The members welcomed this news.

This concluded the business of the meeting.

**Ann Marie Mc Keon**

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

**Ann Marie Mc Keon,**

**Meetings Administrator.**

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

**9th June 2021.**

**Paul Ross**

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

**Cathaoirleach.**