**Minutes of Meeting of Longford County Council**

**held via Microsoft Teams on**

**Wednesday, 19January 2022 at 3pm**

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**PRESIDING**: Councillor Peggy Nolan, Cathaoirleach

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

Monaghan, Garry Murtagh, Paul Ross, Pat O’Toole, Turlough

McGovern, Uruemu Adejinmi, Colm Murray, Gerard Farrell and PJ Reilly

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

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

Ms. Barbara Heslin, Director of Services

Mr. John Brannigan, Director of Services

**APOLOGIES:** Gerry Warnock

**MEETINGS**

**ADMINISTRATOR**: Ann Marie Mc Keon

**SUSPENSION OF STANDING ORDERS**

Councillor Paul Ross requested the suspension of standing orders to deal with a Notice of Motion relating to an urgent matter. The Cathaoirleach reminded Paul that his request did not comply with Standing Order 25 or Standing Order 94. These require that a request to consider a Notice of Motion for the purpose of dealing with urgent business related to a function of the Council or a request to suspend Standing Orders shall be submitted in writing to the Cathaoirleach and Meetings Administrator not later than 12 noon on the day of the meeting.

On the request of the Cathaoirleach and with the unanimously agreement of the Elected Members present it was agreed to consider the Notice of Motion.

**N4 Mullingar to Longford Road Scheme Upgrade**

**The following Notice of Motion was proposed by Councillor Paul Ross and seconded by Councillor Paraic Brady –**

“I propose to seek an urgent meeting with the Minister for Environment and Transport in relation to the lack of funding for the M4 Mullingar to Longford Road Scheme”

It was unanimously agreed that Longford County Council would write to the Minister for Environment and Transport Eamonn Ryan as a matter of urgency requesting a meeting with the elected members.

**ADOPTION OF MINUTES**

On the proposal of Councillor Paul Ross seconded by Councillor Paraic Brady, the Minutes of Monthly Meeting of Longford County Council held on the 8 December 2021, as circulated, were confirmed and adopted.

**MATTERS ARISING FROM MINUTES**

None.

**DECLARATION OF INTEREST BY MEMBERS**

None.

**CHIEF EXECUTIVE REPORT**

The Chief Executive Report, as circulated, was noted.

**MINUTES OF CORPORATE POLICY GROUP MEETING HELD ON THE 12 OCTOBER- CIRCULATED**

The adopted Minutes of Corporate Policy Group Meeting held on the 9 November 2021, as circulated, were noted.

**COMMUNITY, CORPORATE AND ENTERPRISE**

**ADOPTION OF SERVICE DELIVERY PLAN 2022**

Barbara Heslin informed the members that the Service Delivery Plan presented reflected reflects those areas which had completed their Service Delivery Plans. The plan itself outlines the specific objectives and tasks for the coming year and guides us through the 2022 priorities for each section and focuses on the areas that need to be invested in.

Paddy Mahon, Chief Executive, explained that he had hoped to be in a position to present the completed Service Delivery Plan to the Council. He acknowledged the work by those sections who had completed their plans. He emphasised the importance of the service delivery plan and the impact it has on the operational aspect of the Council. He said that the Council’s focus now needed to move to the development of team plans and the rollout of individual performance development plans.

Paddy recommended the adoption of the plan and at the February meeting the additional items will be highlighted to the members. Paddy also thanked the employees for the work done to-date on the plan.

The draft plan was emailed to the members earlier in the day and a lengthy discussion took place between the members. They highlighted their concerns that the document was not complete and that there was not adequate time provided to read the plan. They requested that the updated and completed plan be presented to them at the February Council meeting. They also requested that this updated document be circulated to them, with the agenda, in advance of the meeting. This would provide them with an opportunity to consider the plan in detail.

On the proposal of Councillor Seamus Butler, seconded by Councillor Paraic Brady the members unanimously agreed to approve the plan as presented and to adopt the full plan at the February meeting.

**ANNUAL PROGRESS REPORT ON IMPLEMENTATION OF THE OFFICIAL LANGUAGES ACT – as circulated**

On the proposal of Councillor Peggy Nolan seconded by Councillor Colm Murray, it was unanimously agreed to adopt the Annual Progress Report, as circulated.

**POLITICAL DONATIONS**

**Political Donations - Local Elections (Disclosure of Donations and Expenditure) Act**

**1999, as amended - Members of Local Authorities**

It was noted that completed Annual Donation Statements should be returned to the Meetings

Administrator before 31 January 2022.

**Political Donations - Local Elections (Disclosure of Donation and Expenditure)**

**Act 1999, as amended - Third Parties**. – Noted

**DATE OF FEBRUARY 2022 COUNTY COUNCIL MEETING.**

On the proposal of Councillor Colm Murray, seconded by Councillor Mick Cahill the members unanimously agreed to hold the February meeting of Longford County Council on the 16 February 2022.

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

**The following Notice of Motion was proposed by Councillor Seamus Butler and seconded by Councillor Peggy Nolan-**

Due to a two-year backlog of Municipal and County Cathaoirleach’s awards yet to be

presented, I request that a combined presentation be organised, as a matter of priority, as soon

as COVID-19 restrictions permit.

**Response**

Longford County Council will organise an event to celebrate the Cathaoirleach Award recipients as soon as COVID-19 restrictions permit.

**STRATEGIC INFRASTRUCTURE, REGENERATION AND CLIMATE CHANGE**

**PLANNING APPLICATIONS**

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

**PRESENTATION ON THE “TURNAROUND OF HOUSING STOCK”.**

John Brannigan gave a very detailed presentation on the “Turnaround of Housing Stock” and

responded to the queries raised by the members:

* NOAC 2018/2019/2020
* Casual vacancies
* Void vacancies
* New purchase vacancies
* Actions
* Stock Management System
* Reallocation Policy
* Deposit Scheme
* Framework for contractors
* Tenant handbook
* Sale of long-term vacant units
* Energy retrofit
* Housing stock management
* Issues regarding Colmcille Terrace in Granard
* Challenges relating to availability of contractors
* Cost inflation and materials availability
* Responsibilities of tenants
* Opportunities for apprenticeship schemes

In relation to Colmcille Terrace, John confirmed that Longford County Council has been in contact with a housing body in relation to the redevelopment of Colmcille Terrace. The Council will continue to engage with them and is committed to ensuring that works in Colmcille Terrace will commence in 2022.

John also outlined the impact of the Government’s decision regarding the limit on the number of units which can be purchased across all Local Authorities.

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

**The following Notice of Motion was proposed by Councillor Uruemu Adejinmi and seconded by Councillor Pat O’Toole -**

“I call on Longford County Council to reach out to landlords of RAS properties, and

landlords in general if they wish to sell their properties to Longford County Council”.

**Response**

At present a moratorium has been imposed by the Department of Housing in relation to the buying of second-hand properties. The grounds for the imposition of the moratorium is that it is the Department’s view that for the present the attention of focus should be concentrated on increasing the overall number of housing units that are in the country. By buying second-hand properties the Council would not be doing to achieve that. Competing for second-hand properties could also interfere in the housing market and artificially contribute to price inflation.

In addition to this second hand homes in many cases present opportunities for First Time Buyers to enter the property market and it could be perceived as being unfair to them if the Council was competing for the limited number of second hand properties that become available. At present the Council has limited resources at its disposal and for these reasons the proposal to purchase second-hand properties is not considered to be a high priority for the Council.

**The following Notice of Motion was proposed by Councillor Paul Ross and seconded by Councillor Peggy Nolan -**

“I call on the Minister for the Environment to implement a policy where a database of registered Bin users in each county is available to each Local Authorities Litter Wardens to help identify those who do not dispose of their waste and rubbish in a proper manner. Illegal dumping is growing at a massive rate and is one of the greatest scourges of our county”.

**Response**

Current Privacy (GDPR) legislation and commercial concerns would make the development of a database as suggested difficult to achieve. Under the Waste Presentation Byelaws adopted by Longford County Council on the 6/03/2019 failure to provide evidence of proper waste disposal can result in a fine of €75 or in more serious cases prosecution under the Waste Management Act.  In 2021 Longford Waste Enforcement Officers conducted 142 door to door household waste surveys and 8 commercial waste segregation surveys. Work is continuing on these activities, a number of fines have been issued and more are anticipated in the coming months. As per the Byelaws householders and businesses must be able to prove that they dispose of their waste legally when surveyed by Longford County Council Waste Enforcement Officers.  Household and Commercial Waste segregation is a National Enforcement Priority as identified by the EPA. It is also a priority for Longford County Council. It will feature significantly in the Council’s 2022 RMCEI plan which is currently being prepared.

**The following Notice of Motion was proposed by Councillor Paraic Brady and seconded by Councillor Colm Murray -**

“I call on Longford County Council to make the Civil Defence and trained first responders in the fire department available for emergency cardiac arrest cases as the ambulance service is not fit to cope at this time and waiting time could be halved or reduced significantly”.

**Response**

**Response from Fire Service**

The Fire Service do respond to Ambulance Assistance calls from the HSE. This includes Cardiac arrest calls. The Fire Service have done this for a number of years.

In 2021, we responded to 48 ambulance assist calls. This included 6 cardiac arrest calls.

The following is a breakdown of the location of Ambulance assist calls:

Longford Town              16

Granard                           13

Edgeworthstown             10

Ballymahon                      8

Lanesboro                         1

**Response from the Civil Defence:**

The Civil Defence are a Volunteer based organisation that support the frontline emergency services. Longford Civil Defence will always endeavour to assist to any request that is received through the Major Emergency Management team from the HSE.

**CORRESPONDENCE**

Correspondence dated 13 December 2021 received from the Minister of Health -Re Notice of Motion from Councillor Pat O’Toole on Home Support Services –Councillor Pat O’Toole requested that this correspondence be kept on the agenda.

Correspondence dated 16 December 2021 received from the Minister of Health - Palliative Care Beds at St. Joseph's Care Centre, County Longford – Noted.

Correspondence dated 20 December 2021 - seeking supporting for Irish Presidential Election in 2025 – Noted.

**VOTES OF SYMPATHY**

Councillor PJ Reilly proposed, and Councillor Peggy Nolan seconded that a vote of sympathy be extended to the Murphy family on the death of Ashling Murphy.

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 16 February 2022.**

**Peggy Nolan**

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

**Cathaoirleach.**