

**Minutes of Meeting of Longford County Council**

**held via Microsoft Teams on**

**Wednesday, 12 October 2022 at 4pm**

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**PRESIDING**: Councillor Turlough Mc Govern, Cathaoirleach

**MEMBERS PRESENT**: Councillors –John Browne, Seamus Butler, Mick Cahill, Colin Dalton, Mark Casey, Gerry Hagan, Martin Monaghan, Paul Ross, Pat O’Toole, Colm Murray, Garry Murtagh, Gerard Farrell, Gerry Warnock, Uruemu Adejinmi and Paraic Brady

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

Ms. Barbara Heslin, Director of Services

Mr. John Brannigan, Director of Services

Ms. Samantha Healy, Director of Services

Ms. Fema Farrell, A/ Head of Finance/Director of Services

**APOLOGIES:** Mr. John McKeon, Head of Finance/Director of Services

Councillors PJ Reilly and Peggy Nolan.

**MEETINGS**

**ADMINISTRATOR**: Ann Marie Mc Keon

**CREESLOUGH**

The Cathaoirleach, Councillor Turlough Mc Govern proposed and the members unanimously agreed to a minute’s silence in advance of the commencement of the meeting. Councillor McGovern informed the members that an on-line book of condolence would be opened for the people of Creeslough and the National Flag will fly at half-mast. Councillor Mc Govern sent his heartfelt condolences to the families and friends of those who lost their lives in Creeslough. “On behalf of the people of Longford, I extend our deepest condolences and sympathies to all affected by these tragic events.”

**ADOPTION OF MINUTES**

On the proposal of Councillor Seamus Butler seconded by Councillor John Browne the Minutes of Monthly Meeting of Longford County Council held on the 14 September 2022, as circulated, were confirmed and adopted.

**MATTERS ARISING FROM MINUTES**

None.

**DECLARATION OF INTEREST BY MEMBERS**

None.

**CHIEF EXECUTIVE REPORT**

Noted.

**MINUTES OF CORPORATE POLICY GROUP MEETING HELD ON THE 12 JULY 2022 - CIRCULATED**

The adopted Minutes of Corporate Policy Group Meeting held on the 12 July 2022, as circulated, were noted.

**COMMUNITY, CORPORATE AND ENTERPRISE**

**ELECTORAL REGISTER MODERNISATION – ELECTED MEMBERS UPDATE**

Senior Executive Officer, Nora O’Farrell updated the elected members on the Electoral Register Modernisation:

* Electoral Reform Act signed 25 July
* Revised Check the Register online system will go live
* New version of Ireg system rolled out to local authorities
* Electoral Change Network established
* Data Sharing Agreement with Dept of Social Welfare developed and signed
* Department communicated with an update on Electoral modernisation to Councillors August 31
* Department Plan - gentle launch - settling in period
* No press release or media campaign until November
* checktheregister.ie - revised and modernised online system will go live
* iReg system version 5 in full use with all elector updates included on Rolling Register
* Interface with Social Welfare Data will commence
* What is the process from here on?
* Check the Register
* Registration forms
* Process for removing names from the Register
* Preregistration option for 16 & 17 year olds
* The ‘Paper’ form ERF1
* Looking ahead – Future for Electoral Registration

Nora also outlines the measures being taken on ensuring the accuracy of the register and encouraged the Elected members to engage with the Franchise section in relation to any identified issues. Nora also encouraged the Elected Members to check the new online Check the Register and asked then to also direct citizens to the new system.

Nora explained that the modernisation of the register will mean that there is now a rolling Register. If Elected Members request a printout of the register, it will provide details at a specific point in time.

It was agreed that a copy of Nora’s presentation would be circulated to the Members.

The elected members complimented Nora on the presentation and the proactive work being carried out by the Franchise section. Nora provided comprehensive responses to the questions raised by the elected members.

**PLANNING AND PROJECT DELIVERY**

**Planning Applications**

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

**RESIDENTIAL ZONED LAND TAX**

Senior Planner, Donall Mac An Bheatha gave a detailed presentation on the Residential Zoned Land Tax:

* Part 22A of the Taxes Consolidation Act 1997 as introduced in the Finance Act 2021
* The tax is intended to replace the Vacant Site Levy as a land activation measure
* Purpose is to activate existing planning permissions and zonings where housing is permitted and where the land is connected to, or has access to services, but remains undeveloped
* Land in scope will be:
  + zoned for residential development or a mixture or uses including residential;
  + be serviced or have access to servicing by water, wastewater, road, footpath, and public lighting; and
  + not be affected by contamination or significant archaeological remains which would preclude development taking place
  + not on Derelict Sites Register
  + Not required for Infrastructure and Community Services
* Creating a map with all residential zoned land, new residential zoned land and mixed use (Town Core) where residential development is permitted in principle
* Considering availability of services (water, sewerage, street lighting, road access and footpaths, to determine whether land is in or out of scope for the purposes of the tax
* Consideration of other factors including RMP, contaminated land, rates etc
* Site assessments of individual sites
* New email address set up [rzlt@longfordcoco.ie](mailto:rzlt@longfordcoco.ie)
* Point of contact to be identified to liaise with Revenue
* 1st November – 1st January
* Submissions invited from members of public and statutory bodies – identifying additional land or justifying exclusion of mapped land
* LA will need to advertise alerting the public to the tax and the public consultation map and invite submissions relating to the inclusion or exclusion of specific sites
* Facilities will need to be provided for submissions
* Staff will need to be allocated to this to manage public consultation period
* Facilities will be required for the public who do not have access to internet to access maps
* LA required to publish redacted submissions on website by 11th January
* LA to make decisions on submissions by 1st April
* Public can appeal to ABP before 1st May
* LAs to publish Supplemental Mapping by 1st May
* Supplemental Map open to public consultation until 1st June
* Redacted submissions on LA website by 11th June
* Notify landowners on outcomes submissions by 1st August
* Latest date for appeals to ABP 1st September (8 weeks for decision)
* Final maps 1st December

The members acknowledged the detailed presentation delivered by Donal and issued their concerns on the suitability of this scheme for rural counties and in particular Longford.

The Elected Members agreed that this scheme was more suitable for the larger urban centres. They queried who would value the lands, what areas in the county were being included and excluded and why, situation regarding the strategic land reserves and what happens in the event of works having started on sites. Donal provided detailed responses to all the questions raised.

**The following Notice of Motion was proposed by Councillor Paraic Brady and seconded by Councillor Garry Murtagh**

Can Longford County Council provide the number of houses in our stock that range from A to G in energy ratings as the cost of heating and electricity has increased and bills will be more expensive on the lower rated houses.

**Response**

Information on the BER rating for Longford County Council housing stock is available on the iHouse Management App which is on the staff Intranet. Longford County Council does not have BER ratings for all of Longford County Council stock as there would be a cohort of properties that would never have been assessed.

**The following Notice of Motion was proposed by Councillor John Browne and seconded by Councillor Garry Murtagh**

I call on Longford County Council in its capacity as landlords, to develop a programme of periodic house inspections, of its own houses.

**Response**

The Council has a stock of in excess of 2,000 rental units. It would be ideal if these properties could be inspected periodically but the resources that the Council has at its disposal at present are not sufficient to carry out routine or periodic inspections.

In time it is hoped to develop a programme of the kind that is referred to in the Notice of Motion but realistically it will be at least a number of years before any commitment could be made with regard to the introduction of a periodic inspection programme.

**INFRASTRUCTURE, HOUSING AND INNOVATION**

**Consideration of disposal of Properties at numbers 5-7, 12-14, 17, 25-28 Colmcille Terrace, Granard, County Longford (11 units) to Tuath Housing Association in accordance with the terms of Section 183 of the Local Government Act 2001 issued on the 2 September 2022**

On the proposal of Councillor Turlough Mc Govern, seconded by Councillor John Browne, the members unanimously agreed to dispose of Properties at numbers 5-7, 12-14, 17, 25-28 Colmcille Terrace, Granard, County Longford (11 units) to Tuath Housing Associationin accordance with the terms of Section 183 of the Local Government Act 2001 issued on the 2 September 2022.

**Consideration of disposal of** **Property at numbers 8, 9, 11, 20-23 & 29 Colmcille Terrace, Granard, County Longford (8 units), to Tuath Housing Association in accordance with the terms of Section 183 of the Local Government Act 2001 issued on the 2 September 2022**

On the proposal of Councillor Turlough Mc Govern, seconded by Councillor Garry Murtagh, the members unanimously agreed to dispose of Property at numbers 8, 9, 11, 20-23 & 29 Colmcille Terrace, Granard, County Longford (8 units), to Tuath Housing Association in accordance with the terms of Section 183 of the Local Government Act 2001 issued on the 2 September 2022.

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

That following the publication of the Social Housing Assessment Regulations in which Longford was left out, that Longford County Council write to the Minister for Housing, Local Government and Heritage Darragh O’Brien to move Longford from Band 3 into Band 2 to raise the basic income threshold from €25,000 to €30,000.

Under Standing Order 23, Councillor Paul Ross proposed an amendment to the notice of motion that “Longford County Council writes to the Local Authorities in Band 3 seeking their support to the motion”, Councillor Paraic Brady seconded this proposal and the members unanimously agreed to the amendment.

**Response**

The members unanimously agreed to write to the Minister for Housing, Local Government and Heritage, Darragh O’Brien and other local authorities included in Band 3.

**The following Notice of Motion was proposed by Councillor Paraic Brady and seconded by Councillor Gerry Hagan**

I call on Longford County Council to cut all hedges along lands owned by the council and show good example to farmers and landowners.

**Response**

Longford County Council is responsible for cutting the hedges on public roads along lands owned by Longford County Council in accordance with the Roads Act. The Council will arrange to cut back hedges along the lands owned by Longford County Council in accordance with our current hedge cutting policy (see attached).

The members requested that the Roads Department look at clearing all hedge growth in front of road signage.

**The following Notice of Motion was proposed by Councillor Uruemu Adejinmi and seconded by Councillor Seamus Butler**

I call on Longford County Council to put in a proposal to the Department of Housing for funding for the acquisition of property in Longford to serve as hostel type emergency accommodation for homeless families until they are adequately housed.

**Response**

Homeless hostel provision is provided regionally. In considering homelessness provision for 2023, Longford County Council will engage with regional partners as part of the Joint Homelessness Consultative forum with the intention to include additional hostel beds in Longford as part of the regional exchequer bid for 2023 provision.

**FINANCE AND IT**

**Consideration of Overdraft Accommodation of €15m for year ending 31 December 2023**

On the proposal of Councillor Seamus Butler, seconded by Councillor Colm Murray the members unanimously agreed the overdraft accommodation of €15m for year ending 31 December 2023.

**Dates for Budget Meetings**

Granard MD – General Municipal Allocation Meeting – 25 October (pm).

Longford MD – General Municipal Allocation Meeting – 26 October.

Ballymahon MD – General Municipal Allocation Meeting –25 October (am).

Budget 2022 – ‘In Committee’ Meeting –14 November.

Budget 2022 Meeting – 21 November.

On the proposal of Councillor Seamus Butler seconded by Councillor Colm Murray, the members unanimously agreed to hold the 2023 budget meetings at the dates outlined to the meeting in the Council Chamber.

**GENERAL**

**The following Notice of Motion was proposed by Councillor Uruemu Adejinmi and seconded by Councillor Seamus Butler-**

I call on Longford County Council to write to the Garda Commissioner to appoint an immigration officer to be based in Longford Garda Station.

**Response**

The members unanimously agreed to write to the Garda Commissioner.

**CORRESPONDENCE**

Correspondence dated 14 September 2022 received from the Minister for Housing Re Notice of Motion from Councillor Pat O’Toole on the removal of the population cap on the Affordable Homes aspect of the Housing for All Plan – as circulated was noted.

Councillor Seamus Butler requested that this document be re-circulated to members as some had a difficulty opening the document.

**TRAINING**

Report from the Corporate Policy Group on training was noted.

**SYMPATHY**

Votes of Sympathy to be emailed to the meetings administrator.

**MEETINGS**

On the proposal of Councillor Mick Cahill, seconded by Councillor Colm Murray the members unanimously agreed to hold a Finance Committee Meeting on Monday 24 October 2022 at 4pm.

On the proposal of Councillor Seamus Butler, seconded by Councillor Pat O’Toole the members unanimously agreed to hold a Committee Meeting on Wednesday 9 November 2022 at 3pm.

This concluded the business of the meeting.

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

**Ann Marie Mc Keon**

**Meetings Administrator.**

**Confirmed and adopted at Meeting of Longford County Council held on the 9 November 2022.**

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

**Cathaoirleach.**

