

**Minutes of Meeting of Longford County Council**

**held in the Council Chamber and via Microsoft Teams on**

**Wednesday, 12 April 2023 at 3.30pm**

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

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

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

Mr. Michael Nevin, A/Director of Services

**MEETINGS**

**ADMINISTRATOR**: Ms. Claire McNabola

**Standing Orders**

The Meetings Administrator reminded Elected Members joining online that in line with Standing Orders they must mute their microphones unless they are recognised by the Chair and invited to speak and must keep their camera on for the duration of the meeting.

**PRESENTATION FROM BARRY KENNY AND GAVIN COLLINS, IARNROD EIREANN**

Barry Kenny – Corporate Communications Manager from Irish Rail, together with Gavin Collins – Station Master of Longford, Mullingar and Edgeworthstown Train Stations provided the members with a very information presentation. The presentation detailed enhancements and future plans for the Dublin – Sligo line.

Following the presentation, the members present raised matters in relation to:

* Closure of the Station House restricting access to the facilities
* Closure of the shop
* Overcrowding and health and safety concerns
* Train speed
* Anti-Social behaviour
* Ticketing options
* Waiting times
* Signage
* Accessibility and access to disabled Toilets
* Land required for delivery of twin track

Barry and Gavin responded to the issues raised and confirmed that

* Recruitment process in place and planned that Longford will be a manned station during operation times.
* Mobility access is prioritised.
* Options regarding vending machines being considered and on-board services to resume.
* Anti-Social behaviour is a national and behavioural issue and they work very closely with An Garda Siochana on this and also addressing the issue of illegal substances
* Options in relation to ticketing is currently being reviewed
* Signage requirements are being assessed and currently being rolled out
* Overcrowding impacted by the fact that the line is considered a commuter route with passengers also availing of open return tickets. They accept that the line requires additional capacity.
* There is no short-term solution to the speed issue.
* It is unlikely that there will be an issue with the land required to provide twin track.

**FERGUS KENNEDY R.I.P.**

The Cathaoirleach, Councillor Turlough Mc Govern proposed and the members unanimously agreed to adjourn the meeting for five minutes and a minute’s silence in advance of the recommencement of the meeting as a mark of respect for the late Fergus Kennedy, Arts Officer of Longford County Council.

Councillor McGovern, Chief Executive Paddy Mahon, Elected Members, staff and colleagues in Longford County Council extended their sympathies to Fergus’ family and friends. They noted his character, work ethic and respect among the arts community in his adopted county of Longford.

1. **ADOPTION OF MINUTES**

On the proposal of Councillor Peggy Nolan, seconded by Mick Cahill, the Minutes of Monthly Meeting of Longford County Council held on the 8 March 2023, as circulated, were confirmed and adopted.

1. **MATTERS ARISING FROM MINUTES**

None.

1. **DECLARATION OF INTEREST BY MEMBERS**

None.

1. **CHIEF EXECUTIVE REPORT**

Noted.

Councillor John Browne had a query on the number of expressions of interest received by Longford County Council on the Affordable Housing Scheme. Chief Executive, Paddy Mahon informed the members that they had received approx. 30 expressions of interest under this scheme to date. He expressed the view that the demand in Longford was for additional social housing rather than affordable housing.

Cathaoirleach Councillor Turlough McGovern congratulated Longford County Council on being awarded with the Health & Safety Excellence Award – Public Sector and for their nomination as finalists for the overall Health & Safety Excellence Grand Prix Award. The awards ceremony took place on Wednesday, March 29th, 2023, at The Crowne Plaza Hotel, Dublin. This was a very prestigious award and Councillor McGovern thanked everyone for all their hard work in making this possible.

Cathaoirleach Councillor Turlough McGovern also congratulated and thanked everyone from Longford County Council who took part in the Noel McManus Memorial Run/Walk/Cycle on Good Friday at Lough Rynn Castle.

1. **MINUTES OF CORPORATE POLICY GROUP MEETING HELD ON THE 7th March 2023 – AS CIRCULATED**

The adopted Minutes of Corporate Policy Group Meeting held on the 7th March 2023, as circulated, were noted.

1. **INFRASTRUCTURE, CLIMATE ACTION AND INNOVATION**
2. **Notice of Motions, submitted by Councillors, as listed hereunder**

**Councillor Paul Ross**That all car parking machines in Longford are converted to add card only payment.

**Response**Longford County Council are in a Regional Contract for Managed Parking Services along with Laois, Offaly and Westmeath.  This contract is currently being retendered through the Office of Government Procurement.  When the Tendering process is complete and the contract awarded, Longford Council can explore options of upgrading the current service, subject to budget Provision, which can include:

* Dual Payment Machines Options for some or all of the current Machines, and/or
* Pay by Text Option

It was noted by Councillor Butler that this is a recurring discussion item at the Longford Municipal District meetings.

1. **FINANCE AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY**
2. **Capital Budget**

A/Head of Finance, Fema Flanagan presented a detailed report on the capital budget. The Executive responded to queries raised by the members including:

* Purchase of land for industry and progress on the identification of a site for an IDA advance building solution in Longford Town.
* Special needs playground in the Greyhound track.
* Timeline and anticipated costs for the delivery of the Civic Offices.
* Site for fire station and relocation of playground in Ballymahon

The Members welcomed the Capital Budget and thanked the Finance section for the detailed report. They recognised that this is an aspirational and ambitious budget.

On the proposal of Councillor Colm Murray and seconded by Councillor Seamus Butler the Capital Budget 2023 – 2025 was adopted.

1. **HOUSING, PLANNING, REGENERATION AND CAPITAL PROJECTS**
2. **To note Planning Applications received since last meeting of the Council**

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

1. **Draft Revised Development Contribution Scheme 2023-2027 – as circulated**

On the proposal of Councillor Colm Murray and seconded by Councillor Peggy Nolan the members unanimously agreed to adopt the Draft Revised Development Contribution Scheme as circulated.

1. **Consideration of Part VIII No 103 –** **Road Realignment on the L 1105 at Drumanure, County Longford. Report in accordance with Section 179 of the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended) and Part 8 of the Planning & Development Regulations 2001 (as amended)**

On the proposal of Councillor Mick Cahill, seconded by Councillor Colm Murray, the members unanimously approved the Part VIII No 103 – Road Realignment on the L 1105 at Drumanure, County Longford. Report in accordance with Section 179 of the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended) and Part 8 of the Planning and Development Regulations 2001 (as amended) as circulated.

1. **COMMUNITY, LIBRARY AND CULTURAL SERVICES, CORPORATE AND HUMAN RESOURCES**
2. **Consideration and adoption of Draft Annual Report 2022**

On the proposal of Councillor Mick Cahill and seconded by Councillor Uruemu Adejinmi it was agreed to adopt the draft Annual Report 2022 as circulated subject to the inclusion of the Statement of Comprehensive Income. This content will be updated when the Annual Financial Statement 2022 is adopted by the Elected Members at a later date.

The Members acknowledged the work in compiling the report and thanked all those involved in its development.

1. **Nominations of Elected members for the Creative Ireland Culture Team 2023-2027**

On the proposal of Councillor Seamus Butler and seconded by Councillor Pat O’Toole it was agreed to nominate Councillors Uruemu Adejinmi, Garry Murtagh and Mick Cahill to the Creative Ireland Culture Team 2023-2027.

1. **Consideration of Longford County Council nomination to the Board of Directors of the Backstage Theatre**

On the proposal of Councillor Colm Murray and seconded by Councillor Peggy Nolan it was agreed to nominate County Librarian, Martina Needham to the Board of Directors of the Backstage Theatre.

1. **Correspondence**
2. Correspondence dated 20 March received from the Minister for Transport re. follow-up request to meet a representative deputation of Council members to highlight the N4 Improvement programme, as circulated, was noted.

Chief Executive Paddy Mahon informed the members that he had received notice of a meeting request from Minister for State Jack Chambers shortly before the meeting started. He also informed the Members that Minister Ryan had also requested a meeting with the Elected Members to discuss topics around his Ministerial portfolios, especially any measures being implemented around climate action plans.

The Members unanimously agreed to invite both Minister for State Chambers and Minister Ryan to the Council Chamber as per their meeting requests.

The Members also unanimously agreed by resolution to hold both of these meetings In-Committee. The dates and times will be notified to the Members by the Meetings Administrator. It was also agreed that Elected Members would, as far as possible, physically attend these meetings in the Council Chamber. The Members also agreed to invite Members of the Oireachtas to the meetings.

1. Correspondence dated 29 March received from the Minister for Justice re. Notice of Motion from Councillor Paul Ross regarding a ‘One-for-All’ Garda Vetting process, as circulated, was noted.

On the proposal of Councillor Paul Ross, seconded by Councillor Peggy Nolan, it was unanimously agreed that the same letter be forwarded to Garda Commissioner Drew Harris.

1. **TRAINING**

Noted.

1. **VOTES OF SYMPATHY**

Councillor Colm Murray paid tribute to former Longford County Council employee Joe McManus who passed away recently RIP.

Councillor Peggy Nolan requested a vote of sympathy for Laura Gilmore Anderson, daughter of former mayor Brendan Gilmore – May she Rest in Peace.

Councillor Turlough McGovern requested a vote of sympathy for Mrs Philomena Donoghue (Mrs D), Bracklin Road, Edgeworthstown – May she Rest in Peace.

This concluded the business of the meeting.

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

**Claire McNabola**

**Meetings Administrator**

**Confirmed and adopted at Meeting of Longford County Council held on the 10 May 2023.**

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

**Cathaoirleach.**