

**Minutes of Meeting of Longford County Council**

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

**Wednesday, 11 September 2024 at 4pm**

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**PRESIDING:** Councillor Mark Casey

**MEMBERS PRESENT**: Councillors Paul Ross, Paraic Brady, Peggy Nolan, Niall Gannon, Garry Murtagh, Gerry Hagan, Padraig McNamara, Turlough McGovern, Martin Skelly, Seamus Butler, Uruemu Adejinmi,

Mick Cahill, Pat O’Toole, Sean Mimnagh, David Cassidy, Kevin Hussey

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

Ms. Barbara Heslin, Director of Services

Mr. John McKeon, Director of Services

Ms. Samantha Healy, Director of Services

Mr. Michael Nevin, A/Director of Services

Ms. Louise Kiernan, A/Director of Services

**APOLOGIES**: Mr. John Brannigan

**MEETINGS**

**ADMINISTRATOR**: Ms. Claire McNabola

1. **ADOPTION OF MINUTES**
2. On the proposal of Councillor Paraic Brady seconded by Councillor Pat O’Toole the Minutes of Monthly Meeting of Longford County Council held on 10 July 2024, as circulated, were confirmed, and adopted.
3. **MATTERS ARISING FROM MINUTES**

None

1. **DECLARATION OF INTEREST BY MEMBERS**

None

1. **CHIEF EXECUTIVE REPORT**

Noted

1. **MINUTES OF CORPORATE POLICY GROUP MEETING HELD ON THE 08 MAY 2024 – AS CIRCULATED**

Noted

1. **COMMUNITY, LIBRARY AND CULTURAL SERVICES, CORPORATE SERVICES**
2. **Consideration and adoption of Draft Strategic Policy Committee Scheme 2024 – 2029**

The Draft Strategic Policy Committee Scheme and Chief Executives Report on submissions received during the public consultation were considered by the Corporate Policy Group. Barbara Heslin advised the members that the draft scheme was now recommended by the CPG for adoption.

On the proposal of Councillor Paul Ross seconded by Councillor Peggy Nolan, the Draft Strategic Policy Committee Scheme 2024 – 2029 was adopted.

1. **Consideration of Nominee from Longford County Council to Board of Longford Westmeath Transport CLG**

On the proposal of Councillor Paul Ross, seconded by Councillor Paraic Brady, Councillor Garry Murtagh was nominated from Longford County Council to the Board of Longford Westmeath Transport clg.

The Cathaoirleach declared Councillor Garry Murtagh to be nominated to the Board of Longford Westmeath Transport clg.

1. **Appointment of third member to Longford Enterprise Development Company Ltd** (Each Municipal District to be Represented)

On the proposal of Councillor Paul Ross, seconded by Councillor Seamus Butler, Councillor Peggy Nolan was appointed to the Longford Enterprise Development Company Ltd.

As there was no nomination from the Ballymahon Municipal District, it was agreed by the members that two nominees from Longford Municipal District would be appointed.

**The Cathaoirleach declared Councillor Peggy Nolan appointed to Longford Enterprise Development Company Ltd.**

1. **Appointment of fourth member to Longford Local Community Development Committee (LCDC)** (Each Municipal District to be Represented)

On the proposal of Councillor Paul Ross, seconded by Councillor Peggy Nolan, Councillor Niall Gannon was appointed to the Longford Local Community Development Committee

**The Cathaoirleach declared Councillor Niall Gannon appointed to the Longford Local Community Development Committee.**

1. **Consideration of Draft Civic Protocols**

As requested by the Cathaoirleach at the last meeting, the Draft Civic Protocols were considered by the Protocols and Procedures Committee. In advance of that meeting, the Cathaoirleach circulated draft changes to the Attendance by Elected Members as Guests at Official Overseas Events Protocol. No other changes were suggested to the Draft Civic Protocols. The CPG considered and approved the proposal from the Committee that the remaining Protocols be adopted by the Council.

The Attendance by Elected Members as Guests at Official Overseas Events Protocol will be updated to reflect the proposed changes proposed by the Protocols and Procedures Committees. It will be circulated to the Committee for further review before being circulated to the CPG and Council for consideration.

On the recommendation of the Corporate Policy Group and on the proposal of Councillor Peggy Nolan, seconded by Councillor Seamus Butler, the draft Civic Protocols were adopted, with the exemption of the protocol on Overseas Travel, which will be presented to the Corporate Policy Group in October following amendment.

1. **INFRASTRUCTURE, CLIMATE ACTION AND INNOVATION**
2. **The following Notice of Motion was proposed by Councillor Martin Monaghan and seconded by Councillor Seamus Butler**

That Longford County Council look at acquiring a permanent home for Longford Civic Defence. The service that these volunteers provide is an integral part of the running of any event that occurs in our community.

**Response:**

Longford County Council Civil Defence unit currently rent a building, yard with ancillary sheds in Longford Town. This premises is rented on a yearly basis. A Civil Defence business needs appraisal has been undertaken and the securing of a permanent base for the unit was identified.

Although Longford County Council has explored options for a permanent site, it should be noted there is currently no Central Government funding available for the provision of such a premises and the provision of suitable premises would need to be funded from own resources.

1. **The following Notice of Motion was proposed by Councillors Uruemu Adejinmi and Kevin Hussey and seconded by Councillor Martin Monaghan**

We are calling on Longford County Council to inspect all road signs for obstruction, damage, peeling and/or discolouration and make the necessary repairs/maintenance as needed to improve visibility of signs for road users and safety on our County roads.

**Response:**

The Areas conduct maintenance and repairs to signs on road network on an ongoing basis. It is intended to complete cleaning and sign replacements between now and year end subject to need and available resources.

1. **The following Notice of Motion was proposed by Councillor David Cassidy and seconded by Uruemu Adejinmi**

I call on Longford County Council to review their policy in relation to the provision of public lighting particularly in the context of road & pedestrian safety

**Response:**

Public lighting in County Longford is primarily provided in towns and villages for pedestrian and road safety reasons.

The cost of the provision and maintenance of public lighting in County Longford is almost exclusively met by the own resources funding of Longford County Council.

In 2024, the Longford County Council own resources budget for public lighting is €785,000, which is spent on energy supply (€450,000) and maintenance and upgrade works (€385,000).

The main focus of the Council’s maintenance works is to upgrade the lighting stock to energy efficient lighting, in accordance with Government Climate Change policy, and with a view to controlling energy costs.

Other maintenance works include the repair of lighting faults and retrofitting of older lighting installations which no longer meet required electrical standards.

As such, the provision of additional lighting is limited by the National Climate Change policy, environmental requirements, and the restricted local financing available.

A review of Public Lighting Policy can be undertaken but it must reflect national policies, environmental considerations and availability of funding.

1. **The following Notice of Motion was proposed by Councillor Paul Ross and seconded by Councillor Mick Cahill**

I call on Longford County Council to write to Coillte and all forestry companies, including Bord na Mona informing them of their legal obligation to maintain their hedgerows along the roads of County Longford in the interest of public safety.

**Response:**

It was agreed that Longford County Council would write to Coillte and Bord NaMona in this regard and that the item would be included on the agenda for the relevant SPC with a view to developing policy around hedgerow maintenance.

1. **ENTERPRISE AND UKRAINIAN HUMANITARIAN RESPONSE**
2. **The following Notice of Motion was proposed by Councillor Seamus Butler and seconded by Councillor Uruemu Adejinmi**

I call on Longford County Council to provide an update on a potential site for the IDA Advance facility for Longford and I also request a presentation by IDA personnel for the October meeting of Longford County Council.

**Response:**

The IDA are actively trying to secure a suitable site in the Longford Town area. This has been a protracted process due to the scarcity of zoned sites or landbanks that are either being readied for development or being made available for others to develop. Whilst the IDA have narrowed their search to specific sites, these sites are not without their challenges and LCC continues to work closely with them to identify the best option. The appropriate department in the IDA will be invited to present at a Longford County Council meeting.

1. **FINANCE AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY**
2. **To note draft minutes from the April meeting of the Governance SPC held on 16 April 2024**

Noted

1. **To consider the Local Property Tax Variation in accordance with the provisions of Section 20 of the Finance (Local Property Tax) Act 2012**

John McKeon gave the Members a detailed presentation on the proposed LPT Variation for 2025. John outlined the benefits of this proposal, and how LCC could benefit in both the short and long term. He explained that this was pillar 1 in the proposed 5 year Financial Strategy and will align with the ambition for the county which will be outlined in the Corporate Plan.

* Longford County Council Local Property Tax Local Adjustment Factor to remain at +15% for the 5 year period 2025 to 2029 inclusive
* This will result in consistency and certainty for nearly 18,000 property owners in Longford
* It will give Longford County Council the ability to fund the already committed €49 Million (over 5 Years) through the Longford Model for ongoing Regeneration Projects
* This will result in increased confidence in Longford County Council to “matchfund” and deliver large Regeneration Projects.

John answered any questions raised by the Members.

On the proposal of Councillor Seamus Butler and seconded by Councillor Paul Ross, the Local Property Tax Variation in accordance with the provisions of Section 20 of the Finance (Local Property Tax) Act 2012 as amended was unanimously adopted by the members for the 5 years 2025 to 2029 inclusive.

The members thanked John for his very informative presentation. John McKeon together with Chief Executive Paddy Mahon thanked the Members for their ongoing support.

1. **HOUSING, PLANNING, REGENERATION & CAPITAL PROJECTS**
2. **To note planning applications received**

Noted

1. **CORRESPONDENCE**
2. **Correspondence received from Bus Eireann**

Noted

1. **Correspondence received from HSE regarding St. Christophers**

Noted – On the proposal of Councillor Peggy Nolan, seconded by Councillor Pat O’Toole it was agreed to write to the HSE and request a meeting.

1. **Correspondence received from HSE regarding the retention of Nurses.**

Noted

Councillor Peggy Nolan raised concerns regarding the threat to HSE ophthalmology (eye care) services in Longford due to recruitment challenges. Councillor Nolan proposed that a letter issue to the HSE outlining the concerns raised, seconded by Councillor Pat O’Toole.

1. **TRAINING APPROVAL**

The Members notes the training approved by the Corporate Policy Group.

1. **VOTES OF SYMPATHY**

Councillor Martin Skelly together with the Members of Longford County Council extended their sympathy to the family of the late Michael McCann. Michael played a leading role with the Longford Association in London. May he Rest in Peace.

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

**Claire McNabola**

**Meetings Administrator**

**Confirmed and adopted at Meeting of Longford County Council held on the 09 October 2024.**

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

**Cathaoirleach**