

MINUTES OF MARCH MEETING OF DONEGAL COUNTY COUNCIL,
HELD IN THE COUNTY HOUSE, LIFFORD
ON 25th MARCH, 2019

C/63/19 MEMBERS PRESENT

Cllrs S Ó'Domhnaill (Cathaoirleach), L Blaney, E Bonner, C Brogan, P Canning, T Conaghan, G Crawford, N. Crossan, A Doherty, G Doherty, L Doherty, M Doherty, R Donaghey, M Farren, E Gallagher, M. T. Gallagher, A Glackin, M Harley, N Jordan, J Kavanagh, N Kennedy, S Maguire, M C Mac Giolla Easbuig, F McBrearty Jnr, M Mc Bride, M McDermott, I Mc Garvey, P McGowan, B McGuinness, G McMonagle, J Murray, M Naughton, J O'Donnell, B O' Neill and T Slowey.

C/64/19 OFFICIALS IN ATTENDANCE

Seamus Neely, Chief Executive, Joe Peoples, Director of Housing, Corporate and Cultural Services / Meetings Administrator, John McLaughlin, Director of Roads & Transportation, Liam Ward, Director of Community & Planning Services, Garry Martin, Director of Economic Development, Emergency Services and Information Systems, Michael McGarvey, A/Director of Water & Environment, Richard Gibson, A/Head of Finance, Anne Marie Conlon, Communications Officer, Sean O'Daimhin, Oifigeach na Gaeilge, Anne Marie Crawford, Staff Officer.

C/65/19 VOTE OF SYMPATHY- FORMER CLLR DESSIE LARKIN

The Cathaoirleach said that the news of former Cllr Dessie Larkin's death had been an immense shock to both the members and staff of Donegal County Council. He extended deepest sympathy to his wife Mary, children Danielle, Courtney, James and Matthew together with the extended Larkin and Mc Cool families.

Dessie, he said, had left an outstanding legacy in terms of his service on both Letterkenny Town Council and Donegal County Council. It was acknowledged that he had also served with distinction as the Cathaoirleach of Donegal County Council and as Mayor of Letterkenny Town Council on two separate occasions.

Tributes were then paid by the various political groupings in the Chamber.

Cllr Brogan on behalf of the Fianna Fáil grouping said that Dessie had made a significant and positive impact on public life throughout his career as a politician. He was, he contended, a man

with a passion for politics and in particular his beloved Letterkenny. Continually striving to improve, he had, he said, pursued a further education course and embarked on a new career in the Environment Section of Donegal County Council.

Cllr Mc Monagle representing the Sinn Fein grouping said that he had worked for many years with former Cllr Larkin and had always valued his advice and friendship. He would, he said, be sorely missed.

Cllr Kavanagh on behalf of the Fine Gael grouping acknowledged the commitment and dedication that Dessie had given to the people of Letterkenny and its environs even after he retired from public life. His death, he said, had come as a great shock to all who had known him.

Cllr Mc Garvey representing the independent grouping said that former Cllr Larkin had strived always to do his best for the people that he represented, and that one of his greatest aspirations had been to see Letterkenny acquire city status. He was, he said, a man who continually strived to see the bigger picture.

Cllr Farren on behalf of the Labour party acknowledged that Dessie had been an excellent public representative, and a good family man who would be sorely missed not only within his own family circle, but throughout the wider Letterkenny area also.

The Chief Executive extended sympathy on behalf of the Management Team and the Staff of Donegal County Council. He alluded to the various roles undertaken by Dessie as a local authority member and noted that one of the most successful had been his chairmanship of the Donegal County Development Board. This body in its day, he said, had been acknowledged nationally as one of the most successful in the country.

Sympathy was also extended to Cllr Martin Harley on the death of his mother-in-law Mary Coyle.

C/66/19

MOTION UNDER URGENT BUSINESS – MICA REDRESS SCHEME

A request signed by Cllrs M Doherty, T Slowey, N Crossan, N Kennedy, M C Mac Giolla Easbuig, S Maguire, R Donaghey, M Mc Dermott, A Doherty, J Murray, A Glackin, G Mc Monagle, L

Doherty, E Bonner, M Naughton, P Canning, G Crawford, P Mc Gowan, C Brogan, M Farren, M T Gallagher, and T Conaghan to have the following motion discussed as urgent business in accordance with Standing Order No 27 was submitted to the Meetings Administrator:-

“That this Council are prepared and set up to administer and deliver on The Mica Redress Scheme which I hope will go through the Dáil very soon”

It was unanimously agreed to consider same prior to the close of business.

C/67/19 VOTE OF SYMPATHY- FORMER CLLR DESSIE LARKIN
On the proposal of Cllr O’ Domhnaill, seconded by Cllr Brogan it was resolved to adjourn the meeting until 2pm as a mark of respect to former Cllr Dessie Larkin. This was unanimously agreed.

C/68/19 CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF DONEGAL COUNTY COUNCIL HELD ON THE 28TH JANUARY, 2019.
On the proposal of Cllr A Doherty, seconded by Cllr Mc Garvey the Minutes of the Meeting of Donegal County Council held on the 28th January, 2019 were adopted.

C/69/19 FILLING OF CASUAL VACANCY OCCASIONED BY THE RESIGNATION OF CLLR DESSIE SHIELS
On the proposal of Cllr Mc Garvey, seconded by Cllr Kennedy it was resolved that Mr Eugene Gallagher fill the casual vacancy on Donegal County Council occasioned by the resignation of Cllr Dessie Shiels.

Cllr Gallagher thanked his proposer and seconder. He paid tribute to former Cllr Dessie Shiels who, he said, had worked tirelessly behind the scenes for the electorate in the Letterkenny Municipal District.

It was his intention, he confirmed, to work with the members of the Council and the Executive over the coming months and embrace his role as a local authority member to the best of his ability.

He extended sympathy to the family of the late Dessie Larkin.

C/70/19 FILLING OF CASUAL VACANCY ON THE LETTERKENNY MUNICIPAL DISTRICT COMMITTEE

On the proposal of Cllr McGarvey seconded by Cllr McBride it was resolved that Cllr Eugene Gallagher fill the casual vacancy on the Letterkenny MD Committee occasioned by the resignation of Cllr Dessie Shiels.

C/71/19 FILLING OF CASUAL VACANCY ON THE ISLANDS COMMITTEE

On the proposal of Cllr Mc Garvey, seconded by Cllr McMonagle it was resolved that Cllr Eugene Gallagher fill the casual vacancy on the Islands Committee occasioned by the resignation of Cllr Dessie Shiels.

C/72/19 FILLING OF CASUAL VACANCY ON THE CULTURAL COMMITTEE

On the proposal of Cllr McGarvey, seconded by Cllr Kennedy it was resolved that Cllr Eugene Gallagher fill the casual vacancy on the Cultural Committee occasioned by the resignation of Cllr Dessie Shiels.

C/73/19 FILLING OF CASUAL VACANCY ON THE ECONOMIC ENTERPRISE & PLANNING POLICY STRATEGIC POLICY COMMITTEE

On the proposal of Cllr Mc Garvey, seconded by Cllr McMonagle it was resolved that Cllr Eugene Gallagher fill the casual vacancy on the Economic Enterprise & Planning Policy Strategic Policy Committee occasioned by the resignation of Cllr Dessie Shiels.

C/74/19 DISPOSAL OF LAND AT THE GLEBE, KILLYBEGS.

Members considered the report circulated with the agenda in relation the above.

On the proposal of Cllr Kennedy, seconded by Cllr Conaghan, it was resolved to dispose of a plot of land at The Glebe, Killybegs to Shaun Conneely in accordance with the provisions of Section 211 of the Planning & Development Act, 2000 (as amended) and under Section 183 of the Local Government Act 2001, (as amended).

C/75/19 DISPOSAL OF LAND AT BELCRUIT, KINCASSLAGH.

Members considered the report circulated with the agenda in relation the above.

On the proposal of Cllr Bonner, seconded by Cllr Gallagher, it was resolved to dispose of a plot of land at Belcruit, Kincasslagh to Packie Gallagher in accordance with the provisions of Section 211 of the Planning & Development Act, 2000 (as amended) and under Section 183 of the Local Government Act 2001, (as amended).

C/76/19 DISPOSAL OF LAND AT CRANFORD.

Members considered the report circulated with the agenda in relation the above.

On the proposal of Cllr Blaney, seconded by Cllr McBride it was resolved to dispose of a plot of land at Cranford to Richard John and Yvonne Patricia Sterling in accordance with the provisions of Section 211 of the Planning & Development Act, 2000 (as amended) and under Section 183 of the Local Government Act 2001, (as amended).

C/77/19 DISPOSAL OF LAND AT HERRONS FIELD, ARDARA.

Members considered the report circulated with the agenda in relation the above.

On the proposal of Cllr Gallagher, seconded by Cllr Bonner, it was resolved to dispose of a plot of land at Herrons Field, Ardara by way of lease to Ardara Community Childcare Company Ltd in accordance with the provisions of Section 211 of the Planning & Development Act, 2000 (as amended) and under Section 183 of the Local Government Act 2001, (as amended).

C/78/19 TO APPROVE THE CARRYING OUT OF WORKS WITH REGARD TO THE REPLACEMENT OF THE EXISTING BRIDGE AT MEENAMULLIGAN AND THE CONSTRUCTION OF A CONCRETE STRUCTURE SPANNING 24.3M OVER THE RIVER CRANA IN THE INISHOWEN MD

Members considered the report circulated with the agenda in relation to the above.

On the proposal of Cllr Donaghey, seconded by Cllr Murray, the carrying out of works with regard to the replacement of the existing bridge at Meenamulligan and the construction of a concrete structure spanning 24.3m over the River Crana under Part XI of the Planning & Development Act, 2000 (as amended) and Part 8 of the Planning & Development Regulations 2001(as amended) was approved.

Cllr Donaghey alluded to the horrendous impact that the August 2017 floods had in Inishowen and said that the works in question were to be widely welcomed.

Cllr Murray said that the importance of a permanent structure could not be underestimated and asked that the works be expedited as quickly as possible.

Cllr Canning enquired as to the status of the Play Park in Killea. He proposed, seconded by Cllr Mc Brearty that Part 8 Planning be pursued, given that there was only a short window of opportunity available to draw down the relevant funding.

Mr Liam Ward, Director of Community & Planning Services said that he would come back to Cllr Canning in relation to same.

C/79/19 **TO CONSIDER AND ADOPT THE ANNUAL REPORT FOR 2018 FROM THE DONEGAL COUNTY COUNCIL AUDIT COMMITTEE**

Members considered the report circulated with the agenda in relation to the above.

On the proposal of Cllr Bonner, seconded by Cllr McGarvey the Annual Report for 2018 from the Donegal County Council Audit Committee was adopted.

C/80/19 **TO CONSIDER THE DONEGAL COUNTY COUNCIL ANNUAL SERVICE DELIVERY PLAN 2019**

Members considered the report circulated with the agenda in relation to the above.

On the proposal of Cllr O'Neill, seconded by Cllr Kennedy the Donegal County Council Annual Service Delivery Plan 2019 in accordance with Section 134 (a) of the Local Government Act, 2001 was adopted.

C/81/19 **TO CONSIDER THE COUNCIL HOUSING ESTATE MAINTENANCE POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE ROADS & TRANSPORTATION AND HOUSING & CORPORATE SPCS.**

Members considered the report circulated with the agenda in relation to the above.

Cllr Crawford proposed, seconded by Cllr McBride the Council Housing Estate Maintenance – Policy recommendations from Roads & Transportation and Housing and Corporate SPCs be adopted.

Cllr Mc Monagle however contended that further clarifications were necessary and that the recommendations had not been duly considered by the Corporate Policy group. He noted also that there were specific budgetary implications and that a combined meeting of the Strategic Policy Committees was needed to finalise the recommendations.

Cllr Mc Brearty suggested that the report be adopted but left open, so that the recommendations in question could be amended going forward.

A lengthy debate ensued and the following issues were raised:-

- Need for clear policy in relation to the maintenance of roads in these estates and clarity as to who is responsible for the upkeep of backlanes.
- Concern that there was no reference to Irish Water in the policy recommendations.
- Older estates were being neglected with many seeing little or no improvement works in the last 20 or so years.
- Query as to the situation with a number of the assets taken over by Irish Water and the fact that many outstanding liabilities in relation to same were still with the Council.
- Concern expressed that there had been no housing provision in the Glenties Municipal District over the past number of years.
- Outlined the need to establish a separate section of the Council to deal with Council Housing Estates in their entirety.

The Cathaoirleach at this juncture advised of the need to finalise policy requirements before the 2019 Local Elections.

Cllr Mc Monagle said that whilst he was not against adopting the policy, there was need for additional clarification in relation to the funding aspect. He said that waste water issues needed to be addressed and the role of Irish Water in the overall process clearly identified.

The Chief Executive said that there was a need for a shared understanding so as to be in a position to respond positively and proactively regarding the maintenance of the wider housing portfolio including attendant lands. The recommendations in the report, he advised, were preliminary only and surveys would have to be carried out to quantify the overall level of funding needed.

What was envisaged, he said, was a 3-5 year programme of works with monies ring fenced for maintenance works. Members were informed that the Council was not in a position to draft policy for other utilities.

The Roads SPC, he affirmed, had taken the lead as it was the first scheduled meeting but that ideally the policy recommendations from all other relevant SPCs would come before members for consideration.

Cllr Brogan alluded to the fact that tenants in many of these estates were frustrated and cited the need for a specific roadmap to enable Donegal County Council deal with the concerns and issues raised.

Cllr Mc Monagle welcomed the Chief Executive's suggestion for the development of an all encompassing policy document which, he contended, was needed to address budgetary issues and the role of Irish Water going forward.

Cllr Mc Brearty said that that in his capacity as Chair of the Housing & Corporate SPC, he was aware that there were problems on Social Housing Estates particularly in the Stranorlar Municipal District. It was important, he added, that the issue was kept separate from the Unfinished Estates Programme.

On the proposal of Cllr Brogan, seconded by Cllr Mc Guinness it was resolved to hold a workshop on Monday 24th April, 2019 at 11am in the County House, Lifford to discuss Council Housing Estate Maintenance.

It was further resolved and unanimously agreed to hold a Special Meeting of Council on Monday 15th April, 2019 at 2pm in the County House, Lifford to discuss the Housing Capital Programme together with items on playgrounds and ducting for broadband as raised at the recent Housing & Corporate Strategic Policy Committee Meeting.

C/82/19 CIVIC RECEPTIONS

On the proposal of Cllr O' Neill, seconded by Cllr Mc Brearty it was resolved that a Civic Reception be afforded to Charlie Mc Gettigan in recognition of the fact that it has been 25 years since his Eurovision win.

It was further resolved on the proposal of Cllr Mc Bride, seconded by Cllr Mc Brearty to afford a Civic Reception to the Donegal Special Olympians in recognition of their outstanding sporting achievements.

C/83/19 TO CONSIDER AND NOTE THE DONEGAL LOCAL COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE ANNUAL REPORT 2018

Members considered the report circulated with the agenda in relation to the above.

On the proposal of Cllr A Doherty, seconded by Cllr Murray the Donegal Local Community Development Committee Annual Report 2018 was adopted.

C/84/19 TO APPROVE THE 2019 NON-NATIONAL ROADS BRIDGE STRENGTHENING WORKS PROGRAMME

Members considered the report circulated with the agenda in relation to the above.

On the proposal of Cllr M Doherty, seconded by Cllr Murray the 2019 Non-National Roads Bridge Strengthening Works Programme was approved.

Cllr Mc Gowan welcomed the fact that the Ivy Bridge in Cloghan had been included. Cllr Harley asked that a specific allocation be provided to deal with roads damaged as a result of forestry works.

C/85/19 TO ADOPT THE DONEGAL COUNTY COUNCIL NOISE ACTION PLAN 2018 – 2023

Members considered the report circulated with the agenda in relation to the above.

On the proposal of Cllr Brogan, seconded by Cllr Harley it was resolved to defer the matter for consideration by the new Council. It was noted that the range of issues alluded to in the report warranted more detailed consideration.

Mr John Mc Laughlin, Director of Roads & Transportation said that the matter could be discussed further in workshop format and presented to the incoming Council for consideration.

C/86/19 TO CONSIDER THE REPORT ON IRRECOVERABLE RATES FOR YEAR ENDING 2018

Members considered the report circulated with the agenda in relation to the above.

Cllr Naughton contended that there was effectively a collection rate of 55% when write offs were taken into consideration.

Cllr O' Neill said it was extremely important that members received this update every year. The rate collection office, he said, was doing an excellent job and the information provided gave a general indication of where businesses were at. The payment plan facility had, he noted, proved to be most successful.

There was a need, he advised, for a Business Incentive Scheme providing specific incentives for new and fledgling businesses with options for a two year waiver on rate payments. This it was acknowledged was needed to revitalise many of our towns and villages. It was imperative also, he added, that rate collectors were deployed out on the ground for at least one week in every two thus affording small business an opportunity to pay what they could afford.

Cllr Gallagher warned against sending out the wrong message and said that smaller businesses needed to be supported generally even though it was generally recognised that national legislation was responsible for creating many of the barriers at local level.

Cllr Bonner said that a fairer system would be to base rates liability on profitability and thus called for a full review of the system nationwide.

Cllr Mc Guinness contended however that many properties in the smaller towns and villages were vacant simply because people could not afford to pay. He asked that the Valuation Office be contacted with regard to reviewing valuations on premises in many of the smaller towns and villages.

Mr Richard Gibson, Acting Head of Finance noted that the rate collection performance had increased by 2% in 2018 despite the less favourable economic climate for some businesses in the County. He informed members that since 2015 collection performance percentages had taken account of debts that are deemed to be doubtful but still carried forward into the next financial year. It was acknowledged that there was an onus on Local Authorities to identify amounts to be carried forward which for a number of reasons could be deemed as doubtful for collection purposes. Examples included amounts due as part of a liquidation/receivership process which had not concluded by year end or instances where the formal documentation had not been submitted in respect of vacant properties.

Members noted the report on irrecoverable rates for year ending 2018 in accordance with Section 26(2) of the Local Government Financial Procedures & Audit Regulations 2014.

C/87/19 TO ADOPT SCHEDULE OF MUNICIPAL DISTRICT WORKS FOR THE GLENTIES MUNICIPAL DISTRICT

Members considered the report circulated with the agenda in relation to the above.

On the proposal of Cllr G Doherty, seconded by Cllr Kennedy it was resolved to adopt the Schedule of Municipal District Works for the Glenties MD in accordance with subsection (4) of Section 103A of the Local Government Act 2001.

C/88/19 ATTENDANCE AT CONFERENCE, SEMINAR OR EVENT

Having noted the revised arrangements under Section 142 5(d) of the Local government Act, 2001, introduced by the Local Government (Expenses of Local Authority Members) Regulations 2006-2018 as amended and directives issued by the Minister in that

regard, on the proposal of Cllr Crossan, seconded by Cllr McBride, it was resolved to authorise any member, if he/she so wished, to attend the following conferences, subject to the normal procedures:-

- i. Individual members not exceeding their annual budget for attendance at conferences.
- ii. Payment of expenses for attendance to be conditional on the member furnishing documentary evidence of attendance.
- iii. Submission of a Conference Report.

Training

- AILG Module 2 Training for Local Authority Members to be held on the 28th March, 2019 in the Radisson Hotel, Sligo.

Conferences

- Irish Planning Institute, Annual Planning Conference to be held from 3rd to 5th April, 2019 in the Landmark Hotel, Carrick-on-Shannon, Co Leitrim.
- Dundalk Chamber of Commerce, “Cross Border Tourism Conference 2019” to be held on the 10th April, 2019 in the Four Seasons Hotel, Carlingford, Co Louth.
- Celtic Conferences “Ireland and Plastic Waste” to be held from the 12th - 14th April, 2019 in the Four Seasons Hotel, Carlingford, Co Louth.

C/89/19 CONFERENCE REPORTS.

On the proposal of Cllr Mc Bride, seconded by Cllr Kennedy the following Conference Reports were noted:-

- Cllr John Campbell – CPMR General Assembly held from the 17th - 20th October, 2018 in Funchal, Madeira.
- Cllr Terence Slowey – “Towards a Hard Brexit and its Consequences” held from the 26th -28th October, 2018 in the Clonakility Hotel, Clonakility, Co Cork.
- Cllr Nicholas Crossan – “Celtic Conferences – EU Cohesion Policy 2014 – 2020” held from Friday 14th to Sunday 16th December, 2018 in the Four Seasons Hotel, Carlingford, Co Louth.
- Cllr Terence Slowey – Colmcille Winter School held from 22nd – 23rd February, 2019 in Gartan, Churchill.

C/90/19 FUNDING FOR LIS SCHEMES.

It was unanimously agreed at this juncture to take Motions 11, 12 and 23 together.

On the proposal of Cllr Naughton, seconded by Cllr Kennedy the following motion was adopted:-

"That this Council calls on the Minister for Rural and Community Development, Mr Michael Ring TD, to provide more funding for the LIS scheme."

Cllr Naughton received a response from the Director of Roads & Transportation in relation to the above. He called on the Department not to advertise any more schemes until the current backlog of applications was cleared.

On the proposal of Cllr Kennedy, seconded by Cllr Naughton the following motion was adopted:-

"To seek further funding to cope with the influx in Donegal of applications for LIS roads".

Cllr Kennedy received a response from the Director of Roads & Transportation in relation to the above.

Cllr Kennedy contended that more money and a dedicated staffing complement were needed to clear the current backlog.

On the proposal of Cllr McGuinness, seconded by Cllr Kennedy it was resolved to discuss the following motion:-

"That we discuss the LIS Scheme".

Cllr McGuinness received a response from the Director of Roads & Transportation in relation to the above. He said that the repercussions of not being able to clear the backlog were very serious and the issues raised needed to be dealt with in a fair and efficient manner. He noted that approximately only 200 roads to date had been fixed under the scheme.

Cllr Mc Brearty said that councillors had no say in selecting the roads concerned, and thus called for the rules surrounding scheme selection to be changed so as to facilitate a greater input from the Elected Members.

There was no opposition to the motions outlined above.

Mr John Mc Laughlin, Director of Roads & Transportation said that he would write to the Minister outlining the need for additional funding and resources and the need to make the scheme more inclusive for the Elected Members.

Concluding the debate members asked that the issues raised be communicated to the Minister as soon as possible.

C/91/19 FUNDING FOR HISTORICAL SITES - BELTONY STONE CIRCLE, RAPHOE CASTLE AND ST. EUNAN'S CATHEDRAL

On the proposal of Cllr McBrearty, seconded by Cllr McBride the following motion was adopted:-

"I am calling on Donegal County Council to seek funding for tourism, culture and heritage to enhance the following historical sites, Beltony Stone Circle, Raphoe Castle and St Eunan's Cathedral in order to attract more visitors and historians to East Donegal especially when we have the oldest heritage site in the County which is almost 5000 years old."

Cllr McBrearty received a response from the Director of Economic Development, Emergency Services and Information Systems in relation to the above. He said that the historical significance of the sites referred to in the motion should not be underestimated. It was essential, he added, that they were promoted not only for East Donegal region but for the benefit of the County as a whole. Signage was another major issue, he contended, and he thus called for the erection of adequate tourism signage on all approaches into Donegal. He highlighted the need for East Donegal to have its own dedicated tourism network.

Cllr Mc Bride supporting the motion said that many of the sites in question required funding at national level and suggested that all available funding opportunities be explored as part of the 2020 budget preparations.

There was no opposition to the motion.

Mr Garry Martin, Director of Director of Economic Development, Emergency Services and Information Systems said that one of the key elements of tourism marketing in Donegal was to package the language and cultural aspects of the county. He said that he would work with Dr Joe Gallagher, Heritage Officer and the Heritage team to maximise the product and market effective opportunities in East Donegal.

C/92/19

PROMOTION OF DIGITAL HUBS IN BORDER VILLAGES

On the proposal of Cllr G Doherty, seconded by Cllr Murray the following motion was adopted:-

"That Donegal County Council establish and promote "Digital Hubs" in border villages which have economic growth potential in a post-Brexit climate and due to proximity to larger urban centres"

Cllr Doherty received a response from the Director of Economic Development, Emergency Services and Information Systems in relation to the above. He said that he had submitted the motion after consulting with a number of community and business representatives in the various towns and villages. Community facilities, he advised, could be used to facilitate these hot desks thus allowing workers in multi-national firms to work from satellite desks in local towns.

Representatives from these multi-national companies, he contended, were receptive to the development of these desk pods, subject however to high speed internet access being available. This initiative, he contended, could have potential post Brexit benefits given that East Donegal was geographically positioned to take advantage of many of these emerging opportunities.

Cllr Murray supporting the motion said that border villages needed to be innovative and forward thinking. He alluded also to the success of the CoLab project. The proposed development of a Data Centre in Bridgend would also, he advised be of huge economic benefit.

There was no opposition to the motion.

Mr Garry Martin, Director of Economic Development, Emergency Services and Information Systems said that there were a number of Digital Hubs in Donegal at present and that his Directorate would look to see what the best and optimal formula would be so as to maximise all available opportunities . He was, he said, happy to work with interested community groups in order to develop business cases as appropriate.

Cllr Crawford said that there was potential for the old Army Barracks in Lifford to be used for such an initiative.

There was no opposition to the motion.

Cllr Doherty welcomed the response and said that in this day and age there was no necessity for enterprise to be constrained within the larger towns.

The Director of Economic Development, Emergency Services and Information Systems in conclusion noted that all assets and land banks were on the table with regards the development of this initiative.

C/93/19

SUPPORT FOR TOWNS BEING BEING BYPASSED BY THE CURRENT TEN-T SCHEME

On the proposal of Cllr McGowan, seconded by Cllr Crawford the following motion was adopted:-

“That Donegal County Council support any large town being bypassed in the current TEN-T Scheme by appointing senior management to help businesses and communities to prepare for any likely impacts including the development of purpose built road access with direct support from the Department of Roads & Transportation and that this be pursued through immediate meetings with Minister Ross and all the Donegal Oireachtas members”

Cllr McGowan received a response from the Director of Roads & Transportation in relation to the above.

The development of a Link Road would, he said, be particularly challenging in terms of river crossings and the analysis of where Logue’s Bridge fits in. He welcomed the fact that there was a

particular objective in place to improve local access routes in and around Ballybofey/Stranorlar.

Cllr Crawford outlined his support for the motion.

There was no opposition to the motion.

Mr John Mc Laughlin, Director of Roads & Transportation confirmed that he would write to the Minister for Transport regarding his availability to meet with a delegation from Donegal County Council. It was noted that this delegation would consist of of the Stranorlar Members and the Oireachtas Members.

Cllr Mc Gowan concluding said that more clarity was needed for individuals and their respective communities. He was, he said, confident that business and community groups would rise to the challenge.

C/94/19

THAT THE MEMBERS BE INFORMED OF, AND DEBATE EXISTING DELAYS TO MUCH NEEDED HOUSING SCHEMES

On the proposal of Cllr Crawford, seconded by Cllr Mc Brearty the following motion was adopted:-

"That we be informed of, and debate existing delays to much needed housing schemes scheduled to have begun countywide."

Cllr Crawford received a response from the Director of Housing & Corporate Services in relation to the above. He was, he advised, disappointed with the reply and expressed concern that there was nothing in the programme for the Lifford – Ballindrait area. He was, he said, concerned at the lack of urgency placed on the need for social housing given that there were currently 2385 applicants on the social housing waiting list. He noted that 1,414 of these were receiving assistance through the HAP Scheme and the remaining 971 were not in receipt of any type of assistance. Applicants, he said, were in many cases being directed towards the HAP Scheme in the absence of suitable social housing. He called on the housing department to make the most of the opportunities available to them.

Cllr Mc Brearty supporting the motion said that the waiting times for social housing were far too long and that DEIS areas seemed to

be most severely impacted. He acknowledged that there was much work ongoing, but noted that there seemed to be a problem with contractors tendering for the jobs.

Cllr Bonner said he was concerned at the lack of progress in the Glenties Municipal District and noted that there were only 4 units scheduled for completion by 2020 in the Glenties MD.

There was no opposition to the motion.

Mr Joe Peoples, Director Housing, Corporate & Cultural Services said that the current Housing Programme involved a substantial body of work and involved a comprehensive mix of housing all over Donegal including the acquisition of single houses.

He noted that plans to acquire suitable land in Lifford had to be changed as the original location on offer had proved to be unsuitable. It was hoped, he said, to be able to confirm proposals /land acquisitions for a number of towns county-wide including proposals for the Glenties Municipal District.

Going forward, he acknowledged that there was a need to work at a faster pace whilst streamlining various processes including the design phase.

Cllr Crawford whilst welcoming the reply said that the pace of the programme was of no comfort to those seeking housing in the Lifford area. He queried also the lack of progress in relation to the promised 11 housing units in Raphoe and the delayed start for the 6 housing units in St Johnston.

Cllr Mc Brearty outlined the need for specific policies to be introduced in relation to two additional items namely Building and Community. He asked if these could be included on the agenda of the forthcoming meeting on the Housing Capital Programme.

C/95/19

THAT THE COUNCIL EXPRESS ITS DISAPPOINTMENT
THAT SUBSTANTIAL PROJECTS APPLIED FOR WERE NOT
SUCCESSFUL UNDER THE RURAL REGENERATION AND
DEVELOPMENT FUND

On the proposal of Cllr Gallagher, seconded by Cllr McMonagle the following motion was adopted:-

" That this Council express its disappointment that substantial projects applied for by Donegal County Council to the Rural Regeneration and Development Fund have not been successful in the latest announcement by Minister Ring, and commits to seek all funding options to bring these projects to fruition."

Cllr Gallagher received a response from the Director of Community & Planning Services in relation to the above.

She expressed concern that many worthwhile projects were not being taken forward and alluded in particular to the Burtonport Project which had been unsuccessful in the last tranche of funding.

Acknowledging the commitment of the various community groups, council officials etc, she advised of the need to explore all available funding options to bring the projects in question to fruition. She asked that feedback be sought in respect of those projects that had been unsuccessful and called for the Burtonport submission to be looked at again.

Cllr Mc Monagle agreed that feedback from the Department would be helpful in terms of assessing what needed to be done to get these projects over the line. He asked for clarification in relation to the submission process to the Department.

There was no opposition in relation to the motion.

Mr Liam Ward, Director Community & Planning Services advised that a considerable effort had been made to develop a number of projects for the first tranche of funding. He informed members that a Regeneration and Development Team was being formed to increase the prospect of significant additional allocations to the County and to review 2018 applications submitted under the RRD. It was anticipated, he said, that applications would open this year in April with a July deadline. It would be possible, he confirmed to go back to each Municipal District with the relevant feedback.

Cllr Gallagher asked that the Burtonport Project be progressed urgently in the next round of funding applications.

C/96/19

THE COUNCIL CONTACT THE DEPARTMENT OF FINANCE AND OTHER RELEVANT DEPARTMENTS TO CHANGE THE OUTDATED WAY IN WHICH RATES ARE LEVIED

On the proposal of Cllr Crossan, seconded by Cllr Kennedy the following motion was adopted:-

"That Donegal County Council contact the Department of Finance and other relevant Departments to change the outdated way in which rates are levied on the business sector in our county and throughout Ireland"

Cllr Crossan received a response from the Acting Head of Finance in relation to the above.

He said that the current method of rate collection was outdated and that the business community needed specific supports put in place including the development of a fair and equitable collection system.

Cllr Kennedy supporting the motion referred to particular difficulties in the Killybegs area and the impact of the current system on fledgling businesses.

There was no opposition to the motion.

Mr Richard Gibson, Acting Head of Finance said that the legislative basis for rate collection was spread over a number of enactments and dated back to the 19th Century. The Local Government (Rates) Bill 2018 which proposed to modernise the valuation system was now at Stage 3 in Dáil Eireann, he added. This it was acknowledged would go some way in restating the power of local Authorities to introduce and collect rates. He said that the revaluation of properties in Donegal would now most likely occur in 2021.

Mr Gibson said that he would write to the Minister for Housing Planning and Local Government outlining the concerns raised by members.

Concluding the debate Cllr Crossan said that something needed to change and the issue of vacant properties needed to be addressed.

C/97/19

ALL IRELAND POLLINATOR PLAN

On the proposal of Cllr A Doherty, seconded by Cllr. G Doherty the following motion was adopted:-

"The All - Ireland Pollinator Plan is about everyone working together and contributing to making the landscape more pollinator friendly"

That Donegal County Council

- a) Adopt, implement and actively promote the All Ireland Pollinator Plan on council open spaces and parks,
- b) Provide information, training and distribute pollinator guidelines to rural community groups, tidy towns and community development organisations,
- c) Devise and deliver a biodiversity action plan for Donegal County Council.

Cllr Doherty received a response from the Director of Water & Environment in relation to the above.

He said that the harm caused by human induced climatic change was clearly evident and that there was a need to reduce global carbon emissions. Dr Una Fitzpatrick and her team in the production of the plan had, he advised, outlined specific tasks which could be undertaken by Local Authorities.

It was acknowledged that there was a need for a cross directive approach in the effort to restore and manage natural habitats on council owned land.

The success of the Bunrana Tidy Towns Committee in winning the All Ireland Pollinator award was to be welcomed, he said, and there was acknowledgement also of the efforts of Bunrana Town Gardner, George Mc Dermott.

Small changes such as ensuring that grass perimeters were only cut about 5-6 times per year would, he contended, go some way in helping Donegal County Council become an eco friendly authority. He suggested that all available information be sought from the National Biodiversity Data Centre.

Members were also informed that National Tree Week was taking place from the 31st March to the 7th April, 2019.

Cllr G Doherty welcomed the initiative and said that the matter could be progressed with the assistance of the various Tidy Towns and Community Groups.

There was no opposition to the motion.

Mr Joe Peoples, Director Housing, Corporate & Cultural Services advised that there was already positive engagement with the community groups mentioned. It would be possible, he said, to look at signing up to the plan. It was noted that the County Donegal Heritage Plan had set out a strategy for the preparation and delivery of a Biodiversity Action Plan for the Council.

Cllr Doherty cited the need for proactive engagement with the plan and asked that the motion be circulated to all other Local Authorities for their consideration.

C/98/19 DEVELOPMENT OF LEISURE CENTRE FACILITIES IN DONEGAL

On the proposal of Cllr Murray, seconded by Cllr A Doherty the following motion was adopted:-

“That this Council discusses the need for the development of leisure centre facilities in Donegal.”

Cllr Murray received a response from the Director of Water & Environment in relation to the above. He had, he confirmed, a particular interest in the Bunrana Leisure Centre and expressed concern that the pool had now been closed for five years leaving a generation of children unable to swim and lacking in an important lifeskill. This facility, it was noted, was for all of Inishowen not just the Bunrana area.

Donegal County Council, he contended, had a proud record of supporting facilities such as the Aura Leisure Centre and the Finn Valley Centre and there was no reason why Inishowen could not have access to the same services.

Cllr A Doherty supporting the motion said it was important that this void was filled and the facility marketed accordingly.

There was no opposition to the motion.

Mr Michael Mc Garvey, Director Water & Environment informed members that there had been active engagement with the Bunrana Leisure Centre Committee and that he would come back to members following the next scheduled meeting with the group.

C/99/19 SERVICE DELIVERY IN THE PUBLIC SERVICE CENTRES

On the proposal of Cllr Farren, seconded by Cllr Canning the following motion was adopted:-

“I am calling on Donegal County Council to review their policy in relation to services within the Public Service Centres to see if the level of services can be increased.”

Cllr Farren received a response from the Director of Housing Corporate & Cultural Services in relation to the above. The Public Service Centres, he said, provided excellent services and facilitated the public at local level. He was, he said, concerned however that a number of services had been centralised back into Lifford and alluded in particular to the Planning Department.

He cited the need for greater engagement and access to planning services at local level as the current system was not working for the people of Inishowen.

He asked also that contact be made with the NDLS in relation to the possibility of setting up a centre in the Carndonagh Public Services Centre.

Cllr Canning concurred with this assessment and said it was imperative that services were augmented in each of the Public Service Centres in line with the provisions of “Putting People First”. He called for an immediate review of service delivery in the Carndonagh Public Services Centre.

There was no opposition to the motion.

Mr Joe Peoples, Director Housing, Corporate & Cultural Services said that the PSC s had been developed in the context of making access to Council services convenient for citizens. This coupled with the fact that other public service agencies had been invited to participate had meant that the initial focus had been on the provision of a range of public services at local level. The objective initially had been, he said, to provide a wide range of services. It was recognised however that the dynamics had changed for some of the services in question and that the demand for some services such as driving licences and motor tax had dwindled over the last three to four years with online applications becoming the norm.

He noted that clinics were held routinely in the Public Service Centres for planning applicants.

There was no opposition to the motion.

Cllr Farren said service that accessibility was a major issue and that centralisation of Planning in Lifford was not working. He asked that every effort be made to source and develop additional service provision in the Public Service Centres.

C/100/19 SLOWING DOWN OF TRAFFIC IN TOWNS AND VILLAGES

On the proposal of Cllr Canning, seconded by Cllr Crawford the following motion was adopted:-

"I am asking this Council to start taking the concerns of the public that are living in our towns and villages seriously and put in place proper proposals that can physically slow down traffic."

Cllr Canning received a response from the Director of Roads & Transportation in relation to the above.

He referred to particular issues in the Carrigans and Killea areas and called on the Roads Department to install ramps at these locations. Ramps had been successfully installed in Newtowncunningham, he noted, and a similar approach was required to help prevent accidents at the above locations.

Cllr Crawford supporting the motion said that the road in question had been identified in the County Development Plan as being of strategic importance and that R236 Carrigans appeared on the list of top ten accident locations in the county. He called for immediate action and the formulation of a specific council policy to deal with these types of situations.

There was no opposition to the motion.

Mr John Mc Laughlin, Director of Roads & Transportation said that his reply set out the position in relation to the Low Cost Accident Programme for both national and non-national roads.

He agreed to meet with Cllr Canning in relation to the situation in Carrigans and Killea.

C/101/19 MOTION UNDER URGENT BUSINESS –ADMINISTRATION OF THE MICA REDRESS SCHEME

On the proposal of Cllr M Doherty, seconded by Cllr Mc Guinness it was resolved to adopt the following motion submitted earlier in the meeting under urgent business:-

“That this Council are prepared and set up to administer and deliver on The Mica Redress Scheme which I hope will go through the Dáil very soon”

Cllr Doherty thanked member for their support and said that it was essential that the Council was in a position to administer the Mica Redress Scheme when formally announced.

He alluded to the fact that a two day training scheme for engineers was being progressed as part of the package. Donegal County Council, he advised, needed to be ready in terms of resources and staffing so as not to be accused of holding up the process. This was critical, he advised, given that many families were living in unfit and dangerous conditions.

Cllr Mc Guinness said that it had been a long difficult road for all of those affected. He thanked the Chief Executive, Housing Staff and John Gallagher, Senior Engineer for their excellent work to date. The Council, he contended, needed to play a part in the delivery of the scheme so as to address any uncertainties that existed.

Mr Joe Peoples, Director Housing, Corporate & Cultural Services said that the Council actively engaged with all aspects of the process. The necessary steps, he said, would be taken to ensure that the Council was in a position to respond as required, when the role and work to be done by the Council is clarified.

Cllr Blaney expressed concern that funding had not been included as part of the 2019 budget and said he was sceptical that the redress programme would be implemented any time soon.

C/102/19 DATE FOR ADJOURNED MEETING.

It was unanimously agreed to defer the remaining business on the agenda to an Adjourned Meeting of Council on Monday 15th April, 2019 at 12.30pm in the County House, Lifford .