

**MINUTES OF ADJOURNED SPECIAL MEETING OF DONEGAL COUNTY COUNCIL
HELD ON
18TH JULY 2022 IN THE AURA LEISURE CENTRE, LETTERKENNY**

C/255/22

MEMBERS PRESENT

Cllrs L. Blaney, Cathaoirleach, K. Bradley, C. Brogan, P. Canning, T. Conaghan, D. Coyle, G. Crawford, T. Crossan, A. Doherty, G. Doherty, L. Doherty, M.T. Gallagher, M. Harley, M. Farren, N. Jordan, D. M Kelly, N. Kennedy, M. Mc Clafferty, M. Mc Dermott, I. Mc Garvey, N. Mc Garvey, P. Mc Gowan, M. Mc Mahon, G. McMonagle, A. Molloy, J. Murray, M. Naughton, J. O Donnell, J. S Ó Fearraigh, and B. Sweeny.
Online: N. Crossan, R. Donaghey, J. Kavanagh, M McBride, and J. Mc Guinness.

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OFFICIALS IN ATTENDANCE

John Mc Laughlin, Chief Executive, Patsy Lafferty, Director of Housing, Corporate and Cultural Services, Meetings Administrator, Paddy Doherty, A/Director of Community Development & Planning Services, , Bryan Cannon, A/Director of Roads & Transportation, Garry Martin, Director of Economic Development, Information Systems & Emergency Services, Michael Mc Garvey, Director of Water & Environment, Richard Gibson, Head of Finance, Paul Christy, Senior Executive Planner, Carol Margey, A/Senior Planner, Frances Friel, Communications Officer, William Colvin, Assistant Communications Officer, Róise Ní Laifeartaigh, Rannóg na Gaeilge, Sean O'Daimhin, Rannóg na Gaeilge, Anne Marie Crawford, Staff Officer.

C/257/22

**DISCUSSION ON THE FINDINGS OF THE EXTERNAL REVIEW – 5
HOUSES AT AN CRANLA, BUNCRANA**

The Cathaoirleach welcomed members and said that the purpose of the meeting was to conclude the debate on the findings of the external review of the five houses at An Crannla, Buncrana. He updated members in relation to the operation of the translation services.

Cllr G Doherty on a point of information referred to the Code of Conduct for Councillors and read into the record the following quotes from the document which, he said, were particularly relevant:

Ref Pt 1.5

Councillors exercise their mandate primarily in the Council chamber where they are entitled to represent issues – robustly if necessary – on behalf of the community they represent. This mandate granted by the electorate does not exempt councillors from treating other councillors and employees with respect and dignity. This value of respectful treatment includes comments within and outside the Council Chamber, be it in direct speech written or on social media. The role of the elected member requires that

they conduct their dealings with other councillors and employees, for whom the Council is their workplace, with respect and dignity
Ref Pt 2.1

As holders of elected office, councillors are obliged to keep faith with the public trust placed in them. Core values such as integrity, impartiality and respect are fundamental to the public's perception of local government performance. Moreover, they require councillors to observe the highest ethical standards when delivering on their roles. These values should underpin all actions of councillors so that a high level of public trust continues to be maintained.

Ref Pt 2.2

Councillors should abide by this Code and: -

- Act with integrity to uphold public service values,*
- Act in a way that enhances public trust and confidence,*
- Treat their colleagues and local authority employees with courtesy, respect and dignity.*

He proposed that the Council officially write to the Minister for Housing, Local Government & Heritage, Mr Darragh O' Brien, T.D. and the Minister of State at the Department of Housing, Local Government & Heritage, with responsibility for Local Government, Mr Peter Burke, T.D quoting the above and referring to the conduct of a particular member at the Special Meeting of Donegal County Council held on the 11th July, 2022. He was, he confirmed, extremely angry at the events that had taken place and stated that he still did not have his mobile phone in his possession. This was seconded by Cllr Mc Monagle.

The Cathaoirleach confirmed that there had been contact with the Department and that it would be possible to relay the sentiments expressed by Cllr Doherty.

Members who did not have the opportunity to speak at the previous meeting highlighted the following:

- Allegations of corruption and systemic corruption should be withdrawn. Noted that it was incumbent on those who had made the allegations to do the right thing and withdraw their comments and suggestions.
- Councillors who made the allegations should now make a public apology to staff and members.
- Whole issue had created public mistrust.
- Welcomed the fact that the reputation and good name of the staff involved had been upheld and all concerned exonerated.
- Now that the record has been put straight efforts need to be concentrated on dealing with the mica crisis.

- Call for report to be made available to Council detailing the costs involved in dealing with the issue to date.

At this juncture the Cathaoirleach extended best wishes to Cllr Ian Mc Garvey who had just celebrated his 92nd birthday and thanked him for his long service to Donegal County Council. Cllr Mc Garvey accepting the good wishes said it was important that all aspects of democracy were respected.

Concluding the meeting, the Cathaoirleach said that he hoped that all of the staff and councillors who had received bad press from the issue would now take solace from in the findings in the report and from the unanimous support expressed by all members who had contributed to the meeting.

The Chief Executive said that of many of the staff involved were present at the meeting and alluded to the fact that they had to come to a public forum to get their names cleared. He said that it would be possible to follow up on the sentiments expressed by members for the Council as a body to take further action and that this would be looked at. The true cost involved in dealing with the matter was, he confirmed, difficult to calculate as it involved much more than consultant's fees. The wider costs, it was noted, would include the ongoing legal fees. He confirmed that he would look at how best to present this information and that it would be made available in the public forum.

The Chief Executive alluded to the fact that members and staff were in this situation together and one which was not of their own making.

Members at the request of the Cathaoirleach showed their appreciation for all the staff members of Donegal County Council.

This concluded the business of the meeting.



12th July 2022

TO ALL MEMBERS OF DONEGAL COUNTY COUNCIL

The Special Meeting of Donegal County Council adjourned from Monday 11th July will now take place on Monday 18th July, 2022 at 10.00am in the Aura Leisure Centre, Sallaghgrane, Letterkenny to consider the unfinished business listed below:

- To discuss the findings of the External Review of the acquisition of five houses at An Crannla, Bunrana.

Documents can be accessed in the Special Meeting folder on eCouncil.

If you require an online link for the meeting please contact Anne Marie Crawford, Council Secretariat on or before 12 noon on Friday 15th July, 2022.

Patsy Lafferty
Meetings Administrator