

**MINUTES OF SEPTEMBER MEETING OF DONEGAL COUNTY COUNCIL HELD ON
25th SEPTEMBER, 2023 IN THE COUNTY HOUSE, LIFFORD**

C/258/23 MEMBERS PRESENT

Cllrs M. Harley, Cathaoirleach, L. Blaney, K. Bradley, C. Brogan, P. Canning, T. Conaghan, D. Coyle, G. Crawford, N. Crossan, A. Doherty, G. Doherty, L. Doherty, R. Donaghey, M.T Gallagher, D.M Kelly, N. Kennedy, M. Mc Clafferty, P. McGarvey, P. McGowan, M. Mc Mahon, G. Mc Monagle, M. Naughton, J. S. O'Fearraigh

Online: Cllrs M Farren, N Jordan, J Kavanagh, M Mac Giolla Easbuig, M McBride, M McDermott, N McGarvey, J McGuinness, A Molloy, J Murray, B Sweeny.

Apologies: Cllr T Crossan.

C/259/23 OFFICIALS IN ATTENDANCE

John G McLaughlin, Chief Executive, Patsy Lafferty, Director of Housing, Corporate and Cultural Services, Meetings Administrator, Bryan Cannon, A/Director of Roads & Transportation, Richard Gibson, Head of Finance, Liam Ward, Director of Community Development & Planning Services, Con McLaughlin, A/Director of Water & Environment, Anne M Conlon, A/Director of Economic Development, I.S & Emergency Services, Eunan Quinn, Senior Planner, Paul Christy, Senior Executive Planner, Graham Diamond, Executive Planner, John Gallagher, Senior Engineer, Emmett McCabe, Facilities Management, Frances Friel, Communications Officer, Seán Ó' Daimhín, Rannóg na Gaeilge, Róise Ní Laifeartaigh, Rannóg na Gaeilge, William Colvin, Assistant Communications Officer, Anne Marie Crawford, Staff Officer.

**C/260/23 CONFIRMATION OF THE MINUTES OF THE JULY MEETING OF
DONEGAL COUNTY COUNCIL HELD ON THE 24th OF JULY, 2023**

On the proposal of Cllr Crawford, seconded by Cllr Bradley the minutes of the July Meeting of Donegal County Council held on the 24th of July, 2023 were adopted.

**C/261/23 DISPOSAL OF LANDS AT MUNTERMELLAN, HORNHEAD TO
ANDREW CAMPBELL**

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

On the proposal of Cllr Mc Clafferty, seconded by Cllr O' Fearraigh, it was resolved to dispose of lands at Muntermellan, Hornhead to Andrew Campbell 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/262/23 DISPOSAL OF LANDS AT MAGHERACAR, BUNDORAN TO JIMMY
PATTON**

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

On the proposal of Cllr Naughton, seconded by Cllr Kennedy, it was

resolved to dispose of lands at Magheracar, Bundoran to Jimmy Patton 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/263/23 **DISPOSAL OF LANDS AT CHURCH STREET, RAMELTON TO WILLIAM LESLIE BUCHANAN**

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

On the proposal of Cllr McGowan, seconded by Cllr Coyle, it was resolved to dispose of lands at Church Street, Ramelton to William Leslie Buchanan 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/264/23 **DISPOSAL OF LANDS AT ARDMORE MUFF TO ANNE MCLAUGHLIN**

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

On the proposal of Cllr Donaghey, seconded by Cllr Canning, it was resolved to dispose of lands at Ardmore Muff to Anne McLaughlin 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/265/23 **DISPOSAL OF LANDS AT ARDMORE MUFF TO DAVID DONAGHEY**

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

On the proposal of Cllr Canning, seconded by Cllr A Doherty, it was resolved to dispose of lands at Ardmore Muff to David Donaghey 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/266/23 **DISPOSAL OF LANDS AT DRUMSKELLAN, MUFF TO CHRIS AND JILL HUEY**

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

On the proposal of Cllr Donaghey, seconded by Cllr N Crossan, it was resolved to dispose of lands at Drumskeellan, Muff to Chris and Jill Huey 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/267/23 **DISPOSAL OF LANDS AT ARDMORE MUFF TO DAVID GIBSON**

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

On the proposal of Cllr Canning, seconded by Cllr A Doherty, it was resolved to dispose of lands at Ardmore Muff to David Gibson 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/268/23 **DISPOSAL OF LANDS AT THREE THREES, QUIGLEYS POINT TO THOMAS MCNALLY**

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

On the proposal of Cllr, A Doherty, seconded by Cllr N Crossan, it was resolved to dispose of lands at Three Threes, Quigleys Point to Thomas McNally 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/269/23 **TO APPROVE THE CARRYING OUT OF WORKS WITH REGARD TO THE PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT OF THE CREESLOUGH COMMUNITY REGENERATION PROJECT IN THE TOWNLAND OF CREESLOUGH IN THE GLENTIES MD**

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

On the proposal of Cllr McClafferty, seconded by Cllr O'Fearraigh, the carrying out of works with regard to the proposed development of the Creeslough Community Regeneration Project in the townland of Creeslough in the Glenties MD was approved in accordance with Part XI of the Planning & Development Act, 2000 (as amended) and Part 8 of the Planning & Development Regulations 2001(as amended).

Cllr Mc Clafferty said that the people of Creeslough had expressed their gratitude to the Council and to the members on the excellent work carried out to date in respect of the proposed Creeslough Community Regeneration Project.

Cllr O' Fearraigh complemented the Creeslough Working Group on their input and contribution to the project.

The Cathaoirleach said that as the anniversary of the tragedy approached, he wanted to assure the local community that they would be remembered in the thoughts and prayers of the entire county.

C/270/23 **PROPOSED VARIATION TO THE COUNTY DONEGAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN 2018-2024 (AS VARIED) IN RESPECT OF THE DELETION OF LETTERKENNY-SPECIFIC POLICY CONTENT (VARIATION No. 3).**

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

Mr. Liam Ward, Director Community Development & Planning Services informed members that the matter had been discussed by the Planning Strategic Policy Committee and the Corporate Policy Group. The report he advised set out the rationale for the preparation and proposed publication of a proposed Variation to the County Donegal Development Plan, 2018-2024 (As Varied) in respect of the deletion of Letterkenny-specific policy content (Variation No. 3).

It was, he said, proposed to present to Plenary Council the Local Area Plan for Letterkenny and the Local Transport Plan for adoption no later than the 15th November, 2023. It was noted that detailed planning policy coverage for Letterkenny was included in the County Development Plan (2018-2024 (As Varied)). The result, he said, would be that there would be two adopted and operative statutory plans for Letterkenny at the same time. As this would be an unworkable situation for any significant period of time, he said that the optimum solution was to remove the Letterkenny specific content from the County Development Plan by way of statutory variation. Members were now being asked, he said, to approve the publication of the Proposed Variation for public consultation. This proposed variation, it had been determined would have no negative impact on the environment and therefore would not require Strategic Environmental Assessment or an Appropriate Assessment.

On the proposal of Cllr Brogan, seconded by Cllr Coyle it was resolved in accordance with Section 13(1) of the Planning & Development Act, 2000 (As Amended) to approve the publication of the proposed variation to the County Donegal Development Plan 2018-2024 in respect of the deletion of the Letterkenny specific policy content (Variation No. 3) and the commencement of the statutory publication process on the 1st December, 2023.

The Director of Community Development & Planning Services informed members that the Chief Executive's report for the Letterkenny Plan & Local Transport Plan was scheduled to be with members by the 5th October, 2023. It was intended to hold a workshop for the Letterkenny/Milford MD members, he added, week beginning the 23rd of October with the intention of bringing a report to Plenary Council not later than the 15th November, 2023.

It was unanimously agreed to hold a Special Plenary Meeting on Monday 13th November 2023 at 10am in the County House, Lifford to consider the aforementioned Chief Executive's report.

Members were also informed that it was intended to make the Chief Executive's report on submissions received in relation to the Draft County Development Plan available to members by the 27th of November 2023 five weeks from close of the consultation period. The Director of Service advised that it was intended to hold MD workshops week commencing the 27th of November with a full plenary workshop the following week. A

Special Plenary Meeting, it was noted, was required in the second week in December to agree any proposed material alterations.

It was unanimously agreed to hold a Special Plenary Meeting of Council on Thursday 14th December 2023 at 10am in the County House, Lifford to agree the any proposed material alterations in respect of the Draft County Development Plan 2024-2030.

Cllrs A Doherty and P Canning raised the issue of additional staffing and said that personnel issues needed to be prioritised and adequate staffing in place to advance the seven scheduled Local Area Plans.

C/271/23 **TO AGREE DATE FOR THE 2024 STATUTORY BUDGET MEETING**

On the proposal of Cllr Brogan, seconded by Cllr Crawford, it was resolved to hold the 2024 Statutory Budget Meeting on Wednesday 6th December, 2023 at 10am. in the County House, Lifford.

C/272/23 **TO AGREE OVERDRAFT ACCOMMODATION OF €10,000,000 FOR THE FULL YEAR ENDING 31ST DECEMBER, 2024.**

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

It was noted that the Bank had made, and was continuing to make, available to the Council and overdraft facility (the facility) for the purposes of the working capital needs of the Council as may be required from time to time.

After due consideration, it was resolved on the proposal of Cllr Donaghey, seconded by Cllr Coyle, and in accordance with Section 106 of the Local Government Act, 2001, as amended, and subject to the sanction of the Minister for Housing, Local Government & Heritage that:

“It is in the best interests of the Council and in line with its statutory rights and obligations to avail of the Facility and provide the Guarantee up to an amount of ten million euro (€10,000,000).

Accordingly, the Council agreed to avail of the Facility and provide the Guarantee.

Each of the persons undertaking the roles of Donegal Chief Executive and the Head of Finance from time to time be authorised, together and separately, to negotiate the terms of each of the facility letters put, and to be put, in place to document the Facility (each, a “Facility Letter” and together, the “Facility Letters”), together with any amendments or variations to the Guarantee or replacement Guarantee, and to sign each such Facility Letter and Guarantee by way of acceptance of the terms of such document (including, without limitation, all terms and conditions referred to in each such Facility Letter) and that each such signed Facility Letter and Guarantee shall be fully binding on, and enforceable against, the Council; and

The Council ratifies the availing of the Facility by the Council, within the limits specified, and confirms the execution of all Facility Letters together with the Guarantee.”

Mr Richard Gibson, Head of Finance, confirmed that the provision requested was the same as in previous years and allowed the Council to access monies if needed. Donegal County Council, he advised continued to operate with a positive balance and the provision was in place as an emergency measure if the need arose.

C/273/23

TO APPROVE A LOAN TO THE ASSOCIATED COMPANY DONEGAL 2040 DAC IN THE SUM OF €7M TO COVER COST INCREASES FOR ALPHA AND BETA BUILDINGS IN LETTERKENNY

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

Cllr Kennedy queried why this additional loan was needed and why there were no members sitting on the board of the DAC, as nominations had been made at MD level.

Ms Anne Marie Conlon, A/Director Economic Development, Information Systems and Emergency Services confirmed that several elected members had been selected to sit on the board of Donegal DAC, and that presently the appointment of external individuals was taking place with the first meeting of the board scheduled for the end of October.

Mr Richard Gibson, Head of Finance said that the €7m outlined was to complete the final phase of the building project. The total cost it was noted was €32m with €16m funded by grant aid and a further €6m previously agreed and approved, to be co-funded by the Council through existing loan approvals. The increased costs, he said, had primarily resulted from the construction sector cost inflation over the past number of years and the costs associated with bringing the buildings to a high environmental and energy efficient standard. It was noted that the shortfall of €10m is proposed to be made up of €3m in additional grant funding, together with this proposed loan application in the sum of €7m.

On the proposal of Cllr Brogan, seconded by Cllr Bradley it was resolved to approve a loan to the associated company Donegal 2040 DAC in the sum of €7m to cover cost increases for the Alpha and Beta buildings in Letterkenny.

Cllr Brogan said it was imperative that this was not portrayed as a negative story as the overall benefit of the project would only be seen in the months and years ahead.

The Chief Executive said that this was a new area of work for Donegal County Council and a fresh approach as to how work was organised and managed.

He informed Cllrs N Crossan and R Donaghey that rooms had been reserved in the Buncrana Hub for the former Town Council staff and that it would take time to progress this transition.

The Cathaoirleach welcomed the development and said that it was important that a good news story such as this was highlighted and shared.

C/274/23

TO APPROVE THE RAISING OF A CAPITAL LOAN IN THE SUM OF €7.415M FOR THE PURPOSES OF LAND ACQUISITION COSTS FOR HOUSING PURPOSES.

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

On the proposal of Cllr Brogan, seconded by Cllr Mc Monagle it was resolved to approve the raising of a capital loan in the sum €7.415m for the purposes of land acquisition for housing purposes.

Mr Patsy Lafferty, Director Housing, Corporate & Cultural Services responding to a query from Cllr Mc Clafferty said that if there was a specific wish at MD level to facilitate a meeting in relation to specific housing issues, then this could be accommodated.

He outlined the process for recouping land acquisition costs and confirmed that the total cost of land acquisition at High Road and Ballymacool, Letterkenny was €6.75m and that a loan to this amount was required pending receipt of funding from the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage. Several separate land acquisitions were also being progressed, he added, for the purpose of acquiring lands for social housing, which could not be secured under the new Land Acquisition Fund.

Cllr Mc Clafferty proposed, seconded by Cllr Gallagher that a Special Meeting of Council be held to discuss the ongoing housing situation.

Members raised a number of queries namely,

- At what stage would the money be paid by the Department?
- What was the interest rate on the loan?
- Will the Department provide the interest along with the sum of money needed?
- Query as to the sustainability of the model for drawing down loans?
- What is the position if additional sites become available?
- Issues and delays at Part 8 stage.
- Does Donegal County Council have legacy land debts and if not, is the €7.415m requested enough?

They were informed by the Director of Housing Corporate & Cultural Services that representations were ongoing with the Department to see if the monies could be paid earlier than anticipated. They would, he added

fund the capital and the interest and the monies would be paid back at current rate of interest.

The Chief Executive addressing the meeting said that the loan was necessary in terms of acquiring the two large sites in Letterkenny and was hopeful that the monies could be accessed sooner rather than later. He cited the necessity of ensuring that a loan was in place so that the process could move forward. He said that he had no issue with holding an emergency meeting and that the first half of this meeting could look at the issues on an MD basis. It was confirmed that the Council did not have any legacy loans and that the Council would continue to buy lands going forward, but that it might be necessary to come back to the members if the Department stalled on the release of monies.

At this juncture it was unanimously agreed to take the following motions which were directly related to the ongoing discussion.

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

"I propose that this Council set up a dedicated Housing Directorate away from Housing & Corporate [DCC currently has 1100 staff employed] to deal with the huge challenge in this area in providing new social housing, the new DCB Scheme, Disabled Persons Grants, Housing Adaption Grants, new Vacant Homes Grants and Derelict Housing Grants etc. so as to ensure that the Housing Section is fully resourced going forward."

He alluded to a number of projects and said that they had all failed to proceed at a satisfactory pace due to resource, funding and personnel issues. The staffing aspect, he contended, had long been an issue and noted that he had back in 2019 asked if a staff member from Housing Construction could be based in each Municipal District. Members, he said, were frustrated with the slow pace of delivery, at a time when funds were readily available. Other counties, he said, seemed to be delivering housing at a more rapid pace. The Housing Construction model, he contended was failing and it was time to set up a dedicated Housing Directorate.

Cllr Canning supporting the motion said that he was aware of the fact that lands were available in Killea, yet little or no effort had been made to progress same.

On the proposal of Cllr MT Gallagher, seconded by Cllr McMonagle, it was resolved to adopt the following motion:-

"That this Council develop a short/medium and long-term housing plan for the county, the plan should include social, affordable and private homes along with service sites, and that a team to progress housing is employed by the council in each MD without delay."

Cllr Gallagher received a response from the Director of Housing, Corporate & Cultural Services.

She said that the current mechanisms were failing and that there was a need for an aggressive plan going forward. Resources were needed, she advised, as staff could not continue in a system that was broken. It was noted that there had also been missed opportunities in terms of delivering a serviced site initiative. The failure to build affordable housing, she added, was impacting on young families who had no other means of acquiring their own home and the rental market was at this point in complete meltdown in terms of availability and value for money.

Cllr Mc Monagle supporting the motion said that the current plan for housing provision was not fit for purpose. Income thresholds, he noted were far too low and people were not earning enough to get on the housing ladder. The lifting of the eviction ban, he said had also created a major problem. There was acknowledgment also that the purchase of houses for people with a disability was not being progressed in a timely manner. All of these, he added, were compounded by the housing needs of those impacted by the defective concrete blocks crisis.

In light of the current housing crisis, he asked why there had not been a comprehensive analysis of the use of modular homes.

Cllr Naughton said that the topic warranted ongoing discussion and asked for the suspension of Standing Order to facilitate same. A number of members concurred with this request.

On the proposal of Cllr Harley, seconded by Cllr Mc Gowan it was resolved in accordance with Standing Order No. 28 to suspend Standing Order Number 8 to allow for further discussion on housing issues.

In light of the seriousness of the matter the Cathaoirleach said that he would allow general debate on the matter and that this would take place after the motions had been responded to.

Cllr A Doherty asked that Cllr Gallagher amend her motion to include local consultation and engagement with local communities in relation to housing provision and housing development.

Cllr N Crossan said that it was imperative that answers were provided to the motions as submitted by Cllrs Brogan and Gallagher and that the executive came back to a Special Meeting with a specific outline of all the issues raised by members.

The Chief Executive responding to Cllr Brogan's motion acknowledged that there were huge challenges in housing delivery across a number of headings. He noted that under the "Housing for All" programme efforts had been made to increase and double the delivery targets set out two years ago. It was important, he added that proper discussion took place in an open and transparent manner, and that members were adequately briefed on current housing issues. This could be done, he said, at the Special Meeting as requested earlier in the discussion.

The Director of Housing, Corporate & Cultural Services responding to Cllr Gallagher said that the Council currently was undertaking a significant body of work in relation to social housing. He said that the Council was on track to exceed its target for social housing delivery over the period 2022-2026 and that a dedicated plan was in place. Members were informed that Donegal would not be able to demonstrate an affordability challenge as demonstrated in the preparation of Housing Need Demand Assessment and thus could not be included in the Local Authority Affordable Purchase Scheme at this time.

He advised that as a result, the Council was initiating a separate process for affordable housing and seeking expressions of interest from eligible householders with a view to compiling a list of families who would meet the criteria for the affordable scheme. This, he added, would then be included on an evidence-based application to the Department for inclusion in the LAAPS.

It was noted that in parallel with the work of the Housing Capital team, a new Town Regeneration team had also been set up within the Community Development and Planning Directorate.

Mr Lafferty said that there was a clear delivery plan in place for the delivery of social housing. He said that he could appreciate that there were concerns in terms of the broader complex challenges in the county, but that efforts were ongoing to work on a range of initiatives and to promote and attract investment in the housing sector.

Cllr Brogan welcomed the response and said it was imperative that all aspects of housing were properly resourced. He cited the importance of having a member of staff from Housing Construction based in the various MD offices, and reiterated the fact that a dedicated Housing Directorate was needed.

Cllr Gallagher said it was extremely important that a comprehensive plan was initiated in terms of the housing model and that affordability issues including a review of income levels and thresholds.

On the proposal of Cllr Harley, seconded by Cllr Mc Clafferty it was resolved that a Special Meeting of Council be held on Wednesday 11th October, 2023 at 10am in the County House, Lifford to discuss housing issues in Donegal.

It was agreed that any questions arising from the ensuing debate would be answered at the Special Meeting on the 11th of October and that any members with an additional query should email same to the Director of Service by close of business on Friday 29th September, 2023.

C/275/23

ADJOURNMENT FOR LUNCH

It was unanimously agreed to adjourn the meeting until 2pm

HOUSING ISSUES IN DONEGAL

A lengthy debate ensued with members raising the following issues:

- What provision is being made for social housing tenants who must leave their properties because of the Defective Concrete Blocks issue. Effective communication needed with the families concerned.
- Services not working together in relation to housing and related issues.
- Sufficient manpower a necessity if development is to proceed.
- General support for a stand-alone housing Directorate.
- HAP allocations are not enough given increase in rental costs.
- Road map needed to ensure that a more efficient means of delivering housing is in place and to assist those that are currently not able to find accommodation.
- A programme should be in place nationally to fund derelict properties and vacant houses with up front rental payments for the housing of Ukrainians. Rent could be paid up front from the Ukrainian fund to bring housing stock back into use.
- Proactive approach needed in relation to the Residential Zoned Land Tax. Minister needs to hear that it is ludicrous to build on prime agricultural land.
- Essential that a percentage of all new build and turnkey units acquired by Donegal County Council are used for affordable rental and affordable purchase by first time buyers.
- Issue regarding the way housing figures are presented at MD level as they effectively discount the number of people on HAP or in accommodation that is not stable.
- Cognisance must be taken of the numbers in private rental accommodation who have to deal with increased rents, eviction, and landlords not carrying out repairs.
- Housing crisis further exacerbated by the Defective Concrete Blocks crisis.
- Serviced Site initiatives must be progressed.
- Why are available lands not being purchased?
- Vacant and Derelict Buildings – Path forward and response mechanisms for dealing with same to be same to be looked at including the time constraints involved. Carrot and stick approach needed.
- Need analysis of why it is taking so long to progress social housing developments. (Regional and national guidelines an issue here.) Bottlenecks need to be identified and solutions found.
- Why is there no social housing development in rural areas? Focus must be returned to providing same in rural locations.
- Why has S.I. housing been put on the backburner? Hurdles in the application process need to be identified and the overall process simplified.

- What plans are in place to deal with town centre housing in our towns and villages together with an overview of the problems being encountered with this type of development?
- Payment structures for the Vacant & Derelict properties grant scheme need to be reformed with an option for a three-step payment process included. What provision exists for this?
- Finance issues are paramount (Croí Cónaithe etc) Query as to whether it can be broken down into a three-stage payment process so that young families can access the grant.
- Slowdown in the construction of one-off housing. This related to construction costs. Council needs to talk to the Minister to see if there is any way that the cost of concrete products can be reduced. Grant aid options should also be explored so that the cost of building a house is affordable for young families.
- Council needs to look at sustaining rural communities and percentage of land acquired should be allocated specifically to rural areas. Smaller towns and villages must be prioritised especially for one-off housing.
- Rental costs a major issue and something needs to be done at national level.
- Connection fees levied by Uisce Éireann are stifling development.
- Open consultation and engagement needed with active people and community groups when housing developments are being progressed.
- Query as to why masterplan for Barrackhill, Carndonagh has never been presented.
- Council needs to properly challenge the Department regarding claims that the local authority is holding up development.
- Needs to be provision for people who move into an area and are unable to build because of the local connection requirement.
- Process needs to be streamlined and turnaround time for remediation of voids speeded up.
- Do we have sufficient staff to process and administer Croí Cónaithe applications?
- Extension of time needed with regard to completion of works under the Croí Cónaithe scheme.
- Why is there no Emergency Housing Accommodation Plan or purpose-built emergency accommodation?
- Why are families who have been turned down for the “Tenant in Situ Scheme” not been advised of the reasons for same? Resources needed to ensure that this scheme can develop.
- Query as to how long it takes to progress housing extensions and housing adaptations and whether there are sufficient contractors to progress these works.
- How many houses has the Council purchased in the last two years per Municipal District?

- How many people have presented themselves as homeless to Donegal County Council in the last two years/
- Why has there not been more collaboration with the housing agencies and contractors who have indicated that they are in a position to build?
- Noted sizable area of serviced land available in Bunrana where the Council's landbank is currently exhausted. Query as to how this can be progressed when the Department have advised that monies are readily available.
- Update requested in relation to the acquisition of social housing county-wide and an explanation as to why a number of acquisitions have fallen through. Delays with legal and contractual aspects are an issue.
- Can additional legal staff be employed by the Council to assist with the procurement of housing?
- How many have applied for the refurbishment grant?
- Of the 1500 vacant houses surveyed, how many will be bought?
- What measures are Donegal County Council and other statutory bodies taking to ensure that the concrete blocks used in construction are up to standard?
- Request that monies be provided in the 2024 budget for the compilation of a comprehensive housing plan for the County which can be developed either internally or externally.
- Repair to Lease Scheme not fit for purpose and the Croí Cónaithe grant contradicts this.

C/277/23

PRESENTATION ON ENERGY EFFICIENCY INITIATIVES IN COUNCIL BUILDINGS.

Mr Patsy Lafferty, Director Housing, Corporate & Cultural Services informed members that the presentation had recently been presented to the Value for Money Committee and documented the Council's journey to the national energy and emission target for 2030 under the Climate Action Plan 2023. He noted that since 2009 Donegal County Council had been reporting its total energy consumption to the SEAI through its Monitoring and Reporting System.

Mr John Gallagher, Senior Engineer introducing the presentation outlined the fact that the Council's CO2 emission level was 7,203 tonnes in 2022 (a 19% reduction from 2016) and that this was to be reduced to 2,966 by 2030. There was, he confirmed a significant task ahead. He acknowledged the work done by Aidan Mc Grenra, LEAP Project Manager, and Emmett Mc Cabe, Executive Engineer. He said that external funding had been match funded by the Council, thus ensuring continued investment in energy related projects.

Mr Emmett Mc Cabe, Executive Engineer gave an overview of the various energy efficiency projects completed to date, including the LED lighting upgrades, the installation of photovoltaic solar panel systems and

installation of electric vehicle charging points. Details of the major renewable energy upgrades to various council buildings were also provided.

Mr Richard Gibson, Chair of the Energy Action Team said that the presentation provided an opportunity to showcase what was being delivered in terms of energy and carbon saving. It was important, he added, that Donegal County Council was seen as a leader in these projects as what could be achieved going forward. The targets, he noted, were challenging in the long term and there was much work to be done in the months and years ahead. Members were reminded that reference had been made at last year's budget meeting to increased electricity and heating oil costs. The works referenced in the presentation were, he advised, directly linked to mitigating additional costs in these areas in the coming years. He said it was inevitable that there would be penalties in 2023 if the carbon targets were not reached.

Members then alluded to the following:

- Solar panels should be a feature of all the Council's housing stock.
- Consideration needs to be given to using waste energy from other entities.
- Query as to what plans are in place to deal with emission levels after 2030.
- Are the energy projects alluded to cost neutral in the short term?
- What is the projected saving over a 5 & 10 year period?
- Additional information requested regarding the remit of the Council in providing electric charging points and who is permitted to use those located at the various Public Service Centres.
- What efforts have been made to look at the storage of electricity given the abundance of windmills in Donegal?

Members thanked Mr Gallagher and Mr Mc Cabe for the presentation which they acknowledged was both timely and informative.

C/278/23

ENDORSEMENT OF THE MINUTES OF THE CORPORATE POLICY GROUP MEETING HELD ON THE 17TH OF JULY, 2023.

Members noted the Minutes of the meeting of the Corporate Policy Group Meeting held on the 17th of July, 2023.

C/279/23

ATTENDANCE AT CONFERENCES, SEMINARS OR EVENTS

Having noted authorisation of representation at a seminar, meeting or event under Section 142 (5) of Local Government Act, 2001, S.I. No. 668 of 2006, Local Government (Expenses of Local Authority Members) Regulations 2006, S.I. No. 37 of 2010, Guidelines given by the Minister for the Environment, Heritage and Local Government in relation to the Local Government Act, 2001 (Section 142) Regulations 2010, and the Local Government (Expenses of Local Authority Members) Regulations, 2014(as amended). On the proposal of Cllr McGowan, seconded by Cllr Canning, it was resolved to authorise any member, if he/she so wished, to

attend the following conferences/ events, 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.
- i. Submission of a Conference Report.

Training

- AILG Autumn Training Seminar to be held on the 13th and 14th September in the Sligo Park Hotel, Pearse Road, Cornageeha, Co Sligo.
- LAMA Autumn Seminar to be held on the 25th and 26th October, 2023 in Tuam, Co. Galway.

Conferences

- The Housing Agency- “Leadership in Housing” to be held on the 29th of September 2023 in Dublin Castle.
- Celtic Conferences “A Practical Guide to Budget 2024” to be held on the 13th and 15th October, 2023 in the Four Seasons Hotel, Carlingford, Co Louth.
- Celtic Conferences “The First Home Scheme” – Helping Homeowners get onto the Property Ladder to be held on the 20th, 21st and 22nd October, 2023 in O’ Donovan’s Hotel, Clonakilty, Co Cork.
- “Navigating the Future of Regulation” to be held on Wednesday 25th of October, 2023 in the Atlantic Technological University, Letterkenny.

Events

- Attendance of the Cathaoirleach at the Irish Planning Institute Irish Planning Awards in Clontarf Castle on the 28th of September, 2023.

Travel Abroad

- Attendance of the Cathaoirleach at the Blue Economy Conference in Plymouth MA from the 15th -18th October, 2023.
- Attendance of the Cathaoirleach/Leas Cathaoirleach at the AER European Citizen’s Prize Award Ceremony in Brussels on the 7th of November, 2023.
- Attendance of the Conference of Peripheral Maritime Regions representative at the CPMR General Assembly in St Malo, France on the 17th of November, 2023.
- Attendance of the Cathaoirleach and the Chair of the Economic Development Strategic Policy Committee at the North - West City Region Event in the Irish Embassy, London on the 4th of December, 2023.

C/280/23

Report on attendance at Conference/Event

Members on the proposal of Cllr McGowan, seconded by Cllr Donaghey noted the following conference reports:

Cllr Donal Mandy Kelly

Attendance at the St Patrick's Day events in Rudolstadt, Germany from the 16th to the 21st of March, 2023.

Cllr Micheál C Mac Giolla Easbuig

Attendance at the Soilse Conference in Stornaway Isle of Lewis, Scotland from 29th - 31st August, 2022.

C/281/23

REVIEW OF CURRENT AGE LIMIT FOR DRIVING A SCHOOL BUS

On the proposal of Cllr D M Kelly, seconded by Cllr Brogan it was resolved to adopt the following motion:

"That this Council contacts the N.T.A., Minister for Transport and Bus Eireann to have the current age limit to drive a school bus reviewed as a matter of urgency please."

Cllr Kelly received a response from the Director of Housing, Corporate & Cultural Services in relation to the above.

He said that there was currently a shortage of school bus drivers and that that this was compounded by the fact that many younger drivers had emigrated. The current age limit, he advised, was 70 and it made no sense that highly qualified drivers who were in good health were excluded from driving school buses. This, he noted, impacted also on bus contractors who were losing business by not being able to employ drivers in this age category. Cllr Kelly cited the importance of contacting the various agencies and establishing exactly who had designated over 70 as the relevant age limit.

Cllr Brogan, seconding the motion welcomed the commitment to write to the agencies concerned.

There was no opposition to the motion.

C/282/23

FURTHER FUNDING SUPPORT FOR REPAIR OF ROADS DUE TO RECENT FLOOD DAMAGE

The following motion was submitted by Cllr Liam Doherty

"I am calling upon this Council to go back to the Department to seek further funding support for repair of roads due to the recent flood damage as areas of Donegal have been left with roads in disrepair and in dangerous conditions."

He asked that it be amended as follows:

"I am calling upon this Council to go back to the Office of Public Works to seek further funding support for repair of roads due to the recent flood damage as areas of Donegal have been left with roads in disrepair and in dangerous conditions".

This was duly proposed by Cllr L Doherty and seconded by Cllr G Doherty.

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

He said that there were several major issues after the recent flooding in Castlefin and Raphoe and that a number related specifically to culverts which were the responsibility of the OPW under the auspices of the Flood Relief Scheme.

Cllr G Doherty seconding the motion said that it was incumbent on the OPW to release funds for projects that could be expedited given that people were now at their wits end heading into the winter season. He alluded to the Liscooley, Magheraboy Bridge which, he contended, was not fit for purpose.

There was no opposition to the motion.

Mr Bryan Cannon, Director Roads & Transportation, noted that in the aftermath of the floods in July staff from the Roads Service had liaised with the various funders in relation to the necessary remediation works. Many of the issues, he said, had been addressed in terms of temporary and planned repairs. Collaboration, he advised, was ongoing with the OPW in relation to roads in several locations. He confirmed that correspondence would also be forwarded to the OPW in light of the adoption of the motion.

C/283/23

THAT THE COUNCIL ORGANISE TO DISCUSS PUBLIC TRANSPORT WITHIN THE COUNTY

On the proposal of Cllr McGowan, seconded by Cllr Brogan, it was resolved to adopt the following motion:

"That this Council organise a meeting on public transport within the County including services that link Donegal to other parts of the country, and invite Bus Eireann, the Rural Transport Local Link Service etc. to discuss, plan and then lobby Government for a proper integrated public transport service."

Donegal's Bus Eireann public service needs twenty double decker buses and additional drivers immediately as people attending urgent medical appointments and other business in Dublin and Galway cannot be guaranteed a seat with implications also for those who are entitled to free transport."

Cllr McGowan received a response from the Director of Roads & Transportation.

Concern was expressed that services were being cancelled at the last minute and that passengers were subjected to lengthy delays when buses broke down.

He welcomed the fact that a forum had been established under the auspices of the LCDC and said that this needed to reflect and encompass the needs of the elderly members of the community, and those who used public transport to attend medical appointments. He cited the need to employ additional bus drivers and for the implementation of a Customer Charter for those using public transport in the county. The priority, he said, was to get a proper integrated bus service within the county and linked to all other associated services. It was essential, he added, that a report was received from the forum and that it was followed through going forward.

Cllr Brogan supporting the motion said that there was a lot of excellent work carried out at local level by the Local Link service and Bus Eireann but that there needed to be more collaboration and an assessment of how things could be improved.

Cllr Kennedy in her capacity as chair of the LCDC updated members on the initiative being undertaken by the LCDC forum and said that it was hoped to hold the initial meeting of the forum in October.

Cllr Mc Clafferty highlighted the fact that an elderly passenger had recently been left behind in Dublin due to capacity issues on a Bus Eireann coach.

There was no opposition to the motion.

Mr Liam Ward, Director Community Development & Planning Services alluded to the comments made by Cllr Kennedy and said that a report would be brought back to members, and that he was happy to facilitate this at MD level also.

Cllr Mc Gowan in conclusion said that an overall assessment of service delivery was needed, and a joint approach taken so that people in Donegal had access to a proper integrated public transport system. He cited the need for a door-to-door service for the elderly and called on the Oireachtas members to highlight the situation at national level.

C/284/23

ENERGY PRICES FOR BUSINESSES AND HOMES ACROSS THE STATE

On the proposal of Cllr O’Fearraigh, seconded by Cllr L Doherty, it was resolved to adopt the following motion:

"This Council calls on the Government as a whole to take emergency action with regards the energy prices on businesses and homes across the State."

Cllr O’Fearraigh received a response from the Director of Housing, Corporate & Cultural Services.

He said that rising electricity costs were a serious problem for many households with the large corporations making millions while families struggled. Reference was made also to the impact on small businesses and the fact that many establishments were now closing several days a week as they were unable to make a living in the current climate.

Cllr L Doherty concurred with this assessment and said that the implications were widespread and across all sections of society.

There was no opposition to the motion.

It was agreed to forward the motion to the Department of the Taoiseach.

C/285/23

PUBLIC AWARENESS OF THE DEFECTIVE CONCRETE BLOCK SCHEME

It was unanimously agreed to take motions 17 & 18 together.

On the proposal of Cllr Canning, seconded by Cllr McDermott, it was resolved to adopt the following motion:

Public Information – DCB Scheme.

Now that we have the new enhanced Defective Concrete Block scheme up and running, I would ask that this Council initiate public information webinars (on the application process, planning issues etc.) with a view to sharing information on how the scheme is delivered and how it works, in order to help homeowners, work their way through the process. The webinars should include information on the application process, and other related issues such as Planning.

On the proposal of Cllr Donaghey, seconded by Cllr Kelly it was resolved to adopt the following motion:

"I propose that Donegal County Council takes proactive steps to ensure widespread public awareness and understanding of the recently introduced Defective Concrete Blocks Scheme. To achieve this, I recommend the following actions:

1. Promotion and Provision of Information on Council Platforms: To

maximize the reach and impact of our efforts, I recommend that Donegal County Council actively promotes these resources through our official communication platforms, including our website and social media channels. This will provide homeowners with direct access to detailed information about the new Defective Block Scheme, fostering a deeper understanding of its benefits and procedures.

2. Create an Information Leaflet: I further propose that the council initiates the creation of an informational leaflet containing Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) regarding the Defective Block Scheme. This leaflet will be designed to present complex information in a clear, concise, and easily digestible format, ensuring that residents can make informed decisions about their participation in the scheme.

3. Widespread Distribution: In our commitment to ensuring inclusivity, I suggest that the information leaflet, along with comprehensive details about the Defective Block Scheme, be distributed to every household within Donegal County. Additionally, we should leverage various media outlets to amplify the dissemination of this crucial information, reaching a broader audience.

These measures will empower our residents with the knowledge they need to make informed decisions regarding the new Defective Block Scheme. By taking these steps, we demonstrate our commitment to transparency, accessibility, and the well-being of our community.”

Cllrs Canning and Donaghey received an update from the Director of Housing, Corporate & Cultural Services in relation to the above.

Cllr Canning outlined the need for a dedicated public information webinar presented in layman’s terms and with a pause facility for applicants to the Defective Concrete Blocks Scheme.

Cllr Mc Dermott supporting the motion said that this motion was timely given the frustrations that existed. It was important, he advised, that people engaged with the new scheme and the overall application process.

Cllr Donaghey thanked the DCB Scheme staff for their patience and dedication. The families, she said, needed every assistance and a step-by-step guide to get them through each stage of the process.

Cllr Kelly seconding the motion said and it was important that the Council engaged with mica families to ensure that they had the correct information in a simple and straight forward manner. An FAQ leaflet would, he contended, empower residents to make decisions in relation to their situation. This was necessary, he added, as people were getting misleading information in relation to moving forward with certain aspects of the scheme.

There was no opposition to the motions.

On the proposal of Cllr Brogan, seconded by Cllr Mc Gowan it was resolved in accordance with Standing Order No. 28 to suspend standing Order No. 3 to allow the meeting to proceed after 6pm so that the remaining business on the agenda could be completed.

Mr Patsy Lafferty, Director Housing, Corporate & Cultural Services noted that a considerable amount of communication had already taken place in relation to the Enhanced Scheme. The Department, he noted, had already developed guidelines for the scheme and a "Your Questions Answered" document. These, he said, were on the Department's website and provided significant information in relation to the operation of the scheme. It was confirmed that these were live documents and would be updated as further queries arose. The Council, he said, had also provided a link to the information on its own website. He proceeded to provide an overview of the communications and updates issued from the Council to date.

Concluding he said that there was significant general information on the website but that the Council was open to looking at the webinar option and whatever else could be done to assist the homeowners concerned.

Cllr Canning reiterated the need for a simple but effective webinar that would make the process easier for all concerned.

Cllr Donaghey said that not everybody was computer literate or overly familiar with social media. A frequently asked questions leaflet with the 8 or 9 most relevant questions in an easily digestible form was also needed.

C/286/23

DISABILITY SERVICES FOR CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE

On the proposal of Cllr, A Doherty, seconded by Cllr Mc Monagle it was resolved to adopt the following motion:

The Progressing Disabilities Service for Children and Young People presently is not delivering required services for the young people through the local CDNT services,

"Donegal County Council calls and directs that Minister Anne Rabbitte (Disabilities Minister) initiate an immediate review of PDS delivery in Donegal especially noting the failure to fill key positions in the local CDNT service, includes seeking and delivering pathways to enable trained Therapists find employment in HSE services. Difficulties and delays experienced by applicants with registration with CORU must also be explored and resolved, by the Minister and her government colleagues."

Cllr Doherty received a reply from the Director of Housing, Corporate & Cultural Services in relation to the above.

Cllr. Doherty said that the Children's Disability Network Team were having great difficulty filling various positions, and thus service provision was only possible for more complex cases. This, it was noted, was a poor reflection on the response for those children with challenging needs. He noted that

there were currently 36 vacant posts in Donegal and that this needed to be addressed urgently at national level.

Concern was also expressed that there were difficulties in having qualifications from Northern Ireland recognised and that many people from Donegal who had studied in Derry were unable to apply for these positions referenced above.

He asked that the motion be forwarded to the Northwest Regional Development Group, the Health Service Executive, the Minister for Health, Mr. Stephen Donnelly, T.D, Mr. Roderick O' Gorman, T.D, Minister for Children, Equality, Disability, Integration & Youth and Ms Anne Rabbitte, T.D, Minister of State with special responsibility for Children.

Cllr Mc Monagle seconding the motion said that there needed to be an assessment of why people were not taking up these positions as the situation was unfair on the children concerned and their parents.

There was no opposition to the motion.

C/287/23

HEDGE CUTTING POLICIES

On the proposal of Cllr Farren, seconded by Cllr Mc Dermott it was resolved to adopt the following motion:

"I would like Donegal County Council to liaise with the Office of Public Works/National Parks and Wildlife Service to review their policies on hedge cutting".

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

He said that he was talking specifically about the main entrances to towns and villages and road junctions. He referred to the many representations that he had received from community groups asking for hedges to be cut in specific locations in the interest of road safety. It was important, he added, that Donegal County Council did everything in its power to encourage the Office of Public Works and the National Parks & Wildlife to look at hedge cutting policies as soon as possible.

Cllr Farren advised that there were implications also for the tourism industry and for all road users in a rural county like Donegal. Current timeframes, he said, were impracticable and a common-sense approach was needed to address the situation. He asked that an effort be made nationally to extend the hedge cutting season.

Cllr Mc Dermott supporting the motion said that the policy was driven at national level and that the level of bureaucracy was overwhelming and damaging also for the tourism industry.

There was no opposition to the motion.

Mr Bryan Cannon, Director of Roads & Transportation responding outlined the fact that the Roads Act placed the responsibility of the owner or occupier of land to take reasonable steps to ensure that trees, vegetation did not interfere with the safe use or maintenance of a public road. This he advised was governed by the Wildlife Act 1976 as amended by the Wildlife (Amendment) Act 2000 and the Heritage Act 2018 which limited cutting, burning vegetation on any land not cultivated during the period from the 1st of March to the 31st of August each year. It was noted that there were limited exemptions in relation to construction work and road safety. A review of the Council's hedge cutting policy, he said, had taken place at SPC level and several issues raised. It was intended, he added, to deal with these at the next meeting of the Roads Strategic Policy in October, 2023. It was confirmed that the executive would liaise with the relevant statutory agencies in advance of the SPC meeting.

Cllr Farren welcomed the response and reiterated the need to extend the hedge cutting season.

C/288/23

MONITORING OF LICENSED AND UNLICENSED AQUACULTURE SITES TO ENSURE THAT THE WASTE BY-PRODUCTS OF THE INDUSTRY ARE CLEARED ON A REGULAR BASIS

Cllr A Doherty proposed the following motion on behalf of Cllr T. Crossan.

“That Donegal County Council monitor both licensed and unlicensed aquaculture sites in the county to ensure that waste by-products of the industry are cleared on a regular basis, especially plastics and rubber bands.

This was seconded by Cllr N. Crossan

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

Cllr Doherty said that this was an important motion with a core message for all concerned and that the waste products alluded to should be removed from the aquaculture sites.

There was no opposition to the motion.

C/289/23

CATHAOIRLEACH'S BUSINESS.

Votes of Sympathy

A vote of sympathy was extended to the following:

- David Moen, Housing & Corporate, Letterkenny on the death of his mother, Nancy Moen.
- Pauric Mc Geehan, Roads Central on the death of his mother Ann Mc Geehan

- Patrick Brennan, Capital Projects Delivery Unit on the death of his mother, Mary Brennan.
- Joanne Holmes, NW Energy Action Office on the death of her father, Raymond Rooney.
- Bernadine Mc Gee, Housing & Corporate, Letterkenny PSC on the death of her mother, Margaret Mc Gee.
- Mairead Devine, Income Collection on the death of her sister, Catherine Chan.
- The family of the late Rónan Mac Aodha Bhuí.
- The family of the late Marc Geagan.
- The family of the late Cllr Damien O' Reilly, formerly Meath County Council.
- The family of former Letterkenny Town Councillor, Damien Blake.

Climate Action Workshop

It was unanimously agreed to hold a Plenary Water Services Workshop on Climate Action at 2pm on Thursday 2nd November, 2023 in the Council Chamber, Lifford.

LAMA Autumn Seminar

Members were advised that the dates for the LAMA Autumn Seminar had changed to the 25th and the 26th of October, 2023 with the event taking place in the Ard na Rí Hotel, Tuam. He advised that a seminar brochure would issue in due course.

Having noted representation at a seminar, meeting or event under Section 142 (5) of Local Government Act, 2001, S.I. No. 668 of 2006, Local Government (Expenses of Local Authority Members) Regulations 2006, S.I. No. 37 of 2010, Guidelines given by the Minister for the Environment, Heritage and Local Government in relation to the Local Government Act, 2001 (Section 142) Regulations 2010, and the Local Government (Expenses of Local Authority Members) Regulations, 2014(as amended). It was unanimously agreed to authorise any member, if he/she so wished, to attend the LAMA Autumn Seminar 2023 subject to the normal procedures:

- j. 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.

Events Attended

The Cathaoirleach advised that he had attended the following events and thanked all who had been involved in the organisation of same:

- Disrupt By the Sea Business Event held on the 15th September in Rathmullan.
- The Tip O' Neill Trail Launch and two all-terrain wheelchairs on the 16th September 2023 in Buncrana.

- The Tip O' Neill Awards Ceremony on the 16th of September 2023.
- Ordination of the Dean of Raphoe on the 23rd of September in St Eunan's Cathedral, Raphoe.

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C/290/23

CHIEF EXECUTIVE'S MANAGEMENT REPORT.

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

Community Development & Planning Services

- A. Community Development
 - (i) *Outdoor Recreation Infrastructure Scheme 2023*
 - (ii) *Leader Local Development Strategy*
 - (iii) *PEACEPLUS*
- B. Planning Services
 - (i) *Development Applications Unit*
 - (ii) *E-Planning*
 - (iii) *Enforcement*
 - (iv) *Planning Policy*
- C. Urban & Rural Regeneration & Development
- D. Major Projects

Water and Environment

- A. Waste and Litter Management
 - (i) *'Keep Donegal Beautiful' – Sustainable Holidaymaker Campaign*
 - (ii) *Summer 'Greenpiece' 2023*
- B. County Laboratory
 - (i) *Public Service Announcements – Water Quality*
 - (ii) *Bathing Waters 2023 Season*
- C. Climate Action
- D. Flood Relief Schemes
- E. Northwest Regional Energy Agency (NWREA)

Housing, Corporate & Cultural Services

- A. Housing
 - (i) *Housing Services*
 - (ii) *Housing Capital*

(iii) *Update on Enhanced Defective Concrete Blocks Grant Scheme*

B. Cultural Services

- (i) *Creative Ireland*
- (ii) *Library Service*
- (iii) *Arts*
- (iv) *County Donegal Heritage Office*

Economic Development, I.S. & Emergency Services

A. Fire Service

- (i) *Operations*
- (ii) *Fire Prevention*
- (iii) *Major Emergency Management*

B. Economic Development

- (i) *Tip O'Neill Irish Diaspora Awards 2023*
- (ii) *Asia Matters Summit Letterkenny: 2nd-3rd October 2023*
- (iii) *Navigating the Future of Regulation – North West RegTech Conference: 25th October 2023*
- (iv) *#LoveDonegal*
- (v) *ALPHA Innovation's Disrupt by the Sea welcomes Scaleups from across Ireland to Donegal*

C. Tourism

- (i) *Autumn Tourism Campaign*
- (ii) *Launch of Donegal Travel Concierge Service*
- (iii) *Golf Cluster Meeting*
- (iv) *International Association of Golf Tour Operators (IAGTO) Golf Convention*
- (v) *Golf Media Fam Trip*
- (vi) *Website Redevelopment*
- (vii) *Minor Tourism Related Works Grant Scheme*
- (viii) *Festival Funding*
- (ix) *Ireland West Airport*
- (x) *TOURBO*
- (xi) *Sustainable Arctic and Peripheral Biking Tourism - Interreg Atlantic Area Programme 2021 – 2027*
- (xii) *Tides – PR*

Roads & Transportation

A. Roads Areas

- (i) *Restoration Improvement & Restoration Maintenance*
- (ii) *Local Improvement Scheme (LIS)*
- (iii) *Other Works*
- (iv) *Velocity Patcher Trial*

B. Central Technical Services

- (i) *Piers & Harbours Programme*
- (ii) *NTA Active Travel*

C. National Roads Office

- (i) *All Ireland Strategic Rail Review Update*
- (ii) *DoT Transport Appraisal Framework, Continuing Policy & Standard Changes*
- (iii) *TEN-T Priority Route Improvement Project Donegal*
- (iv) *A5 Western Transport Corridor*
- (v) *Donegal National Roads Projects 2023 Overview*

Cllr Mc Gowan asked that the NWRA be invited to attend a meeting of Council to update members and give an overview of the work that they do. He asked also that they be contacted with regards the provision of a six-monthly activity report.

He further requested that a report be provided on the provision of air quality monitors throughout the county with specific reference to Ballybofey.

25th Anniversary of the Island of Ireland Peace Park in Messine

The Cathaoirleach said that he had been invited to attend the event and that this was a significant occasion as the park had just been designated as a UNESCO world heritage site.

C/291/23

NUMBER OF SOCIAL HOUSING VOIDS WITHIN OUR SOCIAL HOUSING STOCK

Cllr McMonagle submitted the following question:

How many Social House's/Voids are there within our Social Housing Stock and can I have a modular breakdown as per MD, how long has each house/flat has been vacant and what steps are being taken to get these vacant properties back into use?

He received a response from the Director of Housing, Corporate & Cultural Services.

C/292/23

UPDATED REPORT ON THE HOUSING CONSTRUCTION PROGRAMME

Cllr Brogan submitted the following question:

Can we have an updated report on the housing construction programme for this Council for the last four years and our programme going forward per MD with the current numbers on our housing waiting list, land acquired for housing, how many have Part 8 planning granted , how many have contractors appointed and construction started and how many have been completed and can we also get the some information on the AHB Associated Housing Bodies?

He received a response from the Director of Housing, Corporate & Cultural Services.

C/293/23 **UPDATED REPORT ON THE TEN-T PROJECT**

Cllr Brogan submitted the following question:

Can we get an updated report on the TEN-T project and the details of the steps we have taken in the last 5 years; how much money has been allocated to date, and how these monies have been spent and what our next steps are going forward?

He received a response from the Director of Roads & Transportation.

C/294/23 **WHICH SCHOOLS IN EACH MD APPLIED FOR FUNDING UNDER THE SAFE ROUTES TO SCHOOL INITIATIVE**

Cllr Crawford submitted the following question:

Which schools in each MD applied for funding under the Safe Routes to School initiative and what has been the outcome?

He received a response from the Director of Roads & Transportation.

C/295/23 **HOW MANY PROPERTIES IN EACH MD HAS BEEN RETROFITTED AND RETURNED TO BER RANGING FROM B2 UP TO A3**

Cllr Crawford submitted the following question:

How many properties in each MD have been retrofitted and returned to BER ranging from B2 up to A3?

He received a response from the Director of Housing, Corporate & Cultural Services.

C/296/23 **DEFECTIVE CONCRETE BLOCK SCHEME**

Cllr Crawford submitted the following question:

In relation to the Council involvement with the Defective Concrete Block Scheme:

How many additional staff have been requested from the Department, how many have been approved, and how many have taken up positions?

He received a response from the Director of Housing, Corporate & Cultural Services.

C/297/23 **ROLLOUT OF THE RETROFIT PROGRAMME ACROSS THE COUNCILS HOUSING STOCK**

Cllr McGowan submitted the following question:

Please give a report on the rollout of the retrofit programme across the Councils housing stock and any feedback on the success or challenges faced by Council tenants with the air to water and associated works to date?

He received a response from the Director of Housing, Corporate & Cultural Services.

C/298/23 **SUMMARY BREAKDOWN OF ALL COUNCIL SERVICES**

Cllr McGowan submitted the following question:

Please provide a summary breakdown of all Council services, number of staff and roles in each, the budgets required to operate same, wages v running costs and the source of that funding in each case.

He received a response from the Director of Housing, Corporate & Cultural Services.

C/299/23 **PROGRESS ON MONIES OWED TO THE COUNCIL FROM IRISH WATER**

Cllr Gallagher submitted the following question:

Has progress been made with Irish Water on monies owed to the Council outlined in the auditor's report?

She received a response from the Head of Finance.

C/300/23 **NUMBER OF HOMES BEING PROGRESSED UNDER THE TENANT-IN-SITU SCHEME**

Cllr Gallagher submitted the following question:

How many homes are being progressed under the "Tenant-in Situ-Scheme" across the County, and could we be provided with numbers by each MD?

She received a response from the Director of Housing, Corporate & Cultural Services.

C/301/23 **CAN DONEGAL COUNTY COUNCIL LIAISE WITH THE EDUCATION AND TRAINING BOARD IN RELATION TO THE PROVISION OF LIBRARY SERVICES IN THE COUNTY**

Cllr Molloy submitted the following question:

Can Donegal County Council liaise with the ETB in relation to the provision of library services in the county?

He received a response from the Director of Housing, Corporate & Cultural Services.

C/302/23 **PILOT FOR SOCIAL HOUSING REMEDIATION/DEFECTIVE CONCRETE BLOCKS**

Cllr A Doherty submitted the following question:-

Pilot for Social Housing Remediation/Defective Concrete Blocks

"The Department of Housing, Local Government & Heritage has indicated a scheme for the remediation of social homes will now be developed and introduced"(July 24th motion reply received).

*Has the Dept. of Housing introduced, liaised with DCC and progressed the social housing scheme for affected families?
and,*

Has the Dept. of Housing, Local Government & Heritage approved the pilot for social housing remediation in respect of 60 vacant social homes application submitted by DCC in July 2022?

He received a response from the Director of Housing, Corporate & Cultural Services.

C/303/23

VACANT PROPERTY REFURBISHMENT GRANT SCHEME

Cllr A Doherty submitted the following question:

*How many eligible applications have been received by DCC re: Vacant Property Refurbishment Grant Scheme including properties deemed derelict? How many are in each Municipal area? (July 2022)
and*

How many properties and property owners have been identified and contacted by DCC re: Compulsory Purchase Order Activation Fund. How many are in each Municipal area? (2023)

He received a response from the Director of Community Development & Planning Services.

C/304/23

MOTIONS FROM OTHER COUNCILS/BODIES

Members noted the motions from other Councils/Bodies.

CLARE COUNTY COUNCIL

"I am calling on the Minister for Transport Eamon Ryan to address the chaos being caused to members of the public by the incompetent service currently in operation by the National Car Test Company. This arrangement with a company operating on a monopoly basis is not fit for purpose and should be discontinued with a view to opening up a tendering process for accredited garages in Ireland similar to the DOE process that currently provide a quality service to the public for testing commercial vehicles. The carrying out of a car test on private vehicles over 4 years is mandatory and the government have a duty of care to the public to make adequate provision in the delivery of this service. This proposal would also have the potential to provide employment at local level for many people and provide enhanced opportunities for apprenticeships."

CORK COUNTY COUNCIL

"That Cork County Council write to the HSE and Coillte to request a campaign to raise awareness of the possibility of contracting lyme disease at parks and walkways and to circulate correspondence to all other local authorities. It was also agreed that a copy of this letter would be circulated to all Local Authorities."

CORK COUNTY COUNCIL

“This Council requests that the RSA and Department of Transport use every means possible to reduce the totally unacceptable waiting times for driving tests.”

LEITRIM COUNTY COUNCIL

“That Leitrim County Council engage in supporting the “Ash Tree Conservation” project initiated recently in County Leitrim. This is an opportunity to take action and achieve a very positive outcome. The support needs to be led by Dept. of Environment here in Leitrim and motion circulated to all local authorities.”

MAYO COUNTY COUNCIL

“Calling on the Department of Housing to increase the build time requirement of the Croí Cónaithe Scheme from 13 months to 24 months. Currently the Scheme requires a derelict property to be brought back into use within 13 months which is, for the most part, unattainable given the works required on these properties.”

WATERFORD CITY & COUNTY COUNCIL

“Waterford City & County Council recognise and appreciate the positive benefits that have been brought about through Active Travel Funding and would welcome more. However, we also acknowledge that limitations on the Active Travel Scheme mean that it is increasingly focussed on larger urban areas and cannot be used for the badly needed maintenance and repair of deteriorating footpaths. In the interests of pedestrians, particularly people with disabilities, we therefore hereby resolve to write to Minister Eamon Ryan to formally notify him that we upon the Department of Transport to provide ringfenced funding (separate from roads funds and also distinct from Active Travel funding) to Local Authorities to assist significantly and substantially with the costs of maintaining and repairing existing footpaths and to assist significantly and substantially with the cost of providing new footpaths that are not eligible for Active Travel funding. And we further call upon Minister Ryan and the Department of Transport to ensure that Local Authorities would have discretion and autonomy to use such dedicated footpaths funding without having to receive approval from the Department, the NTA, or any other agency, on a per project basis; and to ensure that there would be no other bureaucratic obstacles to the expeditious spending of such urgently needed footpath funding.”

This concluded the business of the meeting.