

**MINUTES OF JANUARY MEETING OF DONEGAL COUNTY COUNCIL HELD ON
29TH JANUARY, 2024 IN THE COUNTY HOUSE, LIFFORD**

C/7/24

MEMBERS PRESENT

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

Online: Cllrs K Bradley, T Crossan, L Doherty, MT Gallagher, N Jordan, J Kavanagh, N Kennedy, M Mac Giolla Easbuig, M McBride, M Mc Dermott, J McGuinness, A Molloy, J Murray, J O'Donnell

C/8/24

OFFICIALS IN ATTENDANCE

John G McLaughlin, Chief Executive, Patsy Lafferty, Director of Housing & Corporate and A/Meetings Administrator, Bryan Cannon, A/Director of Roads & Transportation, Richard Gibson, Head of Finance, Liam Ward, Director of Community Development & Planning Services, , Garry Martin, Director of Economic Development, I.S & Emergency Services, Michael McGarvey, Director of Water & Environment, Eunan Quinn, Senior Planner, Paul Christie, Senior Planning, Frances Friel, Communications Officer, Róise Ní Laifeartaigh, Rannóg na Gaeilge, William Colvin, Assistant Communications Officer, Anne Marie Crawford, Staff Officer. Clíona Ní Ghallachóir,

C/9/24

**CONFIRMATION OF THE MINUTES OF THE SPECIAL MEETING OF
DONEGAL COUNTY COUNCIL HELD ON THE 13TH NOVEMBER, 2023.**

On the proposal of Cllr Donaghey, seconded by Cllr McGowan the minutes of the Special Meeting of Donegal County Council held on the 13th November 2023 were adopted.

C/10/24

**CONFIRMATION OF THE MINUTES OF THE SPECIAL MEETING OF
DONEGAL COUNTY COUNCIL HELD ON THE 22ND OF NOVEMBER,
2023.**

On the proposal of Cllr Coyle, seconded by Cllr Crawford the minutes of the Special Meeting of Donegal County Council held on the 22nd of November 2023 were adopted.

C/11/24

**CONFIRMATION OF THE MINUTES OF THE NOVEMBER MEETING
OF DONEGAL COUNTY COUNCIL HELD ON THE 27TH NOVEMBER,
2024.**

On the proposal of Cllr Sweeny, seconded by Cllr O'Fearraigh the minutes of the November meeting of Donegal County Council held on the 27th of November 2024 were adopted.

C/12/24

**CONFIRMATION OF THE MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL BUDGET
MEETING OF DONEGAL COUNTY COUNCIL HELD ON THE 6TH
DECEMBER, 2023.**

On the proposal of Cllr Blaney, seconded by Cllr Farren the minutes of the Annual Budget Meeting of Donegal County Council held on the 6th of December 2023.

C/13/24

DISPOSAL OF PLOT OF LAND AT THE FORMER BUNDORAN CIVIC OFFICE SPACE TO BUNDORAN COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT CLG.

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

On the proposal of Cllr Sweeny, seconded by Cllr McMahon, it was resolved to dispose of a plot of land at the former Bundoran Civic Office Space to Bundoran Community Development CLG 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/14/24

DISPOSAL BY WAY OF LEASE THE OLD BIM ICE PLANT AT GREENCASTLE PIER TO FOYLE FISHERMAN'S CO-OP

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

On the proposal of Cllr Farren, seconded by Cllr A Doherty, it was resolved to dispose by way of least the Old BIM Ice Plant at Greencastle Pier to Foyle Fisherman's Co-Op 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/15/24

DISPOSAL BY WAY OF LEASE LAND AT GREENCASTLE PIER TO TARDRUM FISHERIES LTD

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

On the proposal of Cllr Farren, seconded by Cllr A Doherty, it was resolved to dispose by way of lease land at Greencastle Pier to Tardrum Fisheries 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/16/24

DISPOSAL BY WAY OF LEASE THE OLD ESSO SITE AT GREENCASTLE PIER TO SEABOUND ENGINEERING LTD.

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

On the proposal of Cllr Farren, seconded by Cllr A Doherty, it was resolved to dispose by way of lease the old Esso site at Greencastle Pier to Seabound Engineering 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/17/24

DISPOSAL BY WAY OF LEASE THE OLD BOX PEN SITE AT GREENCASTLE PIER TO SEABOUND ENGINEERING LTD

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

On the proposal of Cllr McMahon, seconded by Cllr Sweeny, it was resolved to dispose by way of lease the old Box Pen site at Greencastle Pier to Seabound Engineering 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/18/24 **DISPOSAL OF LAND AT QUEENSPORT, GREENCASTLE HARBOUR TO FOYLE & MARINE DREDGING LTD.**

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

On the proposal of Cllr, A Doherty, seconded by Cllr Farren, it was resolved to dispose of land at Queensport, Greencastle Harbour to Foyle & Marine Dredging 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/19/24 **TO APPROVE THE CARRYING OUT OF WORKS WITH REGARD TO THE PROPOSED DEMOLITION OF THE EXISTING BUNCRANA LEISURE CENTRE BUILDING AND THE REBUILD OF THE NEW LEISURE CENTRE ON THE EXISTING SITE AT AILEACH ROAD, BUNCRANA**

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 proposed demolition of the existing Buncrana Leisure Centre building and the rebuild of the new Leisure Centre on the existing site at Aileach Road, Buncrana 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).

C/20/24 **TO APPROVE THE CARRYING OUT OF WORKS WITH REGARD TO THE DEMOLITION OF THE EXISTING FIRE STATION AND THE CONSTRUCTION OF A TWO STOREY DEVELOPMENT CONSISTING OF 8 NO. SOCIAL HOUSING UNITS AT THE SITE OF AND ADJACENT TO THE FORMER FIRE STATION SITE, MAIN ST, STRANORLAR.**

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

On the proposal of Cllr McGowan, seconded by Cllr Harley, the carrying out of works with regard to the demolition of the existing fire station and the construction of a two storey development consisting of 8 no. social housing units at the site of, and adjacent to the former fire station site at Main St. Stranorlar 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).

C/21/24

TO APPROVE THE CONSTRUCTION OF 9 NO. 2 STOREY SOCIAL HOUSING UNITS, AT RADHARC NA TRA BRÉIGE, PHASE 4 MALIN.

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

On the proposal of Cllr, A Doherty, seconded by Cllr Farren, the construction of 9 no. 2 storey social housing units, complete with landscaped area, car parking and all associated site works including open space at Radharc na Tra Bréige, Phase 4 Malin 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).

C/22/24

TO APPROVE THE CONSTRUCTION OF A PEDESTRIAN AND CYCLE ACTIVE TRAVEL FACILITY ADJACENT TO THE N15 NATIONAL PRIMARY ROAD IN LIFFORD IN RESPECT OF THE N15 LIFFORD ACTIVE TRAVEL PROJECT.

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

On the proposal of Cllr Crawford, seconded by Cllr McGowan, the construction of a pedestrian and cycle active travel facility adjacent to the N15 National Primary Road in Lifford in respect of the N15 Lifford Active Travel Project 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).

C/23/24

TO CONSIDER AUTHORISATION OF COUNCIL REPRESENTATION AT THE ST. PATRICK'S DAY EVENTS IN THE USA

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

On the proposal of Cllr Mc Gowan, seconded by Cllr Blaney it was resolved that the Cathaoirleach, and the Leas-Cathaoirleach attend the St Patrick's Day events in the USA. Members were informed that invitations had issued from the various Donegal Associations in the United States.

Cllr Mac Giolla Easbuig said that it was imperative that members did not meet with US politicians on the trip given the US stance on Palestine.

C/24/24

TO NOTE OBLIGATIONS ON MEMBERS TO SUBMIT A DONATION STATEMENT FOR 2023 BY 31ST JANUARY, 2024.

Members noted the requirement under the Local Elections (Disclosure of Donations & Expenditure) Act, 1999 as amended, to submit a donation statement for 2023 by the 31st of January, 2024.

C/25/24

TO NOTE OBLIGATIONS ON MEMBERS TO SUBMIT DECLARATION OF INTEREST FOR 2023 BY THE 29TH OF FEBRUARY, 2024.

Members noted their obligations under (Part 15) Local Government Act, 2001 Ethics Framework to submit declaration of interest for 2023 by the

29th of February, 2024.

C/26/24

TO CONSIDER UPDATE IN RELATION TO THE DEPOSIT RETURN SCHEME FOR BEVERAGE CONTAINERS.

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

Mr Michael Mc Garvey, Director Water & Environment outlined the main provisions of the scheme.

There was general welcome for the scheme given that ongoing issues in relation to litter prevention. A number of queries were raised including:

- What was going to happen to the old bottles that did not have the logo and whether or not there was an obligation on the shop owner to take accept these?
- What will happen to damaged cans and bottles and is there a requirement that they have to be washed?
- Concern expressed in relation to the prescribed notices and the fact that these in instances directed customers to other people's businesses.
- Additional cost to businesses also an issue particularly for the small retailer as they may have to give a refund for items purchased elsewhere and also source additional storage space.
- Does the introduction of the scheme complement or compete with the Council's contract with our own negotiations and contracts.?
- Suggested that the local authority should take the lead in the initiative rather than the small shop owner. Municipal Waste points could possibly facilitate the machines.
- What provision has been made for origin of the cans/bottles especially in cross-border areas.

The Director of Service said that the initiative was a step in the right direction given the seriousness of the litter problem throughout the county. It was expected, he said, that there would be teething problems initially, but the emphasis today was on getting the message out and raising awareness of the scheme. Bottles and cans would continue to be accepted at Recycling Centres, he added, and the Council would be involved in a promotional role only.

Responding to queries, he said that damaged cans would be accepted as long as there was a legible barcode. The store issue, he advised, was something that would have to be worked through and that businesses could apply for exemptions.

He said that it would be possible to get a sample of the set notices and would come back to members in relation to the issues raised.

Cllr Mc Clafferty suggested that a process similar to that for baling cardboard could be utilised and assist with the storage option.

Mr Mc Garvey concluding said that members would be kept updated in terms of the overall rollout of the scheme and the implications of same.

C/27/24

PROPOSED VARIATION TO THE COUNTY DONEGAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN 2018-2024 (AS VARIED) – TO DELETE LETTERKENNY-SPECIFIC POLICY CONTENT (VARIATION No. 3).

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

Mr Liam Ward, Director Housing, Corporate & Culture informed members that a resolution was required as the Letterkenny Local Area Plan and Local Transport Plan had been adopted and thus the Letterkenny specific policy content was required to be deleted from the existing County Development plan 2018 -2024. He noted that the variation process had been put in place and a period of public consultation had taken place from the 1st of December 2023 until the 8th January 2024. As a result, the Chief Executive's report had been prepared and circulated to members on the 18th January. It was noted that there had been seven submissions all from statutory agencies and none from the general public. The recommendation now before members, he said, was to make the variation with the further modifications as outlined in the Chief Executive's report. The variation, he confirmed, was required, as there was no necessity for two plans with Letterkenny specific policy.

On the proposal of Cllr Brogan, seconded by Cllr Mc Monagle, it was resolved in accordance with the requirements of Section 13(6) of the Planning and Development Act, 2000 (As Amended), to make the Proposed Variation with further modification (as recommended in Chief Executive's Report).

C/28/24

DRAFT 2025 RESIDENTIAL ZONED LAND TAX MAP AND ASSOCIATED SIGNIFICANT CHANGES OF APPROACH IN RELATION TO LAND ZONED AS "STRATEGIC RESIDENTIAL RESERVE"

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

Mr Liam Ward, Director Housing, Corporate & Cultural Services said that the report had been circulated by way of information. It set out, he said the process around the requirement on the Council to produce a draft map for the 2025 liability year and to publish same by the 1st of February 2024. Work was ongoing, he advised on the production of the map. It was acknowledged that the liability for the tax had been deferred from the 1st of February 2024 until 1st February 2025.

Work was ongoing, he advised on the production of the 2025 liability map. The significant change here, he advised, was that where lands had been designated “Strategic Residential Reserve” they would not now fall within the scope of the Residential Zoned Land Tax, and this would be reflected in the final map for 2025.

He informed members that there would be a public consultation process as soon as the map was published on the 1st of February. This would allow people with specific issues to make a submission to the Council. There would also be, he confirmed an appeal process with the option to go to An Bord Pleanála.

It was important to note, he said, that lands designated as “Strategic Residential Reserve” were obliged to be retained on the Draft 2025 map but would not appear on the final map.

Cllr Mc Gowan welcomed that the Strategic Reserve lands had been taken out. He was informed that lands zoned as “Opportunity” could accommodate multiple housing if there residential potential existed. He acknowledged that there were challenges in acquiring land and that the Council seemed to be the only entity buying land at present. The major issue at present, he said, was affordable housing. A renewed emphasis, he contended, was need in relation to the provision of affordable housing and to make self-build a more realistic prospect.

Cllr A Doherty noted that the liability for the tax was simply delayed and that the whole concept had emerged from the “Housing for All” Programme and the wish to have vacant lands released for residential purposes. He outlined the need for further information on the Seven Local Area Plans and a clear timetable as to when the process for each will commence.

He cited the need to ensure that the significance of April 1st and May 31st was communicated to all involved including the farming community.

Cllr N Crossan said it was unfair that local farmers in Donegal with small bits of ground were being asked to pay the tax as a result of their land being incorrectly zoned. Many were afraid, he added, that they would have to sell land to pay the tax. He said that people should not be forced off the land so that houses could be built on good agricultural land. He expressed concern that these were national guidelines and thus set in stone with members having no real say in the process. If building continued in this fashion, he said that there would be no green belts left. It did not make sense, he said, that there were so many vacant houses in our town centres and villages, yet policy was directing development to areas outside our towns and villages. It was imperative, he added, that members made people aware of the need to make submissions to the forthcoming consultation process.

Cllr Donaghey concurred with the need to get the message out regarding

the consultation process given that there were concerns in relation to the impact on all categories of landholders.

Mr Liam Ward, Director Housing, Corporate & Cultural Services said that it was essential that all those who had made representations were aware of the current deadlines. These dates would be highlighted in a PR campaign, he advised as soon as the map was published thus affording the general public an opportunity to make submissions.

The RZLT, he noted, was now national policy and the liability existed from the 1st of February, 2025.

Responding to a query from Cllr N Crossan, he confirmed, that it was not planned to have any MD workshops on the issue given the current workload involved in producing the new County Development Plan. The map when published, he advised, would be highlighted in the public domain.

The Cathaoirleach advised that there was an onus on members to keep constituents informed in relation to the specific deadlines and consultation process.

Members were informed that the Special Meeting to deal with the Chief Executive's report on submissions received from the public consultation process on the new Draft County Development Plan would take place on the 6th of February 2024. He drew attention to the fact that an addendum to the Chief Executive's report would be issued in relation to the TEN-T Priority Route Improvement Project with reference to the Preferred Route Corridors relative to the ancillary element of the design which includes the link roads, drainage, active travel, and park and share element.

C/29/24

VERBAL UPDATE ON THE DRAFT CLIMATE ACTION PLAN.

Mr Michael Mc Garvey, Director Water & Environment confirmed that the Chief Executive's report on the Draft Climate Action Plan had issued to members on the 24th of January 2024. He noted that 20 submissions had been received and that there had been positive feedback from the consultation process. There were, he stated, no material changes and 31 minor changes to the Draft Plan mainly wording changes to the actual text. He outlined the specific changes that required consideration namely:

- 1 change to Strategic Goal No. 4 based on inter-departmental observations and follow up – “Promote and protect our environment, ant its biodiversity and water catchments, where possible or where feasible, as key enablers of climate adaptation and mitigation across the County”. See submissions CAP 13 (Culture Division) and CAP 14 (NRDO) in the CE Report for details.
- 1 change to Objective NE 1 based on inter-departmental observations and follow up – “Protect, enhance and restore County Donegal's Biodiversity and Heritage, where possible or where feasible”. See submissions CAP 13 (Culture Division) and CAP 14 (NRDO) in the CE Report for details.

- 1 change to Objective BE6 based on inter-departmental observation – “Increase the resilience of our Built and Archaeological Heritage to climate change”.
- 2 new actions:
 - Splitting of Action NE 1.1 into two separate actions, one for preparation of Biodiversity Action Plan and one for preparation of Pollinator Work Programme
 - Addition of Action CR 3.3 under the Community Resilience theme - Design an innovative and creative project to use archaeological (or other heritage) sites to creatively engage local communities with climate change and heritage and to demonstrate the impacts of climate change such as the DACCHE EU/NPA project (Digital Action for Climate Change in Heritage Environments). This action was proposed at pre-draft stage but was missed from the draft Plan. It is a “co-ordinate and facilitate” action with DCC Culture Division as lead department.
- All minor changes (including to Strategic Goal 4 and Objective NE1, BE6) and the 2 new actions have been reviewed and screened by Minogue Consulting in relation to SEA and AA. There are no issues.
- Determinations confirming no impacts with regard to Strategic Environmental Assessment and Appropriate Assessment are contained in Appendix B of the report.

The Draft Plan, had, he confirmed, been presented to the Climate Action and Environment SPC and to the Corporate Policy Group. Thus, he advised, that the Draft Climate Action Plan 2024-2029 would come before members at the Special Plenary Meeting on the 21st February 2024 for formal adoption. There was a requirement, he advised to adopt the plan before the 23rd of February and Donegal was one of the remaining authorities to complete their plan process.

Cllr Mc Gowan asked if anything had been learned from the experiences of other local authorities. He was informed that Donegal worked as part of the Atlantic Seaboard North CARO in conjunction with five other coastal local authorities and the shared learning from this collaboration had been taken on board and included in the plan.

C/30/24

TO APPROVE CHANGE IN THE SECTORAL MEMBERSHIP OF THE DONEGAL LOCAL COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

On the proposal of Cllr, A Doherty, seconded by Cllr Blaney, it was resolved that Helen Nolan fill the vacancy on the Donegal Local Community Development Committee arising from the resignation of Andrew McNulty.

C/31/24

ENDORSEMENT OF MINUTES OF MEETING THE CORPORATE POLICY GROUP HELD ON 20TH NOVEMBER 2024

The minutes of the meeting of the Corporate Policy Group held on the 20th of November 2023 were noted.

C/32/24

ATTENDANCE AT CONFERENCE, SEMINAR OR EVENT.

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 Brogan, seconded by Cllr McGowan, 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

- LAMA Spring Seminar “Building for Success” to be held on the 19th and 20th January, 2024 in the Abbey Hotel, Donegal Town.
- AILG Members Training Programme Module 1 “Elected Members Briefing: Annual Declarations: Donations: Code of Conduct and LRA Allowance Update to be held in the Fairways Hotel, Dundalk on Thursday 25th January, 2024.
- Association of Irish Regions Annual “Regions in Focus” Training Event to be held in Fitzgerald’s Woodlands House, Hotel & Spa, Adare on the 7th and 8th February, 2024.

Other

- Attendance of the Donegal 2024 Strategic Development Committee members at meeting with Limerick 2030 on the 25th of January, 2024.

Travel Abroad

- Attendance of the Cathaoirleach at the “YOUth & Democracy - Empowering Europe’s next Generation” Event in Santa Comba Spain from the 1st to the 4th of February, 2024.
- Attendance of the CPMR representative at the CPMR Political Bureau Meeting from the 21st to the 23rd of March, 2024 in Patras, Greece.

C/33/24

CONFERENCE REPORTS/REPORTS OTHER BODIES

On the proposal of Cllr Brogan, seconded by Cllr McGowan the following reports were approved: -

Cllr Nicholas Crossan

- Attendance at the “Inspiring Rural Creativity” Conference in Roscommon on the 5th and 6th April, 2023.

Cllr Gerry Mc Monagle

- Attendance at the European Citizens Prize Award Ceremony in Brussels on the 7th of November, 2023.
Cllr John S. O' Fearraigh
- Attendance at the CPMR 50th Assembly Meeting in St Malo, Brittany, France from the 15th to the 17th of November, 2023.
- AILG Annual Activity Report for 2023.

C/34/24

PRIORITISATION OF ROADS NEAR SCHOOLS - REVIEW ON THE WINTER GRITTING SCHEDULE

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

"That Donegal County Council will endeavour to prioritise roads near schools when conducting its review of the winter gritting schedule."

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

Cllr Murray alluded to the fact that a number of schools were affected and that there was an impact also for parents when schools were forced to close due to gritting issues. It was imperative, he said that the gritting programme was reviewed on this basis. He said that it was appreciated that it was not possible to cover all routes and that the team on the ground did an excellent job in keeping routes open and accessible. Consideration, he said, should be given to the use of private companies going forward.

Cllr Mc Monagle seconding the motion cited the need for more engagement with the farming community.

There was no opposition to the motion.

Mr Bryan Cannon, A/Director Roads & Transportation said that he could appreciate that there were difficulties for schools and businesses.

It was noted that approximately 1,140km of road divided into 21 separate routes were gritted in Donegal as part of the winter maintenance programme. An addition 125 km of road had been added after the 2021 review, he confirmed.

He confirmed that work had already commenced on examining the implications of including all schools on the winter maintenance programme. There were, he advised specific considerations to be taken into account such as the time involved for the lorry to grit a route, the volume of the gritting equipment, volume of grit at various spread lengths, the length of the route and the availability of trained staff. Members it was confirmed would be consulted at MD level and an update provided in due course.

The Cathaoirleach said it was important that local overseers got involved as they were in the best position to comment on the mileage involved.

Cllr Murray welcomed the response and thanked all involved in the delivery of the winter maintenance programme.

C/35/24

THE POBAL HP DEPRIVATION INDEX

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

The Pobal HP Deprivation Index was released in November, 2023. The index shows that Donegal was ranked the most disadvantaged.

"That Donegal County Council discuss, analyse the data and forward an executive response to Government demanding that all Government social inclusion supports, and additional resources are delivered and directed to where they are most needed."

He received a response from the Director of Community Development and Planning Services in relation to the above.

Cllr Doherty said that the report highlighted the high level of disadvantage in many areas and substantiated previous requests for the extension of Clár areas in Donegal. The geographic location of these disadvantaged areas remained largely unchanged since 2016 with Donegal, Mayo and Sligo having the most deprived and disadvantaged areas in the Northwest. It was essential, he said that resources were targeted to those communities most in need.

He referred to the fact that Pobal had been contacted regarding the extension of the Clár programme in Inishowen with no meaningful result as yet.

He said that March 2024 was too late in terms of the adoption of the Donegal LECP Plan and asked that Minister Humphreys and Minister McConalogue are confronted again with the inaction over the last ten years regarding the failure to include additional areas of Donegal in the Clár Programme.

Cllr Mc Monagle supported the motion and said it was imperative that the necessary resources were sourced to support social inclusion. Many local communities, he said, had welcomed refugees and international protection applicants and need additional support at this juncture.

There was no opposition to the motion.

Mr Liam Ward, Director Community Development & Planning Services said that his department would continue to highlight the need for the widening of Clár areas in Donegal as referenced by Cllr Doherty. He alluded to the fact that LECP Plan process was being worked through including the socio-economic process that forms part of that and that this would be reviewed in light of the Pobal Deprivation Index findings.

His team, he advised, would work on a submission to Government seeking additional resources for Donegal in context of the outcome of the Deprivation Index.

Responding to Cllr Mc Monagle, he noted that Donegal had benefitted significantly from the Community Recognition Fund dispersed to communities accommodating refugees. Donegal, he said had been one of the top ten counties, he advised, which had received further resources to respond to service provision difficulties arising out of this situation.

Cllr Doherty in conclusion said that he would like to see early communication with Minister Humphreys in relation to the implication of the Deprivation Index for Donegal.

C/36/24 **WORKING GROUP AND POLICY ON CASUAL TRADING AND ERECTION OF FLAGS, BUNTING AND BANNERS FROM OUR ELECTRICITY POLES**

On the proposal of Cllr N Crossan, seconded by Cllr Kennedy it was resolved to adopt the following motion:

That Donegal County Council set up a working group or groups to formulate policy on,

- a) Casual trading in Donegal.*
- b) The erection of flags, bunting, and banners from our electricity poles.*

He received a response from the Director of Planning & Community Development in relation to the above.

Cllr Crossan congratulated Cllr Conaghan on being inducted into the Donegal Sports Star Hall of Fame and said it was a proud day for him and his family.

With regard to casual trading, he noted that it had been over 20 years since this had been introduced in designated towns and that much had moved on since then. Outside these areas, he said, people could trade anywhere along the public road. It was imperative, he said, that a level playing field was in place for the businesspeople and the casual trader alike.

Alluding to the fact that work had been suspended on the Byelaws as a result of activity on the RZLT he queried as to when it would be possible to publish the Casual Trading Byelaws.

With regard to the flag situation, he said there were health and safety and public liability issues involved and that there would be an impact also on the Tidy Towns preparation. He cited the need for a specific policy and asked if the Corporate Policy Group had given specific consideration to this matter.

Cllr Kennedy cited the need to move forward with the Casual Trading Byelaws as businesses were struggling and there needed to be specific guidelines in place for those seeking to trade in our towns and villages.

She outlined the need for a policy in relation to the erection of flags as often flags are left flying until they become an eyesore or there is an element of controversy involved.

Cllr Mac Giolla Easbuig said that a policy on flags would have implications for local communities, fund raising events including the promotion of same, and GAA Clubs etc. As a result, he said that he could not support the second part of the motion.

The Director Community Development & Planning Services said that a small number of towns had designated casual trading areas and that outside of these there were no specified casual trading areas, and that regulation was challenging in that regard. A lot of work, he said, had been carried to date and there had been engagement at MD level. He said that the Planning Department were committed to progressing this in 2024 with further engagement in the Municipal Districts to include additional areas. The matter, he confirmed, would be brought back before members by the end of the year regarding the changes to the Byelaws and the designation of additional areas. There were, he noted, difficult decisions to be made as all concerned were appreciative of the value of casual trading but that consideration had to be taken of the impact on businesses generally. This would form part of the review, he added, and the issues raised by members today would be part of the consideration for the formulation of the draft policy.

Cllr Crossan said it was disappointing that it would be another year before the casual trading issue could be moved forward.

Regarding the flags issue, he again sought clarity on who would ultimately be responsible if an incident took place. Responding to Cllr Mac Giolla Easbuig, he said that he had at no time called for a ban on flags or bunting.

C/37/24`

ADJOURNMENT OF THE MEETING

It was unanimously agreed at this juncture to adjourn the meeting until 2.15pm.

C/38/24

THE INEQUALITY IN CONTRACTUAL ARRANGEMENTS BETWEEN LANDLORDS AND LOCAL AUTHORITIES FOR LONG TERM LEASING OF HOUSING AND RENTAL ACCOMMODATION SCHEMES

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

"I ask that we write to the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage regarding the inequality in contractual arrangements between

landlords and Local Authorities for long term leasing of housing and that of the Rental Accommodation Schemes."

Both schemes are to secure medium to long-term availability of private rented accommodation, yet the rental arrangements and rates of each scheme are very different.

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

Cllr Donaghey noted that long term leasing offered stability and security to tenants and landlords as they locked in rental rates for fixed periods of time usually for between three and ten years. This, she noted, helped landlords avoid vacancies and prevented evictions with tenants having an element of security in that rents were locked in a specific period of time.

There were disadvantages, she said if the market need changed, or the business needs evolved. Long term leases, it was noted, limited the flexibility and the ability to adjust the rent or terms to reflect current demands and were impacted by inflation. Landlords, she advised, were tied into consumer price policy which rental accommodation was not.

The rent of a long-term lease policy, she noted, was only reviewed every five years which she said was unfair and unsatisfactory and thus not a level playing field for all landlords. In a long-term lease, she said, that rent was calculated by the consumer price index rental and not by the landlord thus offering the landlord no choice other than to break the agreement and ultimately incurring legal costs. She alluded to a case where a constituent had signed a lease for under €700 monthly with no option to review until after five years. The current rental rate in the area was between €1000 and €1200 and the lack of flexibility to review was a major problem.

Cllr Donaghey alluded to the fact that there was a two-year review period for the Rental Accommodation Scheme and also provision for a rent increase. She said that more landlords needed to be brought on board and long-term leasing arrangements workable for the tenant and the landlord.

Cllr Kelly concurred with this assessment and said that he was not in agreement with the rent being calculated by the Consumer Price Index and that being locked into a five-year rental period was unfair. He outlined the need for rent to be capped in terms of private rental accommodation as rent increases put pressure on the Council's own housing section.

There was no opposition to the motion.

Mr Patsy Lafferty, Director Housing, Corporate & Cultural Services

noted that the two schemes referred to offered different options for landlords with both being phased out under "Housing for All" with most of the cases on file being existing agreements.

With long-term leasing, he said that the Council would generally enter into a lease for 10 years and would maintain the property, whilst also sourcing new tenants when applicable. Under Long-term leasing, he confirmed, 80% of market rent was paid. The RAS Scheme, he advised, was slightly different and the arrangement is that the local authority pays an agreed weekly amount to the landlord. The amount paid, he confirmed, was generally 8% below the market rate with the landlord maintaining the property and the agreement ends when the tenant leaves. Thus, he said, with the marked increase in market rents due to inflation over the last few years there were inequalities in the Long-term leasing scheme. He noted that the review mechanism was every three years based on an index of the Harmonised Index of Consumer Price.

C/39/24

THAT BANKS AND LENDING INSTITUTIONS PROVIDE 0% BRIDGING LOANS AS WORKING CAPITAL TO DEFECTIVE HOMEOWNER APPLICANTS.

On the proposal of Cllr T Crossan seconded by Cllr A Doherty it was resolved to adopt the following motion:

"That the Department of Housing ensure that banks and lending institutions provide 0% bridging loans as working capital to Defective Homeowner applicants to enable them to progress with remedial works."

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

Cllr Crossan alluded to the fact that many homeowners were finding it difficult to meet the initial costs involved in commencing remedial works and that staged payment was not working for many of the families involved. They were struggling, he noted, to raise the working capital and the financial institutions were not helpful. He cited the necessity of ensuring that banks and lending institutions provided 0% bridging loans as working capital for defective homeowner applicants.

Cllr A. Doherty concurred with this assessment and welcomed the fact that a sub-group had been set up within the Department of Housing, Local Government & Heritage to examine financial aspects of the DCBS. He said that it was imperative that the motion was highlighted to the sub-group prior the scheduled meeting in February.

There was no opposition to the motion.

Mr Michael Mc Garvey, Director Water & Environment said that he Was happy to bring the matter to the attention of the Department.

Cllr Crossan concluding outlined the need for anyone with any influence to put pressure on the financial institutions to alleviate the stress placed on defective concrete blocks homeowners.

C/40/24

THAT THE COUNCIL MARK THE 125TH ANNIVERSARY OF IRELANDS FIRST COUNCIL ELECTIONS IN 1899.

On the proposal of Cllr Kennedy, seconded by Cllr N Crossan it was resolved to adopt the following motion:

"That Donegal County Council marks the 125th Anniversary of Ireland's first council elections in 1899."

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

Cllr Kennedy noted that the first meeting of Donegal County Council had taken place on the 22nd of April, 1899 and called for the anniversary to be formally commemorated. This was something, she said, that could be coordinated by the Cultural Services Section.

Cllr N Crossan seconding the motion said that the AILG had already outlined the need for some form of commemoration.

There was no opposition to the motion.

Mr Patsy Lafferty, Director Housing, Corporate & Cultural Services noted the suggestions and agreed to follow-up in relation to the matter. He said that he would revert to members with further detail when available.

C/41/24

FUNDING SUPPORT TO FESTIVALS AND EVENTS.

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

"That this Council makes changes to increase the scope of the Regional Festivals and Participative Events fund to enable funding support to festivals and events that occur in the early months of the calendar year."

He received a response from the Director of Economic Development, Information Systems & Emergency Services in relation to the above.

Cllr Sweeny called for the scope of the fund to be extended given that the allocation period commenced in March in any given year. He advised of the need for security for festivals/events occurring early in the year. This, he said would benefit tourism and the community generally, whilst also impacting on the local economy. He welcomed the fact that it was intended to hold a specific meeting of the Economic Development, Information Systems and Emergency Services SPC to consider the item further. He said it was imperative that new initiatives were in place by 2025 to facilitate festivals taking place in January and February of that year.

Cllr Kavanagh supporting the motion advised of the need to cover all the months of the year so as to support those events that generally took place in the quieter months of the year.

There was no opposition to the motion.

Mr Garry Martin, Director Economic Development, Information Systems and Emergency Services said that crux of the matter was the flexibility of the existing scheme. It would be considered, he confirmed, at a specific meeting of the Economic Development, Information Systems and Emergency Services SPC and consideration given as to how the funding programme could be reframed in the context of the new frameworks.

Cllr Sweeny thanked the Director of Services for his response.

C/42/24

RECRUITMENT CAMPAIGN FOR MEN AND WOMEN FOR ALL THE FIRE STATIONS THROUGHOUT THE COUNTY

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

"That this Council start a recruitment campaign of men and women for all the fire stations throughout the county."

He received a response from the Director of Economic Development, IS & Emergency Services.

Cllr Mc Mahon advised of the need to begin a recruitment campaign as soon as possible and cited the need for five additional personnel in Bundoran. Fire Service personnel, he contended, did an excellent job and there was a need presently to commence a dedicated recruitment campaign across various elements of the community in order to attract new recruits to the service.

Cllr A Doherty supporting the motion said that going forward it was important that the terms of employment were sufficient to attract new personnel. He said that he hoped there was flexibility in the new job specification and an associated work life balance that would allow personnel serve their community in the best possible manner. There was no opposition to the motion.

Mr Patsy Lafferty, Director Housing, Corporate & Cultural Services informed members that a recruitment campaign would commence in the next two weeks to create panels of qualified candidates and thus fill vacancies across all 15 Retained Fire Brigades in the county.

Cllr Mc Mahon welcomed the response.

C/43/24`

CHILD AND ADOLESCENT COUNSELLING SERVICE RAPHOE PASTORAL CENTRE

It was unanimously agreed to consider Motions No 19 and 23 together.

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

"That this Council in recognition of the great work undertaken by the Child and Adolescent Counselling Service based at the Raphoe Pastoral Centre in Letterkenny write to Minister Mary Butler and the HSE requesting that her Department and the HSE make an intervention to ensure that the funding necessary to maintain the service being provided by the Adolescent Counselling Service right across Donegal is provided for by her department annually to ensure that this very important counselling service for our young people is maintained and fully funded."

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

Cllr Mc Monagle said that the motion was submitted in response to the news that funding for the Child and Adolescent Counselling Service based at the Raphoe Pastoral Centre in Letterkenny was due to fold in mid-March. This service, he said, had been provided since 2010 and had delivered over 15,000 counselling sessions here and in the various outreach centres. There were, he noted, 26 part-time counsellors working with the centre and at any one time at least 120 people were in receipt of the service. There were, he advised, 350 people on the waiting list at present and there was an acute need for a full-time Director and Co-ordinator. Despite a concerted effort, he said, no funding had been identified from the HSE or Tusla. The reality was, he said that the County was facing the loss of a vital service and many people would be left without a much-needed counselling service.

Funding in the region of €80k would, he confirmed, provide for the employment of full-time Counsellor/Director of Service and a Co-ordinator. He alluded to the fact that it had been over a month since the crisis had arisen and that there was no sign to date of any solution being provided.

The Minister, he said, needed to make an intervention so that either the HSE or Tusla came up with the necessary funding. The service provided by the Centre, he confirmed, was delivered for less than half of the costs incurred by the statutory agencies. He expressed concern that there had been no effective intervention to date.

Cllr Murray outlined his support for the motion and noted that this was an issue that impacted people county-wide and that it was imperative that the funding was found to ensure the survival of this critical service.

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

"That Donegal County Council calls for investment from the HSE and Tusla to finance a Director of Counselling and a Co-ordinator to enable the Raphoe Diocesan Pastoral Services CLG continue its services across

the County". The Pastoral Centre is currently helping 120 clients across seven outreach centres in Letterkenny, Dunfanaghy, Stranorlar, Creeslough and Bunrana. 350 young people are on the waiting list."

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

Cllr Mc Gowan said that this was one of the more serious services and was pivotal in reaching out to adolescents and young people where intervention was vital at an early stage. The Diocese, he said, had issues in terms of the expense involved and the bureaucratic nature of the process. He cited the need to have a full-time Manager in place and to have part-time Counsellors working on a permanent basis.

He said that funding needed to be provided immediately for a two-year period and a long-term strategy put in place going forward. Clarity was needed, he added, for both the counsellors and the clients.

Cllr Crawford supporting the motion said that it was a sensitive subject. It was essential, he added, that discussions continued given the benefits and necessity of the service to date.

Members were informed that it would cost the HSE in the region of €273k to deliver 3000 counselling sessions yet the Raphoe Pastoral Service could provide the same service for €105k.

There was no opposition to the motions.

Mr Patsy Lafferty, Director Housing, Corporate & Cultural Services said that the motions as adopted would be forwarded to the Minister for State for Mental Health, Ms Mary Butler, TD, the HSE and Tusla.

Cllr Mc Monagle welcomed the support and said that the HSE had been aware of the work carried out by the Pastoral Centre for the past number of years. He welcomed the fact that the Minister had taken an interest in the situation and said that her intervention was necessary as the service provided was one of its kind in Ireland and was the perfect blueprint for the delivering a counselling service.

Cllr Mc Gowan thanked members and said that the service had to be funded and delivered mainstream.

C/44/24

MAKING APPRENTICESHIPS MORE ATTRACTIVE IN DONEGAL

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

"That this Council engage with the Minister for Education Norma Foley and the Minister for Further and Higher Education, Research, Innovation and Science, Simon Harris T.D and SOLAS (Ireland's Further Education and Training Authority) asking that they focus strongly on making

apprenticeships more attractive here in Donegal to help entice young people to improve skills such as Block Laying, Carpentry, Electrical, Plastering, Plumbing, Technical Design etc by taking up apprenticeships please. "

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

Cllr Kelly said it was imperative that apprenticeships were made more attractive to encourage young people to gain skills in a range of trades. Contractors, he noted, were struggling at present to get skilled workers and the situation in Donegal with the Defective Blocks crisis made the necessity more urgent.

An apprenticeship, he added, would enable young people to acquire skills and trades which they could use anywhere in the world. He asked that a copy of the motion be forwarded to the Minister for Education, Ms Norma Foley, T.D, the Minister for Further & Higher Education, Research, Innovation, and Science, Mr Simon Harris T.D, and to SOLAS highlighting the need to make the Apprenticeship Programme more attractive.

Cllr Brogan outlined the necessity of having a forum to discuss the issue with employers and said that the Construction Industry Federation needed to actively engage with all stakeholders. He acknowledged the excellent work carried out by the ATU and the ETB in providing apprenticeship programmes. The gaps at the minute, he said, were in the whole area of construction. The time was right, he acknowledged to engage further with the Construction Industry Federation and IBEC to explore all available funding options.

There was no opposition to the motion.

Cllr Kelly welcomed the response and concurred with Cllr Brogan that a dedicate forum was needed going forward and a concerted effort made to stop young people leaving the county.

C/45/24

REQUEST TO INCREASE THE HAP HOUSING ASSESSMENT PAYMENTS FOR TENANTS

On the proposal of Cllr O'Fearraigh, seconded by Cllr McMahon it was resolved to adopt the following motion:

"That Donegal County Council ask the Minister to increase the HAP Housing assessment payments for tenants that are availing of this scheme which the rent has increased over the last 12 months and in line with inflation".

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

Cllr O' Fearraigh said that for the last number of years there had been problems when applying for the HAP Scheme. There were difficulties, he added, as tenants were not able to afford the higher rents and there was a distinct lack of available accommodation. He asked that the Minister for Housing, Local Government & Heritage be informed of the need to increase the HAP for tenants and in line with the current rate of inflation.

Cllr Mc Mahon outlined his support and said something needed to be done immediately as rents were increasing tenfold and many families were in dire straits causing serious health and economic problems for tenants.

There was no opposition to the motion.

Mr Patsy Lafferty, Director Housing, Corporate & Cultural Services said that there were 1,702 active HAP tenancies in the county in 2023 with 273 new tenancies set up in 2023.

He alluded to the fact that Local Authorities had some flexibility to go above the HAP limits if a household could not find accommodation within the limits and were paying a top up to the landlord. There was facility, he advised, to go up to 35% above the rent limits and the HAP rates for a single person could be increased to the rate allowed for couples in specific circumstances.

Cllr O' Fearraigh welcomed the response and said it was imperative that an increase in HAP rates was introduced.

C/46/24

THE COUNCIL WRITE TO THE T.I.I. AND THE HEALTH & SAFETY AUTHORITY TO BRING IN COMPULSORY HIGH VISIBILITY VEST WEARING.

On the proposal of Cllr McClafferty, seconded by Cllr O'Fearraigh it was resolved to adopt the following motion:

"That this Council write to the T.I.I. and the Health and Safety Authority to bring in compulsory high visibility vest wearing or at least armbands so that drivers have every chance of seeing pedestrians walking from a safe distance."

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

Cllr Mc Clafferty said that with so many people walking and using our roads there was a need to make the wearing of high visibility vests mandatory. He alluded to the fact that many accidents occurred as a result of drivers being unable to see pedestrian's wearing dark clothing. This was further compounded, he added, by the fact that in many locations there were no footpaths. He alluded in particular to the Dunfanaghy and Port na Blagh areas.

Cllr O' Fearraigh supporting the motion noted that there were difficulties with road safety in Donegal and that many people did not pay attention to the relevant road safety advice. He acknowledged the fact that there were also problems in terms of the lack of public lighting.

It was further resolved that the motion be amended to include eScooters and reference to An Garda Síochána to read as follows.

"That this Council write to the T.I.I and the Health and Safety Authority and An Garda Síochána to bring in compulsory high visibility vest wearing or at least armbands so that drivers have every chance of seeing pedestrians walking from a safe distance and those using e-Scooters."

There was no opposition to the motion.

Mr Bryan Cannon, A/Director Roads & Transportation acknowledged the significance of the motion given that 44 pedestrians had lost their lives on the roads in 2023 and 43 in 2022. This, he said, represented between 1 in 4 and 1 in 5 of all deaths on the roads with pedestrians being the most vulnerable road users. The RSA advice, he stated, clearly stated, he added, that pedestrians should wear bright clothing and carry a torch when walking at night. Donegal County Council, it was noted, provided high-visibility vests to the public free of charge.

He confirmed that the motion would be forwarded to the Department of Transport, the Road Safety Authority and An Garda Síochána for their attention.

Cllr Mc Clafferty thanked members for supporting the motion and said that the message needed to be relayed loud and clear that the wearing of high-visibility clothing would save lives in the long run.

C/47/24

THAT THE COUNCIL CALL ON THE MINISTER FOR SOCIAL PROTECTION TO RE-EXAMINE THE QUALIFYING CRITERIA FOR COMMUNITY EMPLOYMENT SCHEMES

It was resolved to defer the motion below as submitted by Cllr G Doherty to the next meeting of Council.

"That Donegal County Council calls on the Minister for Social Protection to re-examine the qualifying criteria for Community Employment Schemes including:

- *Reducing the qualifying period on a social welfare payment from 12 months to 6 months.*
- *Extending the maximum length on the Scheme from 3 years to 4 years.*
- *Increasing the minimum weekly payment for participants from €259.50 to €300.*

C/48/24

CATHAOIRLEACH'S BUSINESS

Votes of Sympathy

A vote of sympathy was extended to the following:

- Nicola Farrell, Human Resources on the death of her sister, Claire Devine.
- Mary Foley, Management Accounts on the death of her father, Kevin Foley.
- Sinead Mc Laughlin, Library Service, Carndonagh PSC on the death of her father, Mario Comiskey.
- The family of the late John Carr, former Roads Service Supervisor, Letterkenny/Milford MD.
- Paul Mc Gill, Housing & Corporate on the death of his mother, Margaret Mc Gill.
- Eunan Quinn, Planning on the death of his mother, Stella Quinn.
- The family of the late Myra O' Reilly wife of the late Tom O' Reilly (former County Secretary)
- Clodagh Murray, Community Development, Inishowen on the death of her father, Charles Murray.
- Noelle Sandilands on the death of her father, John Sandilands.
- Brid Mc Grenra, Housing, Lifford/Stranorlar MD on the death of her brother Hugh Mc Menamin.
- Anthony Mc Grath, Roads, Donegal MD on the death of his mother, Mary Bridget Mc Grath.
- Jim Doherty, Information Systems on the death of his father, Seamus Doherty.
- Declan Gillespie, Roads, Donegal MD on the death of his father, Conal.

Letter of Appreciation – Mr Paul Lynch

The Cathaoirleach read into the record a note of appreciation from Mr Paul Lynch, Booker Prize winning author. It was hoped, he said, to discuss at the next CPG meeting arrangements for some form of event to mark his outstanding achievement.

C/49/24

CHIEF EXECUTIVE'S MANAGEMENT REPORT

Members noted the contents of the Chief Executive's Report and received an update in relation to the following:

1. Community Development & Planning Services

A. Community Development

(i) *CLAR 2023*

(ii) *Local Economic & Community Plan: LECP 2023-2029*

- B. Urban & Rural Regeneration & Development
 - (i) *Rural Regeneration & Development Fund (RRDF)*
 - (ii) *RRDF – Fifth Call for Category 1 Applications*
 - (iii) *Urban Regeneration & Development Fund (URDF)*
 - (iv) *Croi Conaithe Vacant Property Refurbishment Grant Scheme*
 - (v) *Compulsory Purchase Order Activation Fund / Survey of Vacant Properties*

- C. Planning Services
 - (i) *Development Management*
 - (ii) *e-planning*
 - (iii) *Letterkenny Plan and Local Transport Plan 2023 - 2029*

2. Water and Environment

- A. Climate Action
 - (i) *Adoption of the Climate Action Plan 2024 – 2029*
 - (ii) *Community Climate Action Fund Announced*
 - (iii) *Sustainable Energy Communities Programme – Financing for Energy Master Plans*

- B. Waste & Litter Management
 - (i) *Christmas Green piece Feature*
 - (ii) *National Waste Enforcement Priority - Tackling illegal waste activities and multi-agency sites of concern*
 - (iii) *National Waste Enforcement Priority: Construction and demolition waste*
 - (iv) *National Waste Enforcement Priority: Household and commercial waste*
 - (v) *Waste Annual Returns*
 - (vi) *National Waste Enforcement Priority: Producer responsibility initiatives and additional local priorities*
 - (vii) *CCTV*
 - (viii) *Drones*
 - (ix) *Anti-Dumping Initiative Funding 20223*
 - (x) *Litter*
 - (xi) *Knowledge Exchange*
 - (xii) *Sale & use of Solid Fuel Coal*

3. Housing, Corporate & Cultural Services

- A. Housing Capital
 - (i) *Housing for All*
 - (ii) *Land Acquisition*
 - (iii) *Social Housing through Turnkey Acquisition*

- B. *Housing Municipal Districts*

- (i) Tenant Incremental Purchase Scheme*
- (ii) Draft Traveller Accommodation Programme 2025 – 2029*

C. *Enhanced Defective Concrete Blocks Grant Scheme - Update to 23rd January 2024*

D. *Cultural Services*

- (i) Creative Ireland*
- (ii) Library Service*
- (iii) Regional Cultural Centre*

4. Economic Development, I.S. & Emergency Services

A. Fire Service

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

B. Information Systems

- (i) Defective Concrete Blocks*
- (ii) National Broadband Plan*

5. Roads & Transportation

- A. National Roads Office
- B. Central Technical Services
- C. Roads Areas

The Chief Executive advised members that they could come back to him directly if there were any issues that warranted additional clarification.

Cllr O' Fearraigh was informed that funding had not yet been received from the T.I.I, but that an update was expected over the coming weeks.

The Director of Roads and Transportation said that an update would be forwarded to members when the funding details were received, but that preparations would continue in the meantime in respect of those works where funding was anticipated.

Cllr Kelly asked that every effort be made to address water issues in Newmills, Tullygay and the surrounding areas as ongoing disruptions are causing havoc at present.

Cllr Mc Bride requested clarity in relation to the supply of concrete blocks to Donegal County Council. He queried if the Council was accepting blocks from specific manufacturers only in the county. He asked that a response be provided at the Special Meeting on the 21st of February.

C/50/24

EVICCTIONS AND HOMELESSNESS IN DONEGAL

Cllr A Doherty submitted the following question:

What number of evictions have RTB confirmed in Donegal since April 2023 and what number of tenants have successfully availed of the Tenant-in-Situ Scheme in Donegal together with the current number of applicants deemed "Homeless" in Donegal?

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

C/51/24 **HOW DOES THE NOVEMBER, 2023 RELEASE OF THE POBAL HP DEPRIVATION INDEX AFFECT THE 2023-2029 DONEGAL LECP PLAN**
Cllr A Doherty submitted the following question:

How does the November 2023 release of the Pobal HP Deprivation Index (a Socio-Economic Statement) affect/influence the 2023-2029 Donegal LECP plan?

With little obvious change to 2021 areas of disadvantage, (since 2016), how will EESPC, LCDC and FMA Consultants re - engage with Communities, lobby Government, and ensure support is directed to areas and communities of disadvantage which require additional resources and support social inclusion?

He received a response from the Direction of Community Development & Planning Services in relation to the above.

C/52/24 **ARE THE COUNCIL GETTING ANY CO-OPERATION FROM THE BANKS IN RELATION TO THE BRIDGING LOANS FOR VACANT HOUSES**

Cllr McMahon submitted the following question:

Are the Council getting any co-operation from the banks in relation to the bridging loans for the vacant houses?

He received a response from the Director of Community Development & Planning in relation to the above.

C/53/24 **UPDATE ON THE FLOOD RELIEF SCHEMES ACROSS THE COUNTY**

Cllr McMonagle submitted the following question:

Can I have an update on all the Flood Relief Schemes across the County, what are there approximate start dates and how many have received approval to date?"

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

C/54/24 **HOW MANY APPLICATIONS WERE MADE TO THE DEPARTMENT OF HOUSING TO PURCHASE FOUR AND FIVE BED HOUSES SINCE 2019**

Cllr McMonagle submitted the following question:

How many applications has Donegal County Council made to the Department of Housing to purchase four and five bed houses since 2019 to date, what years were the applications made and how many were successful?

He received a response from the Director of Housing, Corporate and Cultural Services in relation to the above.

C/55/24 **HOW MANY HOUSING ACQUISITIONS HAVE BEEN RECEIVED OVER THE LAST 4 YEARS AND HOW MANY HAVE BEEN PURCHASED**
Cllr O'Fearraigh submitted the following question:

How many housing acquisitions have been received over the last 4 years from Municipal Districts within the County and how many have been purchased?

He received a response from the Director of Housing, Corporate and Cultural Services in relation to the above.

C/56/24 **AGREEMENT WITH THE MATTRESS RECYCLING BUSINESS IN GALWAY**
Cllr McGowan submitted the following question:

Can the Council come to an agreement with the mattress recycling business in Galway where the Council will arrange to collect and transport old mattress to the Galway centre as it is not economical for them to collect and transport themselves owing to the distance involved?

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

C/57/24 **CAN I HAVE AN UPDATE ON PROGRESS MADE ON THE VARIOUS FLOOD PREVENTION SCHEMES COUNTYWIDE**
Cllr Crawford submitted the following question:

Can I be updated on progress made on the various flood prevention schemes county wide?

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

C/58/24 **UPDATE ON PROGRESS MADE ON ENABLING THE PRIOR SCHOOL TO BE BROUGHT TO A STANDARD TO FACILITATE FRONT DOOR OF THE COUNTY ARCHIVES**
Cllr Crawford submitted the following question:

Can I be updated on progress made on enabling the Prior School to be brought to a standard to facilitate front door of the County Archives?

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

C/59/24 **CARRY OUT A COUNTYWIDE INFORMATION DROP-IN ON THE MANY NEW HOUSING SCHEMES THAT ARE AVAILABLE AT PRESENT**

Cllr McGowan submitted the following question:

Can the Council carry out a county wide information drop-in on the many new housing schemes that are available at present, as families that are unable to get on the Council housing list or other social housing schemes, need first-hand information on what new schemes are available and advice on which scheme would be best suited to their individual circumstances?

He received a response from the Director of Housing, Corporate and Cultural Services in relation to the above.

C/60/24 **HOW MANY PEOPLE HAVE PRESENTED AS HOMELESS TO DONEGAL COUNTY COUNCIL IN THE LAST FIVE YEARS**

Cllr G Doherty submitted the following question:

How many people have presented as homeless to Donegal County Council in each of the last five years and what is the process involved when a person presents as such?

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

C/61/24 **THE STATUS OF THE REGIONAL ELECTRIC VEHICLE CHARGING INFRASTRUCTURE STRATEGY**

Cllr G Doherty submitted the following question:

What is the status of the Regional Electric Vehicle Charging Infrastructure Strategy being developed with neighbouring Councils in the West/Northwest?

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

C/62/24 **HOW MANY HOURS AND MILEAGE HAVE OUR ROADS STAFF COVERED IN THE GRITTING AND CALL OUT SERVICES SINCE THE BEGINNING OF WINTER**

Cllr Crawford submitted the following question:

How many hours and mileage have our road staff covered in the gritting and call out service since the beginning of winter?

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

C/63/24 **Motions from other Councils/Bodies**

Members noted the motions from other Councils/Bodies.

CAVAN COUNTY COUNCIL

“It was resolved to write to Cavan GAA to express opposition to the proposal to remove Cavan from the Allianz Hurling League in 2025 along with counties Fermanagh, Leitrim, Longford, and Louth. The members stated that this is complete discrimination because we have fewer than five senior hurling clubs in our Counties”.

CLARE COUNTY COUNCIL

“I am calling on the Housing Minister Darragh O’Brien to review the Part V obligations placed on private housing developers and especially the social element and focus the obligation on the development of affordable housing and housing for people with disabilities. The current policy is a barrier to the development of private housing and especially for people in lower income categories that are struggling to secure their own home. Local Authorities are best placed to deliver social housing and need to be properly resourced.”

CLARE COUNTY COUNCIL

“We are calling on the Minister for Justice, Helen McEntee and the Garda Commissioner, Drew Harris to revisit the current model of policing as it is not fit for purpose and is based on reactionary policing and in the current times the public feel very vulnerable both in rural communities and urban communities throughout Clare and find the lack of adequate numbers of Gardai on the ground is having a negative impact on their lives.”

CLARE COUNTY COUNCIL

“Clare County Council calls on the Minister for Housing, Local Government & Heritage to publish the 2022-2025 Multi Annual Rural Water Programme without further delay. We are now at the end of year 2 of a 4-year programme and still we have no clarity for the many active group water schemes awaiting funding. Request that the motion be circulated to Clare Oireachtas members & all County Councils.”

LIMERICK CITY & COUNTY COUNCIL

“That, Limerick City and County Council write to the Minister for the Environment, Climate and Communications, Mr Eamon Ryan, TD, asking when the wind energy development guidelines will be revised and updated.”

LIMERICK CITY & COUNTY COUNCIL

“That this Joint Policing Committee write to the Commissioner to state our opposition to proposals to disband dedicated community policing and that we ask for the retention of these units and circulate this motion to all local authority Joint Policing Committees.”

This concluded the business of the meeting.

