

2<sup>nd</sup> April, 2015

TO ALL MEMBERS OF DONEGAL COUNTY COUNCIL
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The Adjourned March Meeting of Donegal County Council, will be held on Monday 13<sup>th</sup> April, 2015 at 10.00am, in the County House, Lifford to consider the unfinished business listed at Items below:-

Items 5b, 7a, 7b, 7c, 7d, 7e, 8, 9, 10, 11 – 29, 30, 31, 32 - 65.

Please ensure that you bring the agenda previously distributed to the meeting.

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Meetings Administrator

MINUTES OF ADJOURNED MARCH MEETING OF DONEGAL COUNTY  
COUNCIL, HELD IN THE COUNTY HOUSE, LIFFORD ON 13<sup>TH</sup> APRIL  
2015

C/131/15     MEMBERS PRESENT

Cllrs N Crossan, Leas Cathaoirleach, Blaney, E Bonner, C Brogan, P Canning, T Conaghan, G Crawford, A Doherty, G Doherty, L Doherty, R Donaghey, M Farren, M T Gallagher, M Harley, N Jordan, J Kavanagh, N Kennedy, M C Mac Giolla Easbuig, M Mc Bride, J P Mc Daid, M McDermott, S McEniff, I Mc Garvey, P McGowan, G McMonagle, J Murray, S O'Domhnaill, J O' Donnell, M Quinn, J Ryan, D Shiels, T Slowey.

C/132/15     OFFICIALS IN ATTENDANCE

Mr Seamus Neely, Chief Executive, Mr Liam Ward, Director of Housing, Corporate & Planning Control/ Meetings Administrator, Mr Garry Martin, Head of Finance & Director of Information Systems & Emergency Services, Mr Joe Peoples, A/Director of Water & Environment, Mr John McLaughlin, Director of Roads and Transportation, Mr Michael Heaney, Director of Community Culture & Planning, Mr Sean O'Daimhin, Oifigeach Na Gaeilge, Ms Anne Marie Conlon, Communications Officer, Ms Anne Marie Crawford, Staff Officer, Corporate Services.

C/133/15     APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from Cllrs Campbell, McBrearty, McGuinness and O'Fearraigh who were unable to attend the meeting.

Cllr Crossan chaired the meeting in the absence of the Cathaoirleach.

C/134/15     ADJOURNMENT OF THE MEETING

The meeting was interrupted for a brief period by the Right 2 Water Group - representing Donegal County Council Housing Tenants. They asked that they be allowed to address the Chief Executive in relation to the handing over of tenant's details to Irish Water

Members unanimously agreed a brief adjournment, following which the group presented the Chief Executive with a letter on behalf of all Council Tenants expressing their disappointment that their details had been passed on to Irish Water.

C/135/15 CONSIDERATION AND NOTING OF REPORT ON IRRECOVERABLE RATES 2014

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

Mr Garry Martin, Head of Finance, Director Information & Emergency Systems, said that he was obliged under Section 26 (2) of the Local Government (Financial Procedures and Audit Regulations) 2014 to present a report on irrecoverable rates for consideration and noting. He provided a detailed overview of his report dated 20<sup>th</sup> March, 2015.

C/136/15 ADJOURNMENT OF THE MEETING

The Leas Chathaoirleach responding to further interruptions from the Right 2Water Group declared his intention to adjourn the meeting.

An adjournment was then proposed by Cllr Mc Garvey and seconded by Cllr Slowey.

C/137/15 CONSIDERATION AND NOTING OF REPORT ON IRRECOVERABLE RATES 2014

On resumption Cllr Crossan confirmed that it was intended to complete the discussion on Irrecoverable Rates and then vary the order of business so that the Chief Executive could present his Management Report which provided clarification in relation to the provision of Tenant's data to Irish Water.

The Chief Executive acknowledged the significant contribution made by the business sector to the running of Donegal County Council over the past number of years. He thanked Members for their assistance also. Alluding to Table 4 in the Head of Finance's Report, and the 84% collection rate based on the 2014 accrual only, was, he noted, a good reflection of the Council's performance. The other calculations referred to, he said, encompassed all of the accumulated arrears and therefore reduced the impact of the collection performance overall.

Referring to recent commentary in the local and national media regarding the "Local Government Audit Service Report", he was, he said, concerned that there had been an inaccurate interpretation of this report and in particular to the assertion that Donegal County Council was insolvent. This Council, he said, like a number of

other Councils had an accumulated revenue deficit at the end of 2013 amounting to €17.797 million.

This accumulated deficit, he added, had been reported on previously and the debt managed as part of a multi-annual approach encompassing both the capital and revenue account. This ten year plan to deal with this deficit was, he confirmed, on track and indeed ahead of schedule.

There was, he said, no question as to the solvency of Donegal County Council and that the organisation would continue to trade in a solvent manner and in line with the required governance. It was factually incorrect, he said, to say that any business that had a revenue deficit was insolvent .

Donegal County Council, he confirmed, held fixed assets to the tune of €3.5 billion and this needed to be taken into consideration in the context of the reported deficit.

He informed asked Members that the financial outturn for 2014 was already being prepared and that this would reflect the merged position of the County and former Town Councils. This for the first time, it was acknowledged, would show the net joint position of the authorities concerned.

The position of Donegal County, he noted, had improved by some €785,000 and as a result of the merger with the Town Councils (and on a once off exceptional basis) by a further €2.045 million.

This in net terms, it was acknowledged, would see the previously mentioned revenue deficit being reduced by €2.83 million to less than €15 million. It was noted that the Council's Financial Statement for 2014 would also reflect the fact that there was a credit position on the specific revenue reserve to the sum of €3.375 million at the end of 2014.

This when netted off against the general deficit would mean a net deficit position of €11.6 million at the end of 2014. The track record and performance of 2014, was he noted, a testament to prudent decisions taken over the past number of years.

He said that he was looking forward to continuous engagement with the Members and satisfied that the plan in place would be sufficient to meet any challenges into the future.

He confirmed that there would be modest recruitment into the organisation in 2015, and that there would be a continuation of the planned approach as reflected in the Budget 2015 submission to the Members.

C/138/15 CHIEF EXECUTIVE'S MONTHLY MANAGEMENT REPORT

The Chief Executive advised that the functioning of the Council was divided into two main areas with decisions resting in some instances with the Elected Members and in others with the Executive of the Council.

He acknowledged that Members had voted not to pass on tenant's details to Irish Water, and that he had at the time informed the Council that he would have no option but to pass over the relevant details on receipt of a lawful request to do so by Irish Water.

Having subsequently received a request under Section 26 of the 2013 Water Services Act, he was, he confirmed, obliged legally to comply, as not to do so, would have meant disobeying a lawful request. It was on this basis that the requested information had been passed onto Irish Water and all stakeholders had been advised in advance of doing so.

C/139/15 CONSIDERATION AND NOTING OF REPORT ON IRRECOVERABLE RATES 2014

Members outlined the necessity of obtaining a comparison report for other Local Authorities along the eastern seaboard.

Clarity was requested in relation to the procedure for dealing with outstanding rates bills particularly in respect of companies which had gone into receivership.

There was general consensus that a press statement clarifying the processes used for rate collection in the County, should issue given recent unfair portrayal of the Council's finances in the local and national media.

The Chief Executive responding to a query on the cost benefits of going to court in the pursuit of rates arrears, advised that this

option was pursued only as a last resort and that every effort was made to engage positively with rates customers.

Many businesses, it was noted, had found the Council's approach to be reasonable, and it needed to be put on record that Donegal County Council had not closed any business or had been the reason for any business to stop trading. He advised that comparative analyses with other Local Authorities could be provided.

It was acknowledged that a considerable portion of uncollected rates related to "vacant" or "vacant for lease" properties and that 84% of the write-offs related to such vacancies. There was, he said a need to change the way in which rates were collected and that the Council was currently involved in a pilot programme which aimed to address this and other related issues.

Mr Garry Martin, Head of Finance, noted that there were different forms of legal protection and that businesses could fall into two categories, either receivership or liquidation. The Council, he confirmed, did engage with businesses who fell into these categories. In such cases, he confirmed that all related monies were pursued and paid through the new entity.

Section 32 of the Local Government Reform Act it was acknowledged offered some protection in this regard.

The legal route, he advised, was something however that was pursued only in exceptional circumstances.

C/140/15 CONSIDERATION OF REPORT ON INFRASTRUCTURAL PRIORITIES FOR COUNTY DONEGAL

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

It was noted that the document had been prepared in response to a previous Council Motion and that when fully developed would be reviewed and discussed with the Oireachtas Members. This, it was acknowledged would then be used in a lobbying context and engagement would proceed on the following basis:-

1. Agree breakdown of Infrastructure into groups that do not compete with each other for funding or prioritisation such as Broadband, National Roads, Strategic Regional Roads,

Housing, Water & Sewerage, Tourism, Piers & Harbours and Emergency Response.

2. Form a sub-group of Elected Members supported by relevant staff to develop and finalise each Infrastructure Group above.
3. Agree final document at Plenary Council.

The need to liaise with External Agencies and getting updated infrastructure requirements on their agendas was highlighted.

A lengthy discussion took place with Members highlighting the fact that priorities could be progressed more effectively at Municipal District level in a series of MD Workshops.

A number of issues warranting further consideration were identified including:-

- The need to include Cockhill Bridge.
- Provision of bus and rail transport.
- Any prioritisation needed to include a focus on rural roads, broadband deficiencies and the need for enhanced tourism infrastructure.
- Renewed focus on Town and Village Renewal.
- The fact that Irish Water were not generally accessible to the public and consideration to be given to addressing this issue.
- The Traffic Lights in Stranorlar and associated delays.
- Poor roads infrastructure in the Stranorlar Municipal District.
- Social exclusion as a result of the poor roads infrastructure.
- Logue's Bridge needed to be prioritised.
- Need for a committee to look at emigration issues in the North West.
- Coastal Erosion.
- Necessity of targeting income leaving the County and looking for ways to ensure better utilisation of same at local level. (Motor Tax receipts provided as an example)

On the proposal of Cllr Gallagher, seconded by Cllr Quinn it was resolved that priorities would be identified at district level in a round of dedicated workshops, and the relevant sub-groups formed to allow the matter come back to the May Council Meeting for consideration.

There was further discussion in relation to the issue of coastal erosion with Cllr Blaney contending that the matter required more prolonged discussion. The Chief Executive said there was a wider issue involved here, namely the Council's ability to co-fund any related works and that this needed to be considered before any outside organisations became involved.

It was thus agreed to hold a workshop on Monday 11<sup>th</sup> May, 2015 at 10.00am in the County House, Lifford to further consider the infrastructural priorities for County Donegal.

C/141/15 CONSIDERATION AND ADOPTION OF THE AUDIT COMMITTEE CHARTER

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

On the proposal of Cllr Farren, seconded by, Cllr Donaghey it was resolved to adopt the Audit Committee Charter.

C/142/15 CONSIDERATION AND ADOPTION OF THE AUDIT COMMITTEE REPORT FOR 2014

Members considered the report circulated in relation to the above.

On the proposal of Cllr McDermott, seconded by, Cllr Harley, it was resolved to adopt the Audit Committee Report for 2014.

C/143/15 CONSIDERATION OF REQUEST FROM THE SECRETARIAT OF THE NORTH WEST REGION CROSS BORDER GROUP TO MAKE A PRESENTATION TO PLENARY COUNCIL

On the proposal of Cllr Canning, seconded by, Cllr Donaghey it was resolved to invite the NWRCBG to make a presentation at the May Council Meeting.

C/144/15 AGREEMENT OF A DATE FOR THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING 2015

On the proposal of Cllr Canning, seconded by, Cllr Donaghey it was resolved to hold the 2015 Annual General Meeting of Donegal County Council on the 15<sup>th</sup> June at 3.00pm in the County House, Lifford.

C/145/15 TO NOTE THE MINUTES OF MEETING OF CORPORATE POLICY GROUP HELD ON THE 21<sup>ST</sup> JULY 2014

Members noted the Minutes of Meeting of Corporate Policy Group held on the 21<sup>st</sup> July, 2014.

C/146/15 TO NOTE THE MINUTES OF SPECIAL MEETING OF CORPORATE POLICY GROUP HELD ON THE 15<sup>TH</sup> SEPTEMBER 2014

Members noted the Minutes of Special Meeting of Corporate Policy Group held on the 15<sup>th</sup> September, 2014.

C/147/15 TO NOTE THE MINUTES OF MEETING OF CORPORATE POLICY GROUP HELD ON THE 26<sup>TH</sup> SEPTEMBER, 2014

Members noted the Minutes of Meeting of Corporate Policy Group held on the 26<sup>th</sup> September, 2014.

C/148/15 TO NOTE THE MINUTES OF SPECIAL MEETING OF CORPORATE POLICY GROUP HELD ON THE 22<sup>ND</sup> OCTOBER, 2014

Members noted the Minutes of Special Meeting of Corporate Policy Group held on the 22<sup>nd</sup> October, 2014.

C/149/15 TO NOTE THE MINUTES OF MEETING OF CORPORATE POLICY GROUP HELD ON THE 17<sup>TH</sup> NOVEMBER, 2014

Members noted the Minutes of Meeting of Corporate Policy Group held on the 17<sup>th</sup> November, 2014.

C/150/15 TO NOTE THE MINUTES OF MEETING OF CORPORATE POLICY GROUP HELD ON THE 19<sup>TH</sup> JANUARY, 2015

Members noted the Minutes of Meeting of Corporate Policy Group held on the 19<sup>th</sup> January, 2015.

C/151/15 CONFERENCES

Having noted the revised arrangements under Section 142 5(d) of the Local Government Act, 2001, introduced by the Local Government (Expenses of Local Authority Members) Regulations 2006 and 2010 and directives issued by the Minister in that regard, on the proposal of Cllr Donaghey, seconded by, Cllr Farren, it was resolved to authorise any member, if he/she so wished, to attend the following conferences, subject to the normal procedures:-

1. Individual members not exceeding their annual budget for attendance at conferences.

2. Payment of expenses for attendance to be conditional on the member furnishing documentary evidence of attendance.
3. Submission of a Conference Report

### **Training:-**

- To approve the attendance of Cllr Jack Murray on the IPA Summer Bridging Studies Course 2015. (To be paid in arrears). **Cllr Murray withdrew his application to attend the Summer Bridging Studies Course.**
- AILG “In Service” Training Dates 2015.
  - February 2015 Governance (Part 1) of Local Authorities
  - April 2015 Economic Development – Role of Local Authorities
  - May 2015 Local Community Development & LCDC’s – New Role for Local Authorities
  - June 2015 Local Authority Finance – Module 2 (Module 1 presented in 2014)
  - October 2015 Roads, Transport & Urban Traffic Planning and other Local Authority Services
  - November 2015 New Regional Assemblies Structure and their Relationship with Local Authorities & Governance (Part 2) Ethics
- AILG – Second Annual Conference 2015 to be held Thursday 12<sup>th</sup> and Friday 13<sup>th</sup> March, 2015 in the Nuremore Hotel, Carrickmacross, Co Monaghan.
- LAMA – Spring Training Seminar Housing Provision to be held Friday 10<sup>th</sup> and Saturday 11<sup>th</sup> April, 2015 in the Ard Ri House Hotel Tuam Co Galway.

### **Conferences:-**

- Celtic Conferences – The Finance Act 2014 to be held from Friday 10<sup>th</sup> to Sunday 12<sup>th</sup> April, 2015 in the Clonakilty Hotel, Co Cork.
- Dundalk Chamber – Attracting a new sort of Tourist in the “Decade of Commemorations” to be held Wednesday 15<sup>th</sup> April, 2015 in the Crown Plaza Dundalk.

- Irish Planning Institute – 40<sup>th</sup> Anniversary National Planning Conference 2015 to be held Thursday 16<sup>th</sup> and Friday 17<sup>th</sup> April, 2015 in the Clarion Hotel, Co Cork.

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C/152/15 CONFERENCE REPORTS

On the proposal of Cllr Donaghey, seconded by, Cllr Harley, the following Conference Reports were noted:-

**Cllr Patrick McGowan**

Irish Water held Wednesday 29<sup>th</sup> October 2014 in Carrick-on-Shannon Co Leitrim.

**Cllr Terence Slowey**

Nuclear Free Local Authorities held Saturday 12<sup>th</sup> December, 2014 at the Dublin City Hotel.

**Cllr Terence Slowey**

AILG Governance of Local Authorities Part1held Saturday 21<sup>st</sup> February 2015 at the Arklow Bay Hotel Wicklow.

**Cllr Nicholas Crossan**

Seminar Protected Disclosures Act 2014 held in the Connacht Hotel, Old Dublin Road, Galway on 12<sup>th</sup> & 13<sup>th</sup> December, 2014.

C/153/15 FULL REPORT ON TENDERING FOR COUNCIL PROJECTS

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

"That a full report on tendering Council projects is brought to Members with the names, addresses of all Contractors who are presently on lists and or deemed eligible to carry out any jobs including repairs to Housing, Roads, Water and Environmental etc."

Members were informed that:-

“Works contracts are generally procured through one of two methods:

- Through a standalone competitive process for the specific contract, compliant with public procurement rules
- Through a confined competition using a pre existing Framework or pre-qualified panel

There are currently 4 LAQuotes Frameworks in operation that Donegal Co. Council can use for procurement of works contracts of one form or another:

- Plant Hire Services
- Road Making Materials (Supply and Placement)
- Road Marking Services
- Energy Efficiency Retrofitting Works for Social Housing

There are other LAQuotes frameworks for supply of goods/materials only, which appear to be outside the scope of the Motion submitted.

The Council has requested the Local Government Operations Procurement Centre (LGOPC), which is operated by Kerry Co. Council on behalf of the sector, to provide an up to date list of active framework members in each case, and this information will be made available when provided.

All of the above frameworks with the exception of the Energy Efficiency Retrofit Works one are organised on a national basis. This results in the entire advertising, evaluation and appointment being done by LGOPC (Kerry Co Co).

The Energy Efficiency Upgrades one was significantly different in that each participating LA was required to undertake it's own tender process using a standard set of documents provided by LGOPC.

In all cases involving LAQuotes frameworks, works contracts are awarded following a mini-competition amongst all eligible framework members.

It is anticipated that further frameworks will be rolled out over the coming months (particularly in the Housing maintenance/refurbishment area), which the Council will have the option of participating in.

Frameworks are increasingly becoming the preferred method of procurement for minor works contracts. Major capital works are, and most likely will continue to be, procured via standalone public tenders.

In addition to LAQuotes frameworks, Roads has set up its own arrangements for particular work types:

- Minor Civils Framework (Expires 31st Dec 2015) - contains 10 different Lots (types of work), for each of which there is a separate list of framework members.
- Prequalified Panel for Non-National Roads Contracts 2013-2016 (Expires 31st Dec 2016)

Both arrangements were put in place by way of a public tendering procedure, in compliance with public procurement procedures.

It should be noted that being on a framework or prequalified panel does not guarantee a contractor getting any work. Contracts are awarded by way of mini-competition run amongst framework/panel members.

Also, just because there is a framework/panel in place doesn't mean that all relevant works are procured through that means. The Council can use a standalone procedure in any given instance – as long as it is compliant with public procurement rules.

Also, in emergency situations, works may have to be undertaken by whoever is ready and available to respond at short notice. This, however, should be very much the exception rather than the rule.

The Housing department also has some current panels in place locally for minor works. These panels are established following a pre-qualifying process.

The tendering and procurement of contracts in relation to Water and Wastewater works is now a matter for Irish Water.”

Cllr Mc Gowan asked that the Donegal County Council Economic Development Committee in conjunction with other bodies such as the HSE look at their tendering processes and provide an outline of their shared experiences in dealing with tenders over the past six years.

He expressed concern that small contractors did not receive adequate feedback as to why they had been turned down for specific jobs.

Cllr Canning highlighted the benefits of employing local contractors advising that there were associated benefits also for the local community.

There was no opposition to the motion.

Mr Liam Ward, Director Housing Corporate, & Planning Control alluding to his reply, confirmed that the updated listing of active framework members would be circulated as soon as it became available.

C/154/15 TOURISM POTENTIAL FOR DRUBMOE WOODS

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

That this Council consider the tourism potential of Drumboe Woods and surrounding historical grounds and devise a plan for regeneration of the area for a county tourism project, encompassing:-

- public consultation
- town plan
- tourism potential."

Members were informed that:-

“Ballybofey and Stranorlar have been identified as a Development Centre / Hub for Co. Donegal and in this context, Donegal County Council will be working to develop the towns’ capacity in terms of tourism, sports and enterprise.

In this regard, the full tourism potential will be examined including amenities such as Drumboe Woods and an action plan agreed to be implemented together with partner agencies and the local community. This work is now underway.”

Cllr L Doherty advised of the need to promote and develop this site as a major tourism attraction for the east of the County. The woods, he noted were steeped in history and were presently a lost gem. This combined with the potential to develop as town-park needed to be explored.

There was, he added only one small fingerpost sign there at present. Welcoming the response, he said, that there was great potential for the local community to get involved in any proposed project.

Cllr Garry Doherty said it was crucial that it was developed as a Strategic Tourism Project either in terms of a scenic walk or as part of a Greenway Project. The Drumboe site, he contended, was regardless of politics, part of our shared history and should be developed ahead of the 1916 celebrations.

There was no opposition to the motion.

Mr Michael Heaney, Director Community, Culture & Planning Development noted that Ballybofey/ Stranorlar had been identified as part of a Development Centre- Hub for County Donegal. He agreed to keep the Stranorlar Municipal District Members informed.

Cllr Doherty concluding the debate said that there was room also to explore the notion of an "Enchanted Forest Fest" which could be progressed in tandem with the Errigal Arts Festival.

C/155/15 CALL FOR THE GOVERNMENT TO SUPPLY DONEGAL COUNTY COUNCIL WITH AN EXCEPTIONAL NEEDS GRANTS OF €100 MILLION FOR THE LOCAL ROADS NETWORK IN THE COUNTY

It was resolved to defer the following motion submitted by Cllr Mc Brearty to later in the meeting:-

"I am calling on the Government to supply Donegal County Council with an exceptional needs grant of €100 million for the local roads network in the county along with the annual yearly allocation for local roads funding, and that this exceptional needs roads grant be allocated on a needs basis which will deal with the horrendous problems we have in the county with our local roads, some which are now undriveable due to the lack of funding over many years."

C/156/15 CALL FOR A MORATORIUM ON THE GRANTING OF PLANNING PERMISSION TO WINDFARM DEVELOPMENTS UNTIL A REVIEW OF THE CURRENT LEGISLATION AND PLANNING GUIDELINES IS CARRIED OUT

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

"That Donegal County Council calls on the Minister for the Environment to immediately introduce a moratorium on the granting of planning permission to wind farm developments until a full review of the current legislation and planning guidelines is carried out."

Members were informed that:-

“Should Donegal County Council adopt this motion, arrangements will be made to forward same to the Minister for the Environment, Community & Local Government for his information and attention.”

Cllr G Doherty said that the Planning Guidelines relating to Wind Farm development were outdated and not fit for purpose at this juncture.

He advised, of the need for a moratorium on the granting of permissions for these type of development until such time as new guidelines/regulations issued.

This, he contended would allow both residents and developers to know exactly where they stood, and cut out any element of political wrangling.

Cllr Gallagher alluded to the need for radical reform and protection for the communities concerned.

There was no opposition to the motion.

Mr Liam Ward, Director Housing, Corporate & Planning Control, advised that arrangements would be made to have the motion forwarded to the Minister.

Cllr G Doherty thanked Members for their support and outlined his intention to present the motion at the next scheduled ICBAN meeting.

C/157/15 GO GCUIRFAIDH AN COMHAIRLE CLÁR LE CHÉILE CHUN  
TUARSAIRÍ A MHEALLADH GO GNÓNNA AGUS  
COMHLACHTAÍ ATÁ AG ÚSÁID AN GHAEILGE MAR  
THEANGA GNÓ

CALL FOR THE COUNCIL TO PRODUCE A PROGRAMME TO ATTRACT TOURISTS TO THOSE BUSINESSES AND COMPANIES THAT USE THE IRISH LANGUAGE AS A BUSINESS LANGUAGE

It was resolved on the proposal of Cllr Gallagher, seconded by Cllr Quinn to adopt the following Motion submitted by Cllr O'Ferrairigh:-

"Go gcuirfaidh an comhairle clár le chéile chun toursairí a mhealladh go gnónna agus comhlachtaí atá ag úsáid an ghaeilge mar theanga gnó. Ba Dún na nGall an Ghaeltacht is mó sa tír, go mbeidh branda acu fhéin agus go mbeidh deis ar chuairoteoirí earraí gaelach a cheannacht fríd margaíocht ó gnónna agus comhlachtaí gaeltachta, béim a bheith ar an teanga, greasán a bhúnadh sa ghaeltacht do gnónna gaeilge."

"That the Council produce a programme to attract tourists to those businesses and companies that use the Irish Language as a business language. Donegal is the largest Gaeltacht in the Country, that they have their own brand and that visitors have the opportunity to purchase Irish products through the marketing of Gaeltacht businesses and companies, with an emphasis on the language, and the establishment of a network of Irish language businesses in the Gaeltacht."

Members were informed that:-

"Tá sé aitheanta go bhfuil an Ghaeltacht agus an Ghaeilge an-tábhachtach mar acmhainní eacnamaíochta agus turasóireachta, agus sa chomhthéacs seo beidh an Plean Áitiúil Eacnamaíochta agus Pobail ag cur béim ar na deiseanna a bhaineann leis an Ghaeltacht agus leis an Ghaeilge ó thaobh na turasóireachta, na dtionscal cruthaitheach agus an chultúir i gcoitinne. Beidh Comhairle Contae Dhún na nGall agus Turasóireacht Dhún na nGall Teo. ag obair go dlúth le háisíneachtaí agus le pobail éagsúla lena chinntiú go bhforbrófar an acmhainn seo ina hiomláine agus go gcuirfear sin i bhfeidhm le linn thréimhse an Phlean Áitiúil Eacnamaíochta agus Pobail, agus i gcomhthéacs LEADER / RDP agus go mbeidh sé seo le feiceáil go soiléir i gláracha oibreacha na n-áisíneachtaí eile chomh maith.

It is recognised that An Gaeltacht and the Irish language are key economic and tourism resources for Donegal and in this context the

LECP will be highlighting the opportunities relating to An Gaeltacht and the Irish language in terms of tourism, creative industries and culture in general.

Donegal County Council and Donegal Tourism Ltd will work closely with agencies and local communities to ensure that this resource is fully developed and appropriate actions implemented over the course of the LECP and in the context of the LEADER / RDP and that this is also reflected in work programmes of other agencies.”

C/158/15

RURAL DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME

On the proposal of Cllr M.T. Gallagher, seconded by, Cllr Mc Monagle, the following motion was adopted:-

That this Council outline the process issued by the department to LCDC to deliver the Rural Development Programme, and outline the process to proceed to delivering this programme, and further condemn the cut in funding to this programme."

Members were informed that:-

“Notification has been received of the potential LEADER allocation under the Rural Development Programme 2014-2020 for Co. Donegal.

The allocated notified to us is €12.9 million. This allocation will be subject to the LEADER /RDP submission made for the county and its acceptance by the DECHLG. This detailed submission will follow on from an initial Expression of Interest (EOI) which will be made once a formal call for such expressions is made.

Donegal Local and Community Development Committee (LCDC) will be making an Expression of Interest once called for.

Donegal LCDC will be the proposed Local Action Group (LAG) for County Donegal and it is proposed that following on from this EOI that the LCDC will make a detailed submission. In this context, Donegal County Council will have a lead role with regard the management remit for the LCDC.

Any submission made by Donegal LCDC in relation to the LEADER /RDP will be closely aligned with and drawn from the

Local Economic and Community Plan (LECP) with regard to its content.

Preparatory work has commenced on the Donegal LEADER /RDP submission with the Donegal County Council Research Unit collating necessary data and discussions initiated by Donegal County Council with relevant stakeholders including Local Development Companies.

It is envisaged that if the Donegal LCDC is successful in its bid and becomes the Donegal LAG that an SLA can be entered into to assist the LCDC and Donegal County Council in delivering the Rural Development Programme. (Inishowen Development Partnership, Donegal Local Development Company, Comhar na nOilean and Udaras na Gaeltachta).

The next phase of LEADER / RDP in the county will ensure that key projects and sectors as identified in the Donegal LECP are advanced for the benefit of the community.

A call has now been made for expressions of interest and the Donegal LCDC will be expressing its interest in becoming the Local Action Group for County Donegal.”

Cllr Gallagher said that there was much confusion amongst community groups in general with regard to the new establishment. It was imperative, she said, that all such groups were informed that it would be October at least before funding was available. She said it was regrettable that there had been a 48% cut in funding to the programme.

Supporting the motion Cllr Mc Monagle, advised that there had been a considerable increase in the number of applications to the Strategic Development Fund as a result of the funding cuts.

He asked for additional clarity in relation to the timelines and associated criteria for those groups wishing to submit an expression of interest.

There was no opposition to the motion.

Mr Michael Heaney, Director Community, Culture & Planning Development agreed that there was a need for clarity here particularly with the change over from the old CDB structure.

Confirmation had been received, he said, from the Department that expressions of interest in respect of the Leader /RDP had to be submitted by the 15<sup>th</sup> May, 2015.

He said that should this expression of interest be accepted, much of the content would be developed from and aligned to the Local Economic & Community Development Plan (LECP) . A similar framework, it was acknowledged would exist for the SICAP Programme.

Cllr Gallagher asked that correspondence be forwarded to the DECHLG requesting the reinstatement of the Rural Development Programme

C/159/15

WEBCASTING OF COUNCIL MEETINGS

GACH CRUINNIU DE CHUID NA CHOMHAIRLE CONTAE A CHRAOLADH AR LINE

Ar mholadh ón Clr. Mac Giolla Easbuig, agus an Clr. Mc Bride ag cuidiú leis, glacadh leis an rún seo a leanas:-

On the proposal of Cllr Mac Giolla Easbuig, seconded by, Cllr Mc Bride , the following motion was adopted:-

"Go ndeanfaidh Comhairle Contae Dhun na nGall tuarascáil a scríobh maidir lena hindéanta agus a bheadh se cruinnithe de chuid na Comhairle Contae i Leifear agus gach cruinniu de chuid an Cheantair Bhardasaigh a chraoladh ar líne, lena n-áirítear an costas agus an trealamh a d'fheadfadh a bheith de dhíth ionas go mbeadh saoránaigh in ann an Chomhairle a fheiceáil agus go gcuirfear an tuarascáil sin faoi bhráid na Comhairle tráth nach déanai ná cruinniú de chuid na Comhairle Contae i Mí Iúil."

"That Donegal County Council produce a report regarding the feasibility of webcasting meetings of the County Council in Lifford and all Municipal Area meetings, including the cost of equipment that may be required so that citizens may be able to view the Council, and that that report be placed before the Council at a time not later than the July Meeting of Donegal County Council."

Cuireadh in iúl do na Comhairleoirí:- Members were informed that:-

“Go n-ullmhóir an tuarascáil a iarradh lena phlé ag an Chomhairle”

“The report requested will be prepared for consideration by the Council.”

D’iarr an Clr. Mac Giolla Easbuig go ndéanfaí an túsostas caipitil agus cur i bhfeidhm teicniúil a scrúdú ar dtús sa dóigh is go mbeadh teacht ag an phobal ar chruinnithe iomlánacha agus ar chruinnithe bardais na Comhairle.

Cllr Mac Giolla Easbuig asked that the initial capital cost and technical application be investigated so that the community at large could have access to the meetings at both plenary and district level.

Mhol an Clr. McBride go mbeadh sé le ciall ar dtús éifeachtúlacht costais an togra a mheas ar dtús.

Cllr Mc Bride advised that it would be prudent initially to assess the cost effectiveness of the project.

Níor chuir éinne i gcoinne an rúin.

There was no opposition to the motion.

Dúirt an tUas. Gearaí Ó Máirtín, Ceannasaí Airgeadais, Stiúrthóir Éigeandála agus na gCóras Faisnéise gurbh fhéidir na costais ábhartha a fhiosrú agus go gcuirfear tuarascáil faoi bhráid na Comhairle ansin.

Mr Garry Martin, Head of Finance, Director Emergency & Information Systems said it was possible to look at the relevant costings and that a report could then be brought to Council.

Níor chuir éinne i gcoinne an rúin.

There was no opposition to the motion.

D’iarr an Clr. Mac Giolla Easbuig gur i nGaeilge a gheobhadh sé a chuid freagraí don chéad chruinniú eile den Chomhairle.

Cllr Mac Giolla Easbuig asked that he receive any written responses in Irish for the next Council Meeting.

C/160/15 REQUEST TO HAVE A PRESENTATION ON THE MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING BETWEEN LOUTH COUNTY COUNCIL AND NEWRY AND MOURNE DISTRICT COUNCIL IN 2011

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

"That Donegal County Council represent on the Memorandum of Understanding that was established between Louth County Council and Newry and Mourne District Council in 2011 and invites representatives from Derry City and Strabane District Council to attend said meeting with the view of establishing a similar arrangement in the northwest."

Members were informed that:-

“The development of the North West of Ireland on a cross-border basis is of key importance. It is recognised that the North West Region as a whole provides an essential critical mass which can be used to good effect for sustainable development and service provision for the community.

Donegal County Council is working in close co-operation with the new Derry City & Strabane Council across a range of areas of common interest across the economic and social spheres.

This is building on previous networking and development work carried out between Councils on a Council to Council basis, networking facilitated through the North West Region Cross Border Group (NWRCBG) and development planning and work carried out through the North West Partnership Board (NWPB).

The formation of the newly consolidated Derry City & Strabane Council provides a good opportunity for a focussed approach to addressing the common needs and opportunities of the North West Region on a Council to Council basis.

This approach will enable the coordination of the economic, social and spatial planning activities of each of the two Councils. This will ensure a cohesive and coherent approach for the North West

working in the context of the North West Gateway Initiative and the Letterkenny/Derry Gateway, as set out in the National Spatial Strategy (ROI) and the Regional Development Strategy (NI).

It is clear that the critical mass provided in a North West context provides opportunities for the greater region. It is also recognised that the critical issues in relation to access, connectivity, health and investment are shared in a regional context. This is also true in relation to the resources and opportunities available to the region.

There is a very proactive and concentrated engagement underway between the two Councils.

This will facilitate the necessary engagement between the two Councils and relevant departments in Dublin and Belfast. This engagement is underway with a view towards ensuring that the real needs and opportunities of the North West are recognised in the context of the review of the NSS and its replacement Strategy (and in the parallel NI context).

This collaboration is also important in ensuring that the two Councils work together and make optimum use of the resources in areas such as economic and local development available in each of the Councils. There is a substantial resource available in the two Councils and it is intended to ensure a cohesive and seamless approach to development in the region.

The engagement taking place will in particular continue the work of identifying areas for collaboration in development (enterprise, investment, education, etc) and also in areas such as joint lobbying (e.g. A5, A6, Health, etc). The ICLRD is engaged to work with Derry City & Strabane Council and Donegal County Council to harness new opportunities and promote further Local/Central Government engagement.

This process will also set out what executive structures need to be in place for the future in light of the new Council arrangements in the region. It will be essential to ensure that new and robust arrangements are put in place to advance development. These structures will need to be seamlessly aligned with Council structures and make best use of the resources in each Council (e.g. alignment of two economic development functions).

It will also be necessary to ensure that any additional resources made available to the region be used to augment Council structures and further develop them to deliver best results for the North West.”

Cllr Murray welcomed the comprehensive response and outlined the need to put a formal arrangement in place with Derry City and Strabane District Council. It would, he advised, allow for greater co-operation leading to increased efficiency and access to a wide range of shared services. He asked that every effort be made to progress the matter.

Cllr A Doherty said that Donegal existed effectively in Splendid Isolation and that there was indeed room for ongoing co-operation together and the promotion of reciprocal activities.

The population masses combined, he noted, offered a number of opportunities to develop complimentary projects which would be of mutual benefit to both communities. He cited also the need to progress same within a dedicated timeframe.

Cllr Mc Eniff enquired about the possibility of including Fermanagh District Council.

There was no opposition to the motion.

Mr Michael Heaney, Director Community, Culture & Planning Development confirmed that there was an ongoing level of co-operation with the new Derry City & Strabane District Council and that the ICLRD was also engaged to work with both Councils to explore and develop matters of mutual interest.

Responding to Cllr Mc Eniff’s query in relation to Fermanagh District Council, he advised that there was ongoing co-operation with that authority through ICBAN.

He said that a proposal would be brought to Members in the near future together with an update on initiatives undertaken to date. Information with regard to the needs of the North West Region could he said, be fed through the ICLRD.

The Chief Executive advised that he had had discussions with the Chief Executive in Fermanagh District Council and that it was intended to continue with this dialogue.

Cllr Murray asked that every effort be made to have the presentation as requested in his motion delivered to the Members of Donegal County Council.

C/161/15 ADJOURNMENT FOR LUNCH

It was unanimously agreed to adjourn the meeting lunch until 2pm.

C/162/15 NEED FOR PLAN OF ACTION REGARDING IRISH WATER AND WASTE WATER TREATMENT SYSTEMS WITHIN ESTATES

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

"I understand that Irish Water are responsible for waste water treatment systems within estates but we as a council must put in place a plan of action that will ensure that the location and information on the systems that are not performing are forwarded to Irish Water and that an update and response from Irish Water on these treatment systems is included in the Managers monthly report."

Members were informed that:-

“The Local Government Sector and Irish Water have agreed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between the parties which covers the process for Taking in Charge of water services assets of residential estates to the point of transfer of the water service assets to Irish Water.

This MoU and associated protocol will be implemented in conjunction with existing Local Authority Taking in Charge policies.

The MoU relates to the Taking in Charge of water services assets within the attendant grounds of the development provided by Developers that connects directly to public water/wastewater infrastructure and excludes stand alone developer provided water services infrastructure, which is the subject of a separate process of

engagement between the DECLG, Local Authorities and Irish Water.

In the preparation of the MoU it is accepted that the parties are dealing with a range of legacy issues that exist on housing developments nationally that are either unfinished, inadequately completed and/or not taken in charge and progress has been further complicated by liquidations, receiverships, negotiations with surety providers and other matters.

The Council will take in charge the residential estates pursuant to Section 180 of the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended). The Council and Irish Water will work together to advance Taking in Charge of an estate with reference to the Planning Permission, existing Taking in Charge Policies and Department Guidelines as applicable.

A resolution plan between the Council and Irish Water shall be prepared for each estate setting out a clear methodology for Taking in Charge and will be carried out on an estate by estate basis. This shall become a written agreement between the Council and Irish Water and the agreement shall ensure that;

- There is a reasonable and equitable approach in relation to funding from sources such as the development bonds or other planning security and developer/receiver, for remedial works to the development
- The integrity of the public infrastructure is ensured and acceptable service levels are achieved for the residents of the estate.

The remediation costs in relation to water services will be addressed by IW and the remediation costs for roads, surface water, footpaths, public lighting and open space will be a matter for the Council.

A full report on the implications including the need for a review of the taking in charge policy will be brought to the next meeting of the Council.

It is also expected that a number of estates will be recommended for take-over at the next meeting and at subsequent meetings as this process will see applications for taking in charge going before the Council incrementally.”

Cllr Canning said he was gravely concerned about the significant number of treatment systems in Border Towns which were currently not fit for their intended purpose.

Many of these, he said were contributing to the pollution of the River Foyle. He said it was imperative that funds were sourced through the Interreg V Programme which had presently in the region of €72 million allocated to cross-border funding.

The situation, he advised also warranted further collaboration with the new Derry/Strabane Council, Irish Water and Northern Ireland Water.

Cllr Mc Gowan concurred with these sentiments and said that any proposals needed to refer to and prioritise unfinished housing developments.

There was no opposition to the motion.

Mr Joe Peoples, Director Water & Environment, said that it was clear that additional investment was needed to deal with the problems in unfinished estates.

The Local Government Sector and Irish Water had, he confirmed, agreed arrangements to take in charge residential estates and transfer all relevant water assets to Irish Water. Alluding to the “Taking in Charge Policy” agreed in 2014, he confirmed that a report would be presented at the May Council Meeting regarding the implications of this policy and encompassing a number of revisions.

It was intended, he added, to bring a number of estates for take over to the Members at plenary level over the coming months.

With regard to Interreg funding, it was confirmed that Donegal County Council would explore all possible opportunities and liaise with all public sector agencies.

Cllr Canning outlined the need for something to be done for those estates which were sitting in limbo and were not being assisted by any agency.

There was urgency, he said, with regard to pollution issues in the Foyle. It was imperative, he said, that a programme was put in place to enable the Council to apply for any applicable funding and that this be progressed through the Council's EU Unit.

C/163/15 CALL FOR DONEGAL COUNTY COUNCIL TO CONCLUDE ITS INVESTIGATION INTO MUSCOVITE/MICA DEFECTIVE BLOCKS IN ITS HOUSING STOCK AND PRESENT ITS FINDINGS AT THE MAY 2015 MEETING

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

"That Donegal County Council conclude its investigation into the presence of Muscovite/Mica defective block in its housing stock, including long term leases etc and present its findings to Members at the May 2015 Meeting and immediately pursue Government if required for a redress scheme for the Council and affected householders."

Members were informed that:-

“Arising from suspected cases of occurrence of muscovite mica, the Council has arranged for specific tests to be carried out on a limited sample of materials taken from two Council houses - one SI House and one scheme house.

Preliminary results received, indicated the need for further tests in order to determine a definitive position including any remedial actions which may be deemed necessary.

These further tests are presently being undertaken, with a view to having the results of same within the next number of weeks.

Given the complexities of the testing, this has taken somewhat longer than had originally been envisaged although when definitive findings are available, the situation will be further assessed with a view to determining an appropriate response to any suspected cases.

Arrangements can be made to bring the output from these tests to the May Meeting of Council with a proposal as to how any occurrences of defects arising from Muscovite / Mica will be addressed in Council housing stock.”

Cllr Doherty raised a number of queries including:-

- Who had been engaged by Donegal County Council to investigate the problem?
- The testing fees applicable.
- Whether any preparatory funding steps had been initiated?

At this juncture, he presented the Director Housing, Corporate & Planning Control, with a letter advising of mica related issues in 5 number developments in the Inishowen Municipal Area.

He alluded to the devastating effect that the problem was having on families in Inishowen and in the Carndonagh area in particular.

The Council, he said, had told the MICA Group that they would facilitate engagement with the relevant bodies and keep the group updated re same.

It was essential, he added, that all local TDs came on board, and that there was cross-party support for any actions undertaken both at district and plenary level.

It was essential, he added, that Donegal County Council became the main player in driving this issue forward.

Cllr Murray noted that it was an emotive issue and that the Council was the only body apart from national government who could help. He cited the necessity of checking the Council's own housing stock.

There was no opposition to the motion.

Mr Liam Ward, Director Housing, Corporate & Planning Control, said that details regarding testing and fees would be made available to Cllr Doherty.

Donegal County Council, was, he said, anxious to progress the matter given the reported incidences of mica in the Inishowen area.

It was, he added, highly unlikely that DCC stock was not affected and if so the Council would be obliged to seek and carry out works to address the problem.

Recognising that the issue was an emotive one, he said, that the Council had an obligation initially to look after its own housing stock.

Cllr Doherty welcomed the reply and noted that the testing complexities encountered by the Council had also caused significant headaches for the many households affected by the problem.

C/164/15 THAT DONEGAL COUNTY COUNCIL DISCUSS THE PURCHASE OF HOUSES IN THE COUNTY

It was agreed to defer the following motion to the end of the meeting:-

“That this Council discuss the purchase of houses in the County.”

C/165/15 INTRODUCTION OF A BY-LAW FOR PREFERENTIAL PARKING SPACES FOR PEOPLE WITH NON-PHYSICAL DISABILITIES

On the proposal of Cllr Ryan, seconded by, Cllr Harley the following motion was adopted:-

“That this Council explore the option of introducing a By-Law that would enable or facilitate the introduction of preferential parking spaces in prearranged public places for people with nonphysical disabilities or for parents of children with nonphysical disabilities.

These designated parking spaces which will be complimentary and in addition to existing disabled parking spaces will be denoted by a new logo which is being introduced on a pilot scheme by a group of students and their teacher in Scoil Mhuire Buncrana.

I would also call on Donegal County Council to call on the Minister for Transport, tourism and Sport, Pascal Donohoe, T.D. to amend the legislation governing disabled parking, as those with nonphysical disabilities need to be able to access parking as well as those with a physical disability."

Members were informed that:-

“The Council support the principle of providing suitable parking spaces in such a situation. We are currently examining how they

could be introduced whether by the introduction of a new Bye-Law or changes to the existing legislation.

The Council will write to the Department of Transport and seek their views. In addition, the Council would be interested in participating in any pilot scheme and also the development of the criteria that would apply. It would seem appropriate that this could be developed further at the Roads & Transportation SPC.”

Cllr Ryan said that he had introduced the motion on foot of the recent work carried out by the young social innovators group in Scoil Mhuire, Buncrana. The logo, he said, had been designed to be used in parking spaces specifically allocated to persons with non-physical disabilities. There were, he advised plans to roll out the design on a county-wide basis.

The logo had been developed by the students to highlight the fact that there were currently only designated parking spaces for those with physical disabilities.

The design would they believed ensure that all persons with disabilities would be treated equally. He alluded also to the leaflet, designed by the students which advised in relation to the correct terms and etiquette to be used when referring to disability or talking to someone with a disability.

He called on the Council to take the logo on board and actively promote same,

Cllr Harley outlined his support and advised of the need to monitor and expand the idea.

There was no opposition to the motion.

Mr John Mc Laughlin, Director Roads & Transportation indicated that the matter could be pursued further through the Roads & Transportation SPC.

C/166/15

CALL BY DONEGAL COUNTY COUNCIL ON THE  
MEMBERS OF DAIL EIREANN TO BRING FORWARD  
LEGISLATION TO REPEAL ALL EXISTING LEGISLATION  
WHICH FACILITATES THE CURRENT SYSTEM OF THE

STATE PROVIDING ANNUAL FUNDING FROM PUBLIC MONIES TO RUN THE AFFAIRS OF POLITICAL PARTIES

Cllr Shiels proposed, seconded by, Cllr Mc Garvey that the following motion be adopted:-

"That, in circumstances where public monies should not be spent on funding the affairs of political parties, this Council calls on the members of Dail Eireann to bring forward legislation to repeal all existing legislation which facilitates the current system of the State providing exorbitant annual public funding of approximately 12.6 million Euro to 4 political parties, being 4.9 million Euro approximately to Fine Gael Party, 3.1 Million approximately to the Labour Party, 2.8 Million Euro approximately to the Fianna Fail Party and 1.8 Million Euro approximately to the Sinn Fein Party.

Cllr Shiels said that the current system was a joke as political parties continued to legislate to pay themselves thus wasting millions of Euros of taxpayers money.

The current system, he said, allowed parties, to fund themselves whilst maintaining their existing position and allowed them gain advantage over independents TDs etc. The result, he advised, was an uneven playing field funded by the country's taxpayers. He called on the six Donegal TDs to declare their position and said that the motion if passed would send a message to our TDs and political leaders that change was needed.

Cllr Mc Garvey supported the motion citing the necessity of ensuring the value for money aspect in any process.

Cllrs G Doherty and C Brogan declared their opposition to the motion .

Cllr Doherty said that Sinn Fein was supportive of open and transparent funding mandated through the proper channels, something that was a necessity in any democracy.

The Sinn Fein Political Reform Document in 2011 had, he confirmed, advocated reform including the cutting of TDs salaries and the capping of wages in the public sector together with the elimination of unvouched expenses.

The Dail, it was acknowledged, however needed to hold the Government to account thus enabling all TDs to play an accountable role.

Acknowledging that some reform was necessary, he said that Sinn Fein were of the opinion that proper parliamentary democracy required funding. A greater travesty, he said, was the fact that a parliamentary leaders allowance was paid to each independent TD.

Cllr Brogan advised that he too had concerns about the fact that independent TDs were accepting leaders allowances but the crux of the matter was that Donegal County Council had no role or input into the matter. He cited the need to focus on affairs relevant to the County and on issues which the Member had an active role.

Cllr O' Domhnaill urged caution and queried whether the focus was now on moving towards a system whereby the corporate and business sector funded political parties. The legislation was there, he said, to protect citizens and all political parties.

A show of hands taken by the Meetings Administrator resulted in the majority of Members rejecting the motion with 2 only in favour.

Cllr Shiels said the result was as expected and had hit a nerve with those in political parties. He vowed to continue to pursue and call for a reform of the system.

C/167/15 CALL BY DONEGAL COUNTY COUNCIL TO END THE  
JOBBRIDGE SCHEME AND REPLACE IT WITH A FAIRER  
INTERNSHIP SCHEME

Cllr Quinn, proposed, seconded by, Cllr Murray , that the following motion be adopted:-

Donegal County Council calls for the replacement of the unfair and exploitative Job-Bridge Scheme by a fair and fit for purpose Internship Scheme."

Members were informed that:-

"The following information is provided to assist in the consideration of this motion. Should the motion be adopted,

arrangements will be made to forward same to the relevant Government departments.

The JobBridge scheme is a Government led initiative which aims to provide work experience placements for interns for a 6 month or 9 month period. Its aim is to assist in breaking the cycle where jobseekers are unable to get a job without experience, either as new entrants to the labour market after education or training or as unemployed workers wishing to learn new skills.

An internship provides the opportunity to gain valuable experience in a working environment to those looking to explore or gain the relevant knowledge and skills required to enter into a particular career field.

Participants on the scheme receive an allowance of €50 per week on top of their social welfare entitlement. This is payable for the period of the internship.

- The benefits identified in participating in the scheme include:
- Gain valuable work experience which participants can add to their CV
- Apply knowledge learned in training or education in a work environment
- Enhance skills and learn new ones through workplace learning
- Explore a new career path
- Enhance career prospects
- Gain networking opportunities and keep close to the labour market
- Build confidence through work experience

Since the establishment of the JobBridge Programme, the Council has had a total of 85 participants, (4 of these are currently participating).

The majority of participants have participated for the standard period, which is 9 months. However, 15 participants chose to leave the programme early. Some left to return to further education, others to take up employment. The shortest internship was just short of one calendar month.

The participants were assigned across a number of Council services including Community & Enterprise, Forward Planning, Library Services, Communications, Health & Safety and Information Systems.”

Cllr Quinn, called on Members to support the motion and asked that it to be forwarded immediately to the relevant Minister and all other Local Authorities. He was, he said, shocked by the reply as the scheme itself was both cruel and wrong.

He expressed grave concern that of the 85 persons who had participated in the scheme within Donegal County Council not one had found full-time employment. This, he said, was not Donegal County Council’s fault but rather a symptom of unworkable government policy.

He called for a new and fair internship scheme whose success and failure could be monitored and input received from both unions and employers.

Cllr Murray, advised, that the scheme was nothing short of exploitation and that of the 5000 job interns taken on in the public sector upwards of 60% did not find employment anywhere.

Cllr Ryan said that he was opposing the motion on a personal basis and took exception to many of the comments passed. He himself, he advised, had employed a person through this scheme. He had, he said, plans in place to expand the business that he hoped to be in a position to employ that person on a full-time basis in the near future.

Cllr Crossan supported the comments made by Cllr Ryan and said that there was an onus on Councillors as Leaders to ensure that unemployed school leavers got some level of training. It was essential, he said, that young people were given the opportunity to go out and work.

Mr Liam Ward, Director Housing & Corporate Services said it was fair to say as pointed out by Cllr Quinn that none of those employed under the Job-Bridge Scheme had gained employment with the Council as there was no provision for recruitment at the time. He was, he said, hopeful that this would change in time.

A show of hands taken by the Meetings Administrator resulted in 7 voting for the motion with 8 voting against.

The motion was defeated.

Cllr Quinn expressed disappointment at the outcome noting that his motion had called for the initiation of a real internship scheme. The scheme as it existed was, he said, grossly unfair to applicants who were supposed to work for an extra €50 per week on top of their allocated social welfare allowance. It was impossible, he contended, to defend a scheme which generated little or no loyalty and did not make the best use of the abilities of those taking part.

Cllr Mc Monagle enquired as to the legal status of the motion and asked if there was a conflict of interest here as Cllr Ryan had indicated that he had employed a person under the scheme.

Cllr Crossan advised that he was not aware of anyone who had taken part in this scheme. Cllr Ryan, he said, had referred to the person he employed as an example and as such there was no conflict of interest.

C/168/15 THIS COUNCIL CALLS ON THE IRISH GOVERNMENT TO PROTECT IRISH INTERESTS IN THE ON-GOING TRANSATLANTIC TRADE AND INVESTMENT PARTNERSHIP

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

"That this Council calls on the Irish Government to:  
Protect Irish interests in the on-going Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TTIP) negotiations between the EU and the US.

Take all measures to remove Investor-State Dispute Settlements (ISDS) from the agreement.

Take all measures to ensure that the terms of the living agreement cannot breach Irish Legislation.

Publish the findings of the Copenhagen Economics study on TTIP's potential impact on Ireland.

Initiate a public debate on the consequences of TTIP on Ireland.

Take all measures to protect Irish agriculture in TTIP negotiations.

That this Council also affirms that we will not support any trade agreement that includes Investor-State Dispute mechanisms.

And that this Council recognises with vigilance the construction of a Regulatory Co-operation Council through TTIP and affirms the position that this body's authority and remit should allow only for recommendation and that the Implementation of recommendations should be administered by those elected by and accountable to the citizens of Europe.

And finally that this Council does not support any trade mechanism that allows Irish law to be superseded for corporate interest."

Cllr Mc Monagle informed the meeting that the TTIP was currently being negotiated and that consideration needed to be given as to how this would impact on the local community and its environs.

These negotiations, he said, were taking place between the US and the EU in secret and whilst they had the potential to be of benefit there were a number of issues which warranted attention.

He was, he said, concerned that it would open the door to cheap agricultural imports which didn't meet the same standards as those imposed locally. `

A further concern, he added, was potential impact of the Investor State Dispute Settlement (ISDS). He asked Members to support the motion and said it was imperative that Irish Laws were not superseded by corporate law.

Alluding to the high standard of food produced in Ireland, he asked that every effort be made to obtain the best possible outcome for Ireland.

Pressure, he said, needed, to be put on the Government to ensure that Ireland was not signed up to a Trade Agreement which would be detrimental for the economy as a whole.

Cllr Murray said that he would be raising concerns with the EU Commission in Brussels shortly in relation to the matter. He too expressed concern in relation to the ISDS clause which he contended was an interference in democracy and cited the possible implications if for example a ban on fracking was imposed.

There was no opposition to the motion.

Cllr Mc Monagle thanked all who had supported the motion and asked that the motion be forwarded to the relevant Government Departments for consideration .

It was imperative, he said, that ISDS was not included as an integral part of this deal.

C/169/15 FUNDING OF PLANNING PROCESS AND CPOS FOR THE BONAGEE LINK AND BRIDGE

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

"That this Council write to the Minister to seek funding that will enable the Council to continue with the planning process and CPOs for the Bonagee link road and the new bridge so that if substantial funding becomes available in the next couple of years work could commence straight away without delay."

Members were informed that:-

“The Bonagee Link or Letterkenny Relief Road (another name for the same project) is one of a number of major national road projects in the County on which further work has been suspended due to the impact of the financial crisis, including the N14 Letterkenny - Lifford Realignment Scheme , the Ballybofey/Stranorlar Bypass, the N14/N15/A5WTC link to mention a few.

Advancement of all of these projects is very important for the future economic development of the County. Prior to suspension of the Letterkenny Relief Road project a preferred route for same was adopted by the Council on 26th April 2010.

The next phase of the project will involve detailed design and the completion of the Statutory Processes through an Bord Pleanala

(which will include a CPO and a full EIS). Should the scheme be approved by ABP then the project can proceed to the Tender and Construction phase subject to NRA approval and availability of funding.

Successive delegations of Elected Members to the NRA since 2010 have lobbied strongly for the advancement of this major scheme as well as other major projects in Donegal.

The Council Executive likewise has availed of every opportunity presented to emphasise the importance of progressing these schemes to the economic development of the County be it in meetings with various Government Ministers or officials of both the Department of Transport, Tourism and Sport or the NRA.

It is not prudent to advance the detailed design of projects or to complete an EIS without a realistic programme being in place for the development of a major project as design standards are subject to frequent revision and the specialist data required for an EIS has a relatively short shelf life before it has to be revisited. It would be important to secure a commitment to the complete project funding and a realistic timeframe for when it is likely to advance through the Statutory Processes.”

Cllr Mc Daid cited the need to get the relevant studies done and works progressed in order to be in a position to alleviate the access problems currently being experienced in and around the Letterkenny area.

He expressed disappointment that there were no plans to upgrade the dual-carriageway and that no major projects were earmarked for Letterkenny in the near future.

Cllr Brogan supporting the motion outlined the need to bring the matter to the attention of the Minister. He noted that a number of associated projects such as the Manor to Lifford Road also warranted attention.

He stressed the importance of meeting with local Oireachtas Members in order to highlight funding requirements for a range of infrastructural projects in the County. A delegation to meet with the Minister was also warranted, he added, in order to progress the matter.

There was no opposition to the motion.

Mr John Mc Laughlin, Director Roads & Transportation, said he was happy to write to the Minister and convey the sentiments expressed by Members.

Cllr Mc Daid concluding, said that, the further development of the Bonagee Link would have long lasting benefits for the entire County in terms of greater access to Letterkenny and its environs.

C/170/15 DOWNGRADING OF RURAL DONEGAL

On the proposal of Cllr McGarvey, seconded by, Cllr Mc Bride , the following motion was adopted:-

That this Council with the Government acknowledge the urgent need to stop the downgrading of Rural Donegal."

Members were informed that:-

In relation to rural development, Donegal County Council is currently leading out on the development of the Local Economic and Community Plan (LECP) and this will focus on the needs and opportunities of the county including rural Donegal.

The plan is being prepared with the support of the Donegal LCDC (Local Community Development Committee) and the Donegal County Council Economic Development Committee.

This plan will provide the framework and a solid basis for a range of funding programmes relating to this county over the next period of these initiatives. These include SICAP (Social Inclusion Community Activation Programme), LEADER/Rural Development Programme, PEACE IV and Interreg V.

With regard the LEADER /RDP 2014-2020, an allocation of €12.9m has recently been announced for Co. Donegal. This allocation will be subject to the LEADER /RDP submission made for the county and its acceptance by the DECLG.

This detailed submission will follow on from an initial Expression of Interest (EOI) the call for which has just been made. Any

submission made by Donegal LCDC in relation to the LEADER / RDP will be closely aligned with and drawn from the Local Economic and Community Plan (LECP) with regard to its content.

Cllr Mc Garvey drew Member's attention to the "Enforced Urbanisation of Ireland Booklet" advising that it depicted accurately what was happening in Donegal.

He noted that rural way of life was disappearing rapidly and that many basic services had more or less been eradicated including rural post offices, garda stations, banks, schools etc.

Something needed to be done urgently, he said, otherwise whole areas of the County would become depopulated. Donegal County Council, he said, needed to be proactive on this front and put in place the relevant planning mechanisms.

He called for an audit of rural communities throughout the County and said that any agreed policy needed to incorporate references to farming, fishing and tourism entities.

Cllr Mc Bride called for a renewed emphasis on regeneration and the promotion of new business ideas.

Mr Michael Heaney, Director Community, Culture & Planning Development, alluded to his response and the significant impact that the new Local Economic and Community Plan would have on rural development overall.

There was no opposition to the motion.

Cllr Mc Garvey said that there was an onus on Members to make a special case for Donegal and to follow-up wherever possible in relation to the benefits for the County.

C/171/15

REQUEST FOR AN APOLOGY FROM PAT KENNY IN  
RELATION TO HIS COMMENTS ABOUT THE PEOPLE OF  
DONEGAL DURING THE CELTIC TIGER ECONOMY ERA

On the proposal of Cllr Jordan, seconded by, Cllr Mc Monagle , the following motion was adopted:-

"I would ask this Council to demand an apology from Pat Kenny of Newstalk around comments suggesting that the people of Donegal

were lazy in the celtic tiger economy era that they wouldn't travel looking for work."

Cllr Jordan said that the comments were regrettable and insulting particularly to the many people who had left Donegal looking for work\_including Members of his own family.

Cllr Mc Monagle said that members of his own family had to leave Donegal to get employment and that the presenter needed to reflect on what had been said and apologise to the people of Donegal.

There was no opposition to the motion.

He thanked all who had supported the motion and said that he would contact Newstalk directly in relation to the comments.

C/172/15 NEED FOR RETRAINING COURSES IN RELATION TO UPSKILLING FOR UNEMPLOYED OR LOW INCOME FISHERMEN

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

"That Donegal County Council together with the LYIT, the Department of Agriculture Fisheries and the Marine and BIM to discuss the possibility of completing a needs assessment and following on from that a conversion course for retraining and upskilling unemployed or low income fishermen to a Marine/Merchant shipping qualification in order to seek sustainable employment in the merchant shipping/offshore industry and for these courses to be completed in County Donegal at a reasonable cost to the unemployed or low income fishermen."

Members were informed that:-

“Donegal County Council will, in conjunction with relevant stakeholders, undertake to examine and identify opportunities available and to ensure any training and education needs are put forward in the context of the Local Economic and Community Plan (LECP) which Donegal County Council is currently developing in conjunction with a range of stakeholders including LYIT.

Arising from this, any potential courses can be provided via the mainstream work programmes and budgets of the relevant agency /

organisation. Additional external funding opportunities will also be available via upcoming funding streams including INTERREG V A & B, PEACE IV, SICAP and the Rural Development Programme.”

Cllr Kennedy noted that it cost up to €2600 for an individual fisherman to retrain in the south of the Country and that the only other option involved going out of the Country to Scotland. To this end, she noted, that an Irish Skippers Ticket was not accepted in England and that BIM Fisheries School in Greencastle only provided courses leading to an Irish Ticket. As such she called for a renewed focus on retraining initiatives for unemployed fishermen in the County.

Cllr Mc Dermott concurred with these comments and advised that a number of the staff from the Malin Head Coastguard Station were qualified to deliver courses of this nature.

There was no opposition to the motion.

Mr Michael Heaney, Director Community, Culture & Planning Development, welcomed the initiative and said that everything possible would be done in the context of the LECP and in conjunction with all relevant stakeholders.

Cllr Kennedy welcomed the response and said that the development of such initiatives would open up employment opportunities across the board for fishermen in the County.

#### C/173/15 CATHAOIRLEACH'S BUSINESS

The Leas-Chathaoirleach informed Members of the following:-

##### *Outstanding Civic Receptions*

That it was intended to proceed with the following outstanding Civic Receptions on provisional dates of either Friday 15<sup>th</sup> or 22<sup>nd</sup> May:-

- Lifford Players
- Hugh Gallagher
- Termon Ladies –Senior GAA Team
- Jason Quigley

After some debate it was resolved to:-

- Proceed with the reception for the Lifford Players on Monday 25<sup>th</sup>, 2015 following the May Council Meeting.
- To designate Tuesday 2<sup>nd</sup> June, 2015 as the provisional date for the holding of a reception in honour of both Hugh Gallagher and the Termon Ladies Senior Football Team.
- That Cllr Mc Gowan would follow-up in relation to a suitable date for the reception in honour of Jason Quigley.

*Awarding of Freedom of the County*

Cllr Crossan informed Members that the Mayor wished to propose the awarding of the Freedom of the County to Mr Danny Hutton, a member of the Donegal Diaspora and one of the most successful emigrants from Donegal to have risen to the top of his chosen career in the music industry.

On the proposal of Cllr Donaghey, seconded by, Cllr A Doherty, it was resolved in accordance with Section 74 of the Local Government, 2001 to award the Freedom of the County to Mr Danny Hutton.

*RNLI Lifeboat*

Cllr Crossan complimented all involved with the arrival of the new RNLI Shannon Class Lifeboat in Buncrana on the 10<sup>th</sup> April, 2015.

*Spring Clean Ups*

Congratulations was extended to all who took part in the Inishowen Spring Clean- Up on the 11<sup>th</sup> April, 2015.

C/174/15

CALL FOR THE GOVERNMENT TO SUPPLY DONEGAL COUNTY COUNCIL WITH AN EXCEPTIONAL NEEDS GRANTS OF €100 MILLION FOR THE LOCAL ROADS NETWORK IN THE COUNTY

On the proposal of Cllr Mac Giolla Easbuig , seconded by, Cllr Mc Bride, the following motion submitted by Cllr Mc Brearty was adopted:-

"I am calling on the Government to supply Donegal County Council with an exceptional needs grant of €100 million for the local roads network in the county along with the annual yearly allocation for local roads funding, and that this exceptional needs roads grant be allocated on a needs basis which will deal with the horrendous problems we have in the county with our local roads,

some which are now undriveable due to the lack of funding over many years."

Members were informed that:-

"Funding to the Department of Transport (DTTas) for road maintenance and improvement has been reduced by Government in recent years. The road maintenance needs in Donegal is not unique and is comparable with many other counties.

The trend in State Grants for Non-National Roads ( Regional and Local Roads) over the past 8 years is as follows for the combined amounts of Surface Dressing, Pavement Strengthening, Specific Improvements and Discretionary Maintenance. These four grants form the core of the Roadworks Programme each year.

2008	€30.4million
2009	€21.8 million
2010	€21.6 million
2011	€19.8 million
2012	€19.1 million
2013	€16.8 million
2014	€16.6 million
2015	€17.1 million

This trend shows that the State Grants for funding of Regional and Local Roads now being received is roughly 55% of what was being received 8 years ago and the reduction on these type of funds have a significant impact on the condition of the network. Normally reductions in roads maintenance monies do not show their true impact for a period of five to seven years or so after the time the money is reduced. Thereafter it can take significant expenditure to regain the condition of the pavements and road network."

C/175/15 THAT DONEGAL COUNTY COUNCIL DISCUSS THE PURCHASE OF HOUSES IN THE COUNTY

Cllr Ryan advised that Cllr Mc Guinness intended to resubmit the following motion to the next meeting of Council.

"That this Council discuss the purchase of houses in the County."

Members were informed that:-

“The Council has in the past taken the opportunity to acquire a number of units to meet the special needs of clients where the traditional form of supports would not meet their needs or where there was a lack of accommodation. Towards the latter part of 2014, fourteen such units were acquired.

The Social Housing Strategy as published in November 2014 sets out an ambitious delivery programme to deal comprehensively with the housing list and to reform key elements of social housing policy. The Strategy proposes a range of mechanisms to meet the housing need.

It is this Council's belief that any Programme should contain an element of acquisitions to not only maximise the output under the Programme but also take advantage of value for money proposals which can often be achieved and to meet special needs of clients where there is a lack of accommodation.

Towards this end, it is the Council's intention that the Programme will contain provision for the acquisition of a number of units in each Municipal District on an annual basis and work has already commenced this year in the context of seeking to identify a number of acquisitions in anticipation of funding becoming available under the Programme.”

C/176/15 CHIEF EXECUTIVE'S MONTHLY MANAGEMENT REPORT

Members considered the report circulated with the agenda, the addendum circulated on the 30<sup>th</sup> March, together with the addendum circulated during the meeting in relation to the above..

Updates were provided in relation to the following:-

1. Donegal Local Economic and Community Plan (LECP)
2. LEADER / Rural Development Programme 2014 – 2020 Co. Donegal.
3. Social Inclusion Community Activation Programme (SICAP) – Donegal
4. Donegal County Council Local Enterprise Office (LEO) – Quarter 1 Activity 2015
5. EU Programmes / Projects Update – Donegal County Council's EU Unit

6. Interreg V - Donegal County Council
7. Donegal County Development Board Peace & Reconciliation Partnership PEACE III & Proposed PEACE IV Programme
8. Donegal County Council's Research Unit
9. 'St. Patrick's Journey around the World' Online App
10. Mapping Public Participation Network and Community Facilities – Donegal PPN
11. LGMA funding for establishment of an ENFOpoint
12. Bealtaine – 2015
13. Donegal County Council Archives
14. The Donegal Weavers traditional dance group, in Malaga and Marbella
15. The Henry Girls tour of Vesteralen, Norway
16. Reaching Out to Schools with the Museum's Archaeology Box
17. Donegal County Council Heritage Office
18. Donegal Youth Council Norway Delegation
19. Age Friendly Strategy - Donegal
20. Wild Atlantic Way Development
21. Malin Head Development
22. Fanad Lighthouse
23. Killybegs Tourism Website
24. Launch of Donegal Tourism Brochure
25. Barrack Hill, Carndonagh
26. Marine Tourism – Donegal County Council
27. Irish Water – Draft Water Services Strategic Plan
28. Update in relation to the transfer of Local Authority tenant data to Irish Water.

*Addendum- 30<sup>th</sup> March, 2015*

1. The High Court Judicial Review 2014/712JR - John Campbell – v- The Minister for the Environment, Community and Local Government (Respondent) and Donegal County Council (Notice Party)
2. Replacement of Mullantiboyle Bridge
3. Roll-out of Housing Assistance Payment (HAP) in Donegal County Council.

*Addendum- 13<sup>th</sup> April, 2015*

Update to Members in the context of media coverage of the Local Government Audit Service report entitled "Overview of the work of the Local Government Auditors"

Cllr Gallagher asked that a press release be issued directing the general public to exercise caution in periods of dry weather and take all necessary measures to prevent gorse, hill and forestry fires.

Householders living in areas prone to wildfires, she said, should be urged to cut back any vegetation in the vicinity of their homes so as to provide increased protection and create adequate fire breaks.

**Members noted the following questions**

C/177/15 AMOUNT OF ANNUAL ROAD TAX COLLECTED IN COUNTY DONEGAL

The following question was submitted by Cllr Crawford:-

"How much money is collected annually from road tax in County Donegal?"

Cllr Crawford was informed that:-

The following is a breakdown of Motor Tax receipts in Donegal over the last three years:-

	Online Motor Tax	Motor Tax	Total
2012	10,362,036	24,281,484	34,643,520
2013	12,255,605	24,789,797	37,045,402
2014	14,784,601	22,780,739	37,565,340

C/178/15 OUTLINE OF THE AMOUNT AND NATURE OF COMPLAINTS MADE TO DONEGAL COUNTY COUNCIL

The following question was submitted by Cllr McBrearty:-

"How many complaints a year come into the Council and can you outline the nature of the complaints e.g. such as the most popular complaint made to the council."

Cllr McBrearty was informed that:-

The Council receives contacts from many sources over the course of any year and in some cases these contacts may be in the form of a complaint, while in others they are enquiries in relation to Council services.

In terms of formal complaints which have been progressed through to the office of the Ombudsman, an analysis has been carried out of complaints received over the past 10 years.

Over this time, the number of complaints referred to the Council by the Office of the Ombudsman was 158, which is broken down approximately as follows:

- Housing 45
- Roads 27
- Planning 68
- Water & Env 12
- Corporate 6

Total 158

In addition to the above analysis, the Council has reviewed the contacts received through the Customer Contact Centre during the year from April 2014 to March 2015. It should be noted that these contacts do not necessarily relate to complaints but do give an understanding of the issues that our customers are contacting us about.

During this period a total of 87,747 contact were made with the Council which are broken down as follows:

Housing & Corporate	54854
Roads & Housing Capital	4831
Water & Environment	4034
Finance & Emergency	4439
Community & Planning	12102

Non Specific 7487

Total 87,747

C/179/15 NUMBERS OF DONEGAL COUNTY COUNCIL STAFF WHO ARE IN RECEIPT OF SALARIES TOPPING €100,000 INCLUDING EXPENSES

The following question was submitted by Cllr Gary Doherty:-

"How many members of staff in Donegal County Council were in receipt of salaries over €100,000, including expenses, in 2014?"

Cllr Gary Doherty was informed that:-

"Six members of staff in Donegal County Council were in receipt of salaries over €100,000, including expenses, in 2014."

C/180/15 TO WHAT STANDARD ARE THE HOUSING STOCK COUNTYWIDE BROUGHT TO BEFORE RELETTING

The following question was submitted by Cllr Crawford:-

"To what standard are houses county wide brought to, before re-letting and how is this standard verified?"

Cllr Crawford was informed that:-

"Vacant properties being returned to productive use are brought to a high standard prior to re-letting with over €1.1 million having been spent during 2014 repairing and upgrading such properties.

A summary of the approach / works carried out is outlined below: -

- House structurally sound
- House empty and all rubbish removed
- Walls clean
- Chimney cleaned
- Any broken bathroom facilities replaced
- Kitchen units made useable
- Doors/handles/locks ok
- Windows secure and locks checked
- Electrics ok
- All range parts working, grates replaced etc.
- Boiler serviced

- Attic and cavity insulation provided
- Hot water tanks and pipes lagged
- Carbon monoxide alarm fitted
- Battery operated smoke alarms checked

Where a property becomes vacant which is already of a high standard, much less extensive works would be carried out with the priority being to ensure that the house is structurally sound, safe, clean, warm and well insulated.

Prior to any unit being re-let, it is inspected by a member of staff in the area to establish that it is brought to the appropriate standard.”

C/181/15 CONFIRMATION OF THE PROGRESS MADE WITH IRISH WATER REGARDING AREAS IN THE COUNTY WHERE SEWERAGE TREATMENT PROBLEMS EXIST

The following question was submitted by Cllr Crawford:-

“Has any progress been made with Irish Water in relation to any area of the County where sewerage treatment or lack of it is a problem such as St Johnston?”

Cllr Crawford was informed that:-

“Irish water has published it's capital investment programme for the period 2014 to 2016 which includes a programme of spending on improvements to sewerage infrastructure in County Donegal at a number of locations including St Johnston where there is currently an infrastructure deficit. Details of the programme are available on the Irish Water website. Arrangements can be made to have the programme circulated to the members for their information.”

C/182/15 LIST OF THE ESTATES THAT HAVE BEEN TAKEN IN CHARGE OR ARE IN THE PROCESS OF BEING TAKEN IN CHARGE SINCE THE NEW TAKE IN CHARGE POLICY IN 2013

The following question was submitted by Cllr McGowan:-

"Can I have a full list of Estates that have been taken in charge at present or are at an advanced stage of taken in charge since the Council agreed a new Take in Charge Policy in 2013?"

Cllr McGowan was informed that:-

“An electronic copy of the current countywide register of estates which have made applications for taking in charge will be forwarded to each Elected Member in the next few days.

The taking in charge team have held workshops at each of the Municipal Districts (with the exception of Donegal MD; date to be arranged) to update members on the progress carried out by the team and to advise members on the taking in charge procedures.

Each of the members have been provided with a listing of housing estates in the individual Municipal Districts which had made applications for taking in charge. As indicated, this will now be supplemented by the countywide list mentioned above.

In terms of existing policy in this area, this will be require review in light of the following developments.

Following the issuing of DOECLG Circular PL5/2014 relating to the Taking in Charge of Residential Developments, a Working Group was established under the guidance of the Water Services Transition Office (WSTO).

This Working Group was charged with the development of a Memorandum of Understanding and Taking in Charge Protocol. This documentation has been accepted and approved by WSTO and circulated on 4th March 2015 to all Local Authorities for adoption in the taking in charge process.

It ensures that the responsibilities of both the planning authority and IW as outlined in Circular PL5/2014 will be adhered to in a structured manner. It will be necessary to modify the Council's current TIC policy/processes to include the MoU and Protocol and it is expected to bring a comprehensive report to the May Council meeting on this matter.

Although there is currently a backlog of residential estates to be taken in charge with only 5 no. estates being formally taken in charge since the current TIC policy was adopted, it is the intention of the TIC team to initiate procedures for the taking in charge of a significant no. of housing estates in accordance with Section 180 of the Planning & Development Act 2000 (as amended) and to present details of the same to members at the May meeting.”

C/183/15 PROVISION OF THE MINUTES OF LCDC MEETINGS

The following question was submitted by Cllr McGowan:-

"Can the minutes of all LCDC meetings be made available to all Councillors immediately following adoption, so that all public representatives are aware of what is going on and in order that LEADER and other schemes are fully understood and as transparent as possible going forward?"

Cllr McGowan was informed that:-

"Yes – these minutes can be made available to the Elected Members once adopted."

C/184/15 DELAY IN THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE NEW JPC

The following question was submitted by Cllr McBrearty:-

"What is the delay in the establishment of the new JPC and what recommendations or directions have come from Government for the setting up of the new JPCs."

Cllr McBrearty was informed that:-

"It is proposed to hold the first meeting of the Donegal Joint Policing Committee at the end of May. Exact date to be confirmed. The first meeting will take the form of a facilitated workshop. The revised guidelines will be reviewed at this workshop. The Joint Policing Committee will assess options and agree priorities for a strategic annual and multi-annual plan."

C/185/15 ESTIMATE OF THE STAFF/STAFF HOURS DEDICATED TO GRASS CUTTING AND GENERAL GARDENING DUTIES

The following question was submitted by Cllr Gary Doherty:-

"Can I have an estimate of the number of staff/staff hours dedicated to grass cutting and general gardening duties in each of the five Municipal Districts in 2014?"

Cllr Gary Doherty was informed that:-

"Grass Cutting and General Gardening duties or what is sometimes referred to Parks and Amenities has been carried out across all

Municipal Districts to a certain degree. The former Town Councils of Letterkenny, Bundoran and Buncrana would have had specific programmes and budgets for this type of work. The former Electoral Areas would have generally used discretionary maintenance budgets for this activity. Since this type of work was not tracked specifically in electoral areas, it is taking longer to get the full reply prepared. When the information is gathered up and compiled a fuller written reply will be issued to the Member and apologies are given for it taking this time to get the full answer.”

C/186/15 DONEGAL COUNTY COUNCIL LINKS TO THE DONEGAL LOCAL ENTERPRISE OFFICE

The following question was submitted by Cllr M.T. Gallagher:-

"How is this Council linked with Donegal Local Enterprise Office, and could I be provided with the number of interactions between the LEO and businesses in the County over the past six months?"

Cllr Gallagher was informed that:-

Donegal Local Enterprise Office is now an integral part of Donegal County Council contributing to the economic and enterprise activity in the county. The below sets out recent activity of Donegal LEO:

- Public Procurement workshop with 35 participants organised in January. Delivered in conjunction with Aidan Smith, Procurement Officer, Donegal County Council. Follow-on training programme scheduled for June.
- Workshop on Intellectual Property, trademarks etc. delivered in March with 26 attendees.
- Accelerate Management Development programme currently running since January with 20 businesses participating.
- Start Your Own Business programme currently running with 20 participants (6 x 1 day workshops with 1 to 1 mentoring sessions in between).
- Small Business Accounts programme to commence March 23rd with 15 confirmed participant businesses.
- Donegal Local Enterprise Office is lead LEO partner in the Enterprise Europe Network project along with Enterprise Ireland and the Chambers of Commerce in Dublin and Sligo. Donegal LEO will be managing the engagement of the 31 LEOs in this 7 year EU co- funded programme.

- Final of Secondary Schools Enterprise Competition held on March 12th with Raphoe Royal and Prior winning the senior category and Scoil Mhuire, Buncrana the junior.
- On-going management of Profitnet groups – one Engineering group currently operating and agreement in principal to establish a Profitnet group for the Ren Net group of businesses.
- Two workshops held in January/February towards the development of a Strategic Action Plan for Creative Entrepreneurship in Donegal with planned launch day of April 20th for the plan.
- Programme for Enterprise Week 2015 put together and Enterprise Week to run from March 23rd to 27th. Seventeen events over the five days and strong interest registered in most events.
- Newstalk/Bobby Kerr to do broadcast from Letterkenny as part of the Business Week - programme to be broadcast on the Saturday.
- Promotion of Enterprising Donegal Business Awards in first quarter and final of Enterprising Donegal Business Awards will take place on March 27th – 10 finalists and four category awards.
- Organised the participation by Food Coast food businesses in promotional showcase at Donegal Airport and in the Nottingham St. Patrick's Day parade.

C/187/15

TAILTE DE CHUID NA COMHAIRLE A D'FHÉADFADH A BHEITH AR FÁIL LE HÚSÁID AG EAGRAÍOCHTAÍ AR NÓS GRÚPA SÚGARTHA POBAIL DHÚN FIONNACHAIDH  
AVAILABILITY OF COUNCIL OWNED LANDS THAT COULD BE USE BY GROUPS SUCH AS DUNFANAGHY COMMUNITY PLAYGROUP

The following question was submitted by Cllr Mac Giolla Easbuig:-

"An bhfuil aon sealuchas no aon talamh ar fail ag Comhairle Contae Dhun na nGall ar fud an chontae, nach bhfuil in usaid, agus a d'fheadfai a chur ar fail do ghrupai ar nos Ghrupa Sugartha Dhun Fionnachaidh?"

"Does Donegal County Council have any property or lands available and not in use throughout the County which could be made available to groups such as the Dunfanaghy Community Playgroup?"

Cllr Mac Giolla Easbuig was informed that:-

“Ta talamh ag an Chomhairle ar fud an chondae a d’fheadaí a chur san aireamh do tograi mar seo, ma aontaíonn achan nduine gur an suíomh ceart e don fhorbairt sa cheantair agus nach bhfuil aon pleananna ag aon stiúireoireacht eile le é a fhorbairt.

Ba cheart de na coistí a bhfuil suim acu ionaid sugartha a fhorbairt ina gceantear teangbhail a dheanamh leis an Bainisteoir Rannoige ins an stiúireoireacht pobal, cultúr agus pleanáil.

Donegal County Council do have various plots of lands throughout the County that could be considered for projects such as playgrounds, if it is decided that it is the most appropriate location in that area for that development and no other directorate has plans to develop the ground.

Any groups interested in developing playgrounds in their area should make contact with the Divisional Manager in Community, Culture and Planning Directorate.”

C/188/15 BREAKDOWN OF SERVICES PROVIDED EACH OF THE PSCS

The following question was submitted by Cllr Gallagher:-

“Could this Council provide in tabular format the breakdown of services in each PSC, including the number of staff in each section delivering each service?”

Cllr Gallagher was informed that:-

“The number of Council staff assigned within each Public Service Centre is summarised as follows:

Letterkenny PSC	38
Carndonagh PSC	31
Dungloe PSC	28
Donegal PSC.	26
Milford PSC (incl. Contact Centre)	15

(Note: the above excludes National Roads Office staff based in Donegal PSC)

Our Public Service Centres provide availability to all front line services of the Council. This include front line access to staff dealing with the following:

- Housing Applications
- Housing maintenance requests
- Roads issues
- Environmental Matters
- Planning queries - including request for pre-planning enquiries
- Motor taxation services
- Community development engagement
- 

Having regard to the ‘pooled’ staffing arrangement that is in place to enable flexibility in assignment of duties, it is difficult to provide a tabular representation of the staffing on a service by service basis.”

C/189/15 PROVISION OF MONIES BY DONEGAL COUNTY COUNCIL IN ORDER TO DRAWDOWN SIGNIFICANT INVESTMENT IN KEY MARINE PROJECTS SUCH AS THE GREENCASTLE BREAKWATER

The following question was submitted by Cllr Murray:-

Will the Council provide monies in order to draw down significant investment in key marine projects such as the Greencastle Breakwater?"

Cllr Murray was informed that:-

“The Three Year Capital Report is on the Council Agenda for this Meeting and it contains information on capital projects including Piers and Harbours. Normally Marine Projects are funded on the basis of 75% State Grants and 25% Co-Funding by the Council. There is a very limited amount of co-funding provided in Budget 2015 for Marine Projects and it is intended to keep the existing progamme running without the addition of any significant new projects.

The Greencastle Breakwater Project was stopped a few years ago due to the economic downturn and the difficulty in providing both the 75% funding by the Department of Marine and the 25% match

funds by the Council. The estimate for the completion of the Breakwater Project had been previously considered to be around €10 million and the Council has difficulty in providing the €2.5 million co-funding.

While there is no particular co-funding provided in Budget 2015, normally the Council would take a fresh look at any new grants being provided and how it might provide any match monies on a case by case basis.”

C/190/15 COUNTY LIST FOR FUNDING OF PIERS AND HARBOURS  
IN 2015

The following question was submitted by Cllr Albert Doherty:-

"Has the Council forwarded to the Minister of the Marine the County list for funding for Piers and Harbours for 2015, and is pursuit of resumption of funding for the Greencastle Breakwater Project a priority County listing?"

Cllr Doherty was informed that:-

“The Three Year Capital Report is on the Council Agenda for this Meeting and it contains information on capital projects including Piers and Harbours. Normally Marine Projects are funded on the basis of 75% State Grants and 25% Co-Funding by the Council. There is a very limited amount of co-funding provided in Budget 2015 for Marine Projects and it can keep the existing programme running without the addition of any significant new projects.

The Greencastle Breakwater Project was stopped a few years ago due to the economic downturn and the difficulty in providing both the 75% funding by the Department of Marine and the 25% match funds by the Council. The estimate for the completion of the Breakwater Project had been previously considered to be around €10 million and the Council has difficulty in providing the €2.5 million co-funding.

While there is no particular co-funding provided in Budget 2015, normally the Council would take a fresh look at any new grants being provided and how it might provide any match monies on a case by case basis.

Separately, the Council has agreed to prepare an Infrastructure Requirements Plan for the entire county and that is being considered on a separate item on the Council Meeting today. The development of that plan will ultimately prioritise infrastructure including piers and harbours together with its co-funding obligations. When this plan is agreed, it is intended that it will be submitted to government departments.

Further, on the 13th March 2015 the Minister for Agriculture, Food and the Marine announced details of a €17.8m Capital Investment Package for the ongoing development of Ireland's publicly owned fishery harbours and local harbour network. This included an allocation of €1.5m for a Local Authority Harbour Development and Marine Leisure programme in 2015 and €1.4m for the completion of a number of Local Authority Storm Damage projects which were approved in 2014 as part of the Governments response to the extreme weather conditions in late 2013 and early 2014.

Donegal County Council have applied for funding to carry out essential repairs to piers around our coastline at 23 separate locations including Greencastle, Glengad and Leenan pier. It is anticipated that €135,000 allocated to Bunagee Pier as part of the Storm Damage programme last year will be spent there this year.

The Council have also applied for funding to carry out Marine Leisure projects at 5 separate locations in the county including Greencastle and Dunree.

This is the only avenue for funding currently available to Donegal County Council and with funding of only €1.5m available to the entire country for harbour development and marine leisure projects it allows for little more than essential repairs. The Council do not know at this stage however, how much funding will be made available to them.”

C/191/15 PROPOSALS ON UPGRADING THE EXISTING CHAMBER

The following question was submitted by Cllr Canning:-

“Has this Council any proposals on upgrading the existing chamber?

Cllr Canning was informed that:-

“The Council agreed about one year ago to use the Training Room as a Temporary Council Chamber to accommodate the new 37-Member Council that would be formed in June 2014. At the time it was understood that a SubGroup of the new Council would assist in discussing and determining the best arrangement for a permanent Council Chamber. There has been ad hoc discussion on what is the best solution since and at times a desire expressed to return to the existing Chamber. Also, there has been discussion on how the Training Room might be modified even on an interim basis perhaps to raise the top and side tables and add electrical outlets and individual seats. Some have expressed a desire not to alter the existing Chamber.

With regard to the specific question, there is no particular plan in place at the moment to make modifications to the existing Chamber and any such modifications would require discussion and agreement of the Elected Council. It is suggested that the best way forward is to form a SubGroup who together with relevant staff could consider options and make a recommendation on how best to proceed.”

C/192/15      SURVEY AND RESULTS OF COUNCIL OWNED HOUSES  
FOR MICA IN DONEGAL

The following question was submitted by Cllr McGuinness:-

“How many council owned houses were surveyed for MICA in Donegal? When was the survey done? What was the findings?”

Cllr McGuinness was informed that:-

“Arising from suspected cases of occurrence of muscovite mica, the Council has arranged for specific tests to be carried out on a limited sample of materials taken from two Council houses - one SI House and one scheme house. Preliminary results received, indicated the need for further tests in order to determine a definitive position including any remedial actions which may be deemed necessary. These further tests are presently being undertaken, with a view to having the results of same within the next number of weeks.

Given the complexities of the testing, this has taken somewhat longer than had originally been envisaged although when definitive

findings are available, the situation will be further assessed with a view to determining an appropriate response to any suspected cases. Arrangements can be made to bring the output from these test to the May meeting of Council with a proposal as to how any occurrences of defects arising from Muscovite / Mica will be addressed in Council housing stock.”

C/193/15 PROVISION OF TENANTS INFORMATION BY OTHER COUNCILS TO IRISH WATER

The following question was submitted by Cllr Canning:-

"Have any other councils in the state decided not to give tenant's information to Irish Water?"

Cllr Canning was informed that:-

“It is understood that no Local Authority has decided not to provide the requested tenant information to Irish Water”

C/194/15 HIGHLIGHTING OF THE DANGERS OF GORSE FIRES

The following question was submitted by Cllr Canning:-

"Has this Council any proposals on highlighting awareness on the dangers of gorse fires and the need for landowners to create fire breaks?"

Cllr Canning was informed that:-

“During the wildfire season which generally occurs between March and April inclusive (though it can extend on either side of this period) Donegal Fire Service monitors the situation and issues warnings as and when considered necessary. Radio advertisements, have, for example, been running in recent days in this context.

The matter of firebreaks on gorse land is not one that has been addressed heretofore. The provision and maintenance of firebreaks would pose practical and financial challenges for landowners and Donegal County Council as the Fire Authority for County Donegal has no statutory powers to compel land owners to provide fire breaks on gorse land.

In the past householders in wildfire prone areas have been advised to remove or cutback growth in the vicinity of their dwelling in

order to increase protection to the dwelling should a wildfire occur in the vicinity.”

C/195/15 POSSIBLE PLANNING PERMISSION DIFFICULTIES WITH DONEGAL COUNTY COUNCIL AND IRISH WATER OVER LANDS THAT IRISH WATER HAVE PIPES ETC LOCATED  
The following question was submitted by Cllr Albert Doherty:-

Have problems at Donegal County Council arisen with Irish Water with applicants being denied planning permission as a result of Irish Water rejecting applications where planned structures were over/above Irish Water owned pipes, water/sewerage lines?"

Cllr Doherty was informed that:-

“No particular issues of the type indicated have arisen.”

C/196/15 ACTIONS BY DONEGAL COUNTY COUNCIL IN THE PROVISION OF BROADBAND IN RURAL AREAS OF DONEGAL

The following question was submitted by Cllr McGuinness:-

“What actions have the Council taken regarding the provision of broadband in rural areas of Donegal?"

Cllr McGuinness was informed that:-

“Whilst the provision of broadband services is not a statutory responsibility of Donegal County Council, the Council recognises the importance of broadband as a key economic development tool and continues to lobby for telecommunications and broadband investment in the County.

In so far as rural broadband is concerned, Donegal County Council contributed financial assistance to the Community Network Services project in partnership with the International Fund for Ireland, Inter-Reg and Udaras Na Gaeltachta. In addition to funding, the Council provided technical and project management assistance to the CNS project which was a community led initiative.

Community Network Services funded the provision of fixed wireless broadband services in rural and costal areas of County Donegal in the period 2007 – 2012.

As part of the Council's evolving digital strategy at present, it is envisaged that the strategy, when completed, will incorporate actions intending to progress the expeditious application of broadband services in the County, through, inter alia, working with relevant Government Departments and as required engaging with telecoms providers.”

C/197/15

ENFORCEMENT NOTICES FROM THE EPA

The following question was submitted by Cllr Shiels:-

"Can the Council confirm (1) how many enforcement notices were received by it from the Environmental Protection Agency in respect of water quality issues for a period of 5 years from 1-1-2009 until 31-12-2013 and (2) provide a copy of each enforcement notice and (3) confirm how many of those enforcement notices had not been complied with at the date of handover of the Council's water assets to Irish Water and (4) confirm the reasons why such enforcement notices were not immediately complied with when received from the Environmental Protection Agency?"

Cllr Sheils was informed that:-

“The following is the position in relation to Directions issued by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) to Donegal County Council under the provisions of the European Communities (Drinking Water) (No.2) Regulations, 2007 during this period 2009 to 2013. 8 Directions were issued by the EPA, Four of these were issued under Regulation 16.1 and related to Narin-Portnoo Public Water Supply (PWS), Rathmullan PWS, Greencastle PWS and Gortahork-Falcarragh PWS and four under Regulation 10(4)(c) relating to Letterkenny Regional Public Water Supply (PWS), Fintown PWS, Cashilard PWS and Ballyshannon PWS.

The Ballyshannon PWS Direction has been compiled with.

The other Directions required substantial capital investment to replace or upgrade treatment plants, install trunk mains to connect to alternative supplies, with a knock-on effect on these alternative

supplies in some cases. The Department of the Environment, Community and Local Government (DECLG) had accepted that the necessary remedial works would be funded under their Water Services Investment Programme (WSIP).

The Council had proposals prepared for the necessary works to comply with the Directions through the West Donegal Regional Water Supplies Strategy under the WSIP during the lead up to the transition to the transfer of responsibility to Irish Water and some of the requisite works had commenced and were ongoing at the time of the transfer of responsibility.

Since the legal obligation now rests with Irish Water their Capital Investment Programme 2014/2016 provides for works to comply with the EPA Directions much of which is consistent with the programme which the Council had prepared in consultation with the DECLG.

Arrangements will be made to email copies of the Directions to the members in due course.”

C/198/15 IRISH WATER POLICY IN RELATION TO NEW CONNECTION APPLICATIONS TO EXISTING GROUP WATER SCHEMES

The following question was submitted by Cllr McGarvey:-

"Will Donegal County Council ask Irish Water to state their policy regarding new applications for New Connections to Existing Group Water Schemes?"

Cllr McGarvey was informed that:-

“The Council will request Irish Water to confirm their policy in relation to applications for new connections to existing group water schemes and advise in due course.”

C/199/15 PROVISION OF REPORT TO IRISH WATER ON THE LOCATION AND STATUS OF THE MANY PUMPING AND MECHANICAL SEWER/WATER TREATMENT PLANTS ACROSS THE COUNTY

The following question was submitted by Cllr McMonagle:-

"Has this Council given Irish Water the locations of and status of the many pumping and mechanical Sewer/Water treatment plants across the County and can we as councillors get a copy of that report?"

Cllr McMonagle was informed that:-

“The Water Services (No. 2) Act 2013 provides for the transfer of water service assets from the local authorities to Irish Water by Ministerial Order. The transfer of water services property from the local authorities to Irish Water commenced with an initial Ministerial Order to transfer the "below ground" assets, in effect the mains network, and it is expected that a further Order will be made shortly to transfer treatment plants, pumphouses etc. which can transfer without any modifications to the Property Registration Authority folios for the properties. The Council has prepared a full inventory of all assets and arrangements will be made for a copy of the register to be provided to the elected members in due course.”

C/200/15

FUNDING FROM THE OPW FOR COASTAL EROSION

The following question was submitted by Cllr O'Donnell:-

"Can this council get the much needed funding from the OPW for coastal erosion which is happening throughout the County?"

Cllr O'Donnell was informed that:-

“Donegal County Council apply for funding from OPW for coastal erosion on an ongoing basis. Some applications are routed through the Council's Road Design section. In recent times however the application process has been complicated somewhat by the introduction of a requirement for Coastal Erosion Risk Management Studies for proposed measures in excess of 75m in length or where the site is located in an environmentally sensitive area.

A Coastal Erosion Risk Management Study is a specialised body of work that is beyond the expertise of the Council's roads staff and requires the appointment of an external consultant.

The appointment of an external consultant requires scoping, preparation of tender documents, tendering, appointment,

management of consultant, etc. and can be a significant body of work in itself.

At present the Road Design section have a large workload for a small number of staff and this has an effect on the progress of this work.

Separately, the Council is generally not responsible for coastal erosion on stretches of coast outside it's control even though as a public body it would try to be as helpful as possible and quite often advance projects if funding is made available to it from other state bodies or departments.

The Council would have a particular emphasis on coastal erosion that affects public roads, car parks, beaches and the like and less of an emphasis on private lands. It is acknowledged that coastal erosion is a significant issue and it became very pronounced in the storms early last year.”

C/201/15 UPDATE ON THE FERRY SERVICE FROM RATHMULLAN TO BUNCRANA

The following question was submitted by Cllr O’Donnell:-

"What is the update on the ferry service from Rathmullan to Buncrana as its soon will be summer again and nothing sorted?"

Cllr O’Donnell was informed that:-

“As was outlined at the January Council meeting, tenders can be requested for a 2015 service should the necessary resources be allocated towards this end.

Previous years allocations for the Swilly Ferry came through the Letterkenny Electoral area, the Inishowen Electoral Area and the Buncrana Town Council.”

C/202/15 COUNCIL’S DISABILITY STRATEGY GROUP

The following question was submitted by Cllr Kavanagh:-

"When was the last meeting of the Council's Disability Strategy Group and when do the Council intend to have another meeting of this group?"

Cllr Kavanagh was informed that:-

“Council is currently examining the possibility of re-establishing its internal structures that deal with its access responsibilities as well as its potential involvement in a proposed Donegal Disability Equality Network.”

C/203/15 UPDATE ON THE REINSTATEMENT OF THE FULL  
OPENING HOURS AT THE COUNTY LIBRARY AT  
LETTERKENNY

The following question was submitted by Cllr Kavanagh:-

"Is there any update on when full opening hours will be restored to all sections of the County Library in Letterkenny"

Cllr Kavanagh was informed that:-

“The Council's plan to address the reduction in library opening hours is through internal recruitment to priority areas, of which Central Library is one.

The transfer process has commenced at Central Library and as soon as fully implemented, opening hours will be reviewed which will in turn increase opening hours at the research section.

Staff have already been appointed to Dungloe, Ballyshannon, and Bundoran Libraries through internal recruitment.

One additional person transferred to the staff of the Letterkenny Central Library in January of this year with the full compliment with an additional 2 staff members will be in place over the coming weeks.”

C/204/15 PROGRESS OF CLLR MCDAID’S MOTION REGARDING  
THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A RURAL AFFAIRS  
COMMITTEE

The following question was submitted by Cllr McDaid:-

"What progress has this Council made regarding my motion which got passed in January's meeting to form a Rural Affairs Committee within this Council?"

Cllr McDaid was informed that:-

“Since this issue was last raised work has progressed on all of these fronts. Detailed work can be advanced in the context of Donegal County Council’s Economic, Enterprise & Planning SPC and Community, Social and Cultural SPC.

This issue will also be raised at the Donegal PPN (Public Participative Network). The PPN will be establishing specific interest focus groups to concentrate on key areas of importance for the county. The establishment of a Rural Development focus group in this context is an option that can be examined over the coming weeks.

Previous response to January motion: The Council are leading on the development of a Local, Economic and Community Plan (LECP) which will be focusing on all areas of need and opportunity in the County including local development, connectivity and promoting sustainable communities.

The Council led Local Community Development Committee (LCDC) will be preparing a Donegal County submission for the next LEADER / Rural Development Programme which will provide an opportunity to deal with issues and opportunities identified in the LECP.

The LCDC is a Council Committee involving all sectors which will be the Local Action Group (LAG) for the purposes of LEADER, SICAP, PEACE IV, and potentially other programmes which will support rural development.

Further economic development work relating the LECP is being carried out by the DCC Economic Development Committee. This Committee comprises of the members of the CPG, the CE, the Director of Community, Culture & Planning and representatives of the Economic Development Agencies and relevant sectoral representatives.”

C/205/15

ENGAGEMENT WITH STAKEHOLDERS TO OPEN NEW MARKETS IN NORHTERN IRELAND AND THE U.K. FOR SMALL BUSINESS

The following question was submitted by Cllr McGarvey:-

"Will this Council do more to engage with all Stakeholders to open new Markets in N. Irl. and the U.K. for small business and others?"

Cllr McGarvey was informed that:-

“Donegal County Council is actively working with all stakeholders in developing the Local Economic and Community Plan (LECP). The plan is being prepared with the support of the Donegal LCDC (Local Community Development Committee) and the Donegal County Council Economic Development Committee and will promote a range of proposals to consolidate and further develop businesses operating in the county with building capacity to export being a key part of this. The Donegal County Council Local Enterprise Office (LEO) will have a key role in advancing this work in the county.”

C/206/15 INSTALLATION OF CARBON MONOXIDE ALARMS

The following question was submitted by Cllr Kavanagh:-

"Is the Council installing carbon monoxide alarms in its housing stock in the County on an ongoing basis, if so how many units have now had these alarms installed and how many units are still awaiting installation?"

Cllr Kavanagh was informed that:-

“While it had not been Council policy generally to install carbon monoxide alarms in its rented housing stock, alarms (and radon gas monitors) had been installed in a limited number of dwellings under the “insulation programme”.

This matter was reviewed towards the end of 2014 where it was decided that such alarms would now be installed in all dwellings having works carried out in the future under the insulation programme or where vacant properties were being returned to productive use.

It is intended that the insulation in all of the Councils rented properties will be upgraded to current standards under the insulation programme over the next few years.”

C/207/15 PORTION OF THE COUNCIL’S 131 MILLION REVENUE BUDGET THAT RELATES TO THE SERVICES NO LONGER

UNDER ITS CONTROL SUCH AS HIGHER EDUCATION GRANTS

The following question was submitted by Cllr McDaid:-

"Of the total expenditure of 131 million in the 2015 Revenue Budget. How much of this relates to services (such as coroners, veterinary inspection, student grants) over which the Council have no control?"

Cllr McDaid was informed that:-

"The Council has control over all expenditure included in its annual revenue budget, in so far as the decision to make payment is concerned.

The extent to which discretion can be applied varies and includes a multitude of options ranging from no discretion in instances of fixed or statutory costs, some discretion where costs are only partially fixed in nature and through to wholly discretionary in instances where there is an option to incur, or not, any expenditure in an area.

In the context of the 3 examples cited, the Council reimburses Coroners costs as billed during the year in question with this figure varying from year to year, as such the Council does not have control on what it spends on this category of activity.

In the case of Veterinary a portion of this activity is funded externally but the Council will then work within a pre-defined budget comprising own resources and this external funding and, as such, this is fully controlled by the Council.

Lastly in relation to student grants, 2015 will be the last year that the Council administers these following the establishment of SUSI.

All grants are fully covered by Department of Education with administration costs covered by the Council, as such, this expenditure is fully controlled.

The above examples give a flavour of the variety of income and expenditure scenarios that are at play in the Councils Revenue budget and as such it is not practical to give a definitive answer to the question as submitted."

C/208/15 PROVISION OF FIGURES ON THE NUMBERS OF OUTDOOR STAFF PER ELECTORAL AREA AND OUTDOOR POSTS THAT MAY BE FILLED BY PARTICIPANTS ON THE JOBBRIDGE SCHEME

The following question was submitted by Cllr Quinn:-

Recruitment of outdoor staff per Electoral Area.

- a. Since 2002 how many staff have been employed on 9 month contracts?
- b. How many of these staff members have received permanent employment?
- c. How many (if any) posts previously filled by outdoor staff have been or are being filled by participants on the JobBridge Programme?"

Cllr Quinn was informed that:-

“a) Over the period from 2002 to 2007, the Council employed a significant number of employees annually on a seasonal basis (up to 70 per year). In the period from 2008 to date, the Council has taken on around 20 seasonal outdoor workers on average each year.

The contract periods would range from roughly 2 months up to 9 months. These employees are by and large taken on to deal with additional requirements pertaining to the Roadworks Programme, mainly during the summer season.

Since 2009, as a result of the moratorium on recruitment, all such appointments require Departmental sanction in advance.

(b) During the period from 2002 until the moratorium on recruitment was implemented, there were approximately 20 employees who had been employed on a seasonal basis, who were made permanent by Donegal County Council.

(c) The posts in question, which were previously filled by seasonal employees, are not filled by JobBridge participants, as there are specific and different criteria to be applied to same.”

C/209/15 UPDATE ON THE JOBBRIDGE SCHEME PARTICIPATION BY DONEGAL COUNTY COUNCIL

The following question was submitted by Cllr Quinn:-

"Since the establishment of the JobBridge Programme how many participants have Donegal County Council employed, in what areas were they employed, what was the longest and shortest duration of employment and how many participants are now in real, full-time employment with the Council?"

Cllr Quinn was informed that:-

“Since the establishment of the JobBridge Programme in Donegal County Council, the Council has had a total of 85 participants, (4 of these are currently participating).

The majority of participants have participated for the standard period, which is 9 months. However, 15 participants chose to leave the programme early. Some left to return to further education, others to take up employment. The shortest internship was just short of one calendar month.

The participants were assigned across a number of Council services including Community & Enterprise, Forward Planning, Library Services, Communications, Health & Safety and Information Systems.

While we do not have access to information pertaining to the current employment status of those who have participated with the Council on the Scheme, it is confirmed that none of the participants are in full time employment with the Council.

There are a number of contributing factors in the regard including the lack of recruitment generally into the Public Service over the period in question.”

C/210/15 MOTIONS FROM OTHER COUNCILS/BODIES

Members noted the following motions from other Councils:-

LIMERICK COUNTY COUNCIL

“That Limerick City and County Council call on the Minister for Justice and the Minister for Children to investigate the alleged movement of sex offenders from Northern Ireland to the 26 County Republic, in particular, Limerick City and County.”

WICKLOW COUNTY COUNCIL

“That this Council support the National Association of Regional Game Councils in their request to be fully and meaningfully consulted by any changes made to the firearms licencing system.”

THE MUNICIPAL DISTRICT OF CARRICKMACROSS –  
CASTLEBLAYNEY

“That the District call on the Minister for Jobs Richard Bruton, the IDA and Enterprise Ireland that any new factories that are opened are not sold to private commercial groups but are kept in the ownership of the State Agencies.”

OFFALY COUNTY COUNCIL

“As democrats elected by the people of County Offaly, today this Council condemns targeting the President of Ireland Michael D Higgins for any protest or demonstrations. This is an attack on our constitution, and if allowed to continue will lead to a breakdown of normal politics.”

FINGAL COUNTY COUNCIL

“That this Council calls on the Chief Executive to write to the Minister of the Environment to ask him to remove the 15% limit on Local Property Tax reductions on the basis that it is expected that the valuation on property prices mandated to occur in 2016 is expected to reveal that valuations have increased far above 15% and as a result local councillors will be powerless to prevent what may be an unnecessary imposition of higher LPT rates. This motion also calls on the Chief Executive to write to all County and City Councils in Ireland to inform them of this potential issue for their consideration.”

MONAGHAN COUNTY COUNCIL

“That Monaghan County Council requests the Department of Environment Community and Local Government to create a newly funded co-ordinator post for the Public Participation Networks throughout each Local Authority, to enhance its potential for optimum outreach and success and building relations between Local Authorities and the Communities they serve.”

This concluded the business of the meeting.