

## **Minutes of Monthly Meeting of Offaly County Council**

Held on 24 March 2025 at 2.00pm, in Áras an Chontae, Charleville Road,  
Tullamore and via Teams

The Meetings Administrator carried out a roll call to confirm attendance.

### **Present**

Cllr. Audrey Hennessy Kennedy, Cathaoirleach

Bryant, Ollie	Masterson, Aoife
Clendennen, Eleanor	McDonnell, Fergus
Cribbin, Noel	Moran, Frank
Egan, Hugh	Murray, Claire (SF)
Feighery, Neil	Murray, Shane
Fitzpatrick, Eddie	Murray-Smale, Claire (FF)
Leahy, John	Ormond, Peter
Maher, Sean	

### **Apologies**

Cllr. S. O'Brien, Cllr. D. Harvey and Cllr. L. Quinn.

### **Officials in Attendance**

Ms. A. Delaney, Chief Executive; Ms. F. Millane, D.O.F.; Ms. A. Dillon, D.O.S.; Mr. B. Lennon, A/D.O.S.; Mr. N. Gorman, D.O.S.; Mr. A. Murray A/D.O.S.; Mr. J. Condrón, A/Senior Executive Planner.; Ms. L. Mitchell, A/Senior Planner; Ms. C. Clancy, Environmental Liaison Officer; Mr. E. Fennell, S.E.O. Meetings Administrator; Ms. AM. Kelly, Administrative Officer; Ms. C. Darby, C.O. ; Mr. B. Gunning, Chairperson of Audit Committee.

### **1. Confirmation of Minutes**

On the proposal of Cllr. P. Ormond, seconded by Cllr. F. McDonnell, the members resolved to adopt Minutes of the ordinary meeting of Offaly County Council held on Monday 17 February 2025.

### **2. Minutes for Noting**

The Members noted the minutes of the Meetings below:

- Minutes of Corporate Policy Group Meeting held on 13 January 2025.

### 3. Audit Committee Annual Report 2024

Mr. B. Gunning expressed his thanks on behalf of the Audit Committee to Chief Executive Ms. Anna Marie Delaney, members of the Management Team as well as Mr. Barry Loughlin Head of Internal Audit & Ms. Tammy Dunne, Staff Officer, Internal Audit, who had supported and assisted the committee in 2024.

Regarding the Annual Financial Statements, he welcomed the progress that has been made over the last number of years in reducing the revenue deficit despite the macroeconomic challenges faced by the Council.

The committee met on 4 occasions over the year and considered and received briefings on the following:

- Offaly County Council's Annual Financial Statement 2023
- Offaly County Council's Annual Report 2023
- Quarterly updates on Local Government Audit Service Statutory Auditor's Reports
- Quarterly updates on Internal Audit Plan progress
- Internal Audit Reports
- Internal Audit Recommendation Tracking System.
- Internal Audit Charter 2024
- Internal Audit Risk register
- Internal Audit Strategic Plan
- Internal Audit Plan for 2024/2025
- Audit Committee Work Plan 2024/25
- Offaly County Council's Public Spending Code Quality Assurance Report 2023
- Monthly Management Reports to Council

Mr. Gunning noted the Internal Audit unit were unable to complete all the audits included in the 2024 audit plan due to the complexity of the Cybersecurity Audit and delays in acquiring an independent expert. He advised that the audit would need to be carried into the 2025 plan. He also advised that the annual report noted that while Parking Charges, LEO and NWCPO audits were completed, reports will not be presented to the committee until April.

The Internal Audit unit completed both non-discretionary audits during the year, and the Social Inclusion Community Activation Programme audit and review of the Public Spending Code. As part of their work programme Internal Audit staff also reviewed the Internal Audit Charter, Internal Audit procedure manual and the Internal Audit functions compliance with the IIA standards set out by the Institute of Internal Auditors. The Function monitored the Internal Audit Risk Register which was shared and approved by the Audit Committee.

The Audit Committee considered the following Internal Audit Reports/reviews in 2024:

- SICAP 2023 Review
- Motor Tax stock Review
- Fuel Stocktake Review
- Planning Bond Review

- Travel and Subsistence Audit
- Fire Charges Audit
- Development Contributions Review
- LVP Card Review
- Public Spending Code Quality Assurance Report 2023
- Public Spending Code Quality Assurance In-depth Check Reports:
  - Revenue Programme – SICAP
  - Capital Project – Kylebeg, Banagher & Woodfield, Birr

Mr. Gunning advised that the committee deliberated on the Annual Financial Statement and Local Government Auditor's Statutory Report 2023 and highlighted the following areas:

- The Audit Committee notes the continued reduction in the revenue deficit in 2023
- The Audit Committee raised their concern regarding future running costs of associated companies and the impact that any potential shortfalls could have on Offaly County Council.
- Concerns over the adequacy of the current bond rate calculation of €5k per unit which has been in place for over 20 years. The Committee are aware of the challenges faced in terms of dealing with the housing crisis, and that Offaly County Council must protect itself from the financial impact associated with the taking in charge of housing developments. The Audit Committee recommended Offaly County Council conduct a detailed review of the current bond rate calculation.
- Concerns over the level of unfunded capital balances, the committee noted that the Local Government Auditor has raised concerns that the unfunded balances may place a strain on the finances of the council in the future. The Audit Committee recommended that the management team discuss options regarding the clearance of such balances as detailed by the Local Government Auditor.

On the proposal Cllr. J. Leahy, seconded by Cllr. O. Bryant, the members resolved to adopt the Audit Committee Charter 2025.

On the proposal of Cllr. J. Leahy, seconded by Cllr. O. Bryant the members resolved to adopt the Audit Committee Work Plan 2025.

Ms. A. Delaney, Chief Executive thanked Mr. B. Gunning, Chairperson Audit Committee, Mr. B. Loughlin, Internal Auditor, and Ms. T. Dunne, Staff Officer in Internal Audit, for their work.

#### **4. Taking in Charge of Estates - Section 11 of the Roads Act 1993 and Section 180 of the Planning and Development Act 2000 as amended**

On the proposal of Cllr. N. Feighery, seconded by Cllr. J. Leahy in accordance with Section 11 of the Roads Act 1993 and Section 180 of the Planning and Development Act 2000, as amended, the members resolved to Take in Charge of Silverbrook, Tullamore.

## **5. Planning and Development Act, 2000 as amended, Part 8 of the Planning and Development Regulations, 2001 as Amended**

On the proposal of Cllr. F. McDonnell, seconded by Cllr. N. Cribbin, the members resolved to adopt the Planning and Development Act, 2000 as amended, Part 8 of the Planning and Development Regulations, 2001 as Amended for Proposed Housing Development at Beechwood Court, Daingean, Co. Offaly.

## **6. CE Report on the Draft Joint Portarlington Local Area Plan 2025-2031**

Mr. Andrew Murray, Director of Service, advised the members on Section 148 of the Planning and Development Act 2000, as amended in relation to ‘requirements affecting members who have certain beneficial interests.’

Mr. Murray introduced Ms. L. Mitchell, A/Senior Planner and Mr. J. Condon, A/Senior Executive Planner, to the meeting. Ms. Mitchell advised that the Draft Local Area Plan went on display from November 12th to January 2nd and 32 no. submissions were received, 11 of which applied to the Offaly side of the town. Ms. Mitchell informed the members that were then issued with the CE Report on February 12th. The members were advised in accordance with Section 20(3)(c) of the Planning and Development Act 2000, as amended, that they are restricted to considering the proper planning and sustainable development of the area, the statutory obligations of any Local Authority in the area and relevant policies or objectives for the time being of the Government or of any Minister of the Government. Ms. Mitchell noted that the motions that have been received will require the passing of a resolution by not less than half of the members.

Mr. J. Condon, A/Senior Executive Planner brought the members through the CE Report on the Draft Joint Portarlington Local Area Plan 2025 – 2031. Mr. Condon began his presentation outlining the timeframes and dates involved in the Joint Local Area Plan process before advising the members that it was hoped the plan would be adopted at the Council meeting in July and would take effect in September.

Mr. Condon noted that a mandatory Local Area Plan is required for Portarlington having regard to Section 19 of the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended), which states that a Local Area Plan is required to be prepared in respect of an area that is:

- Designated as a town in the most recent census
- Has a population more than 5,000
- Is situated in the functional area of the planning authority which is the county council.

He continued that it is important to note that under section 19(2) of the Planning & Development Act 2000 as amended, ‘A local area plan shall be consistent with the objectives of the development plan, its core strategy, and any regional spatial and economic strategy that apply to the area of the plan’.

Mr. Condon recapped on certain provisions from the Offaly County Development Plan 2021-2027 which referred to:

- Portarlington as being designated a Self-Sustaining Town in which requires consolidation and targeted ‘catch up’ investment in services, infrastructure, suitable transport options,

amenities and local employment whilst balancing housing delivery and focusing on consolidation to become more self-sustaining.

- The projected population increase, 207 persons, housing supply target, 140 units, and total of 'New Residential' zoned land, 4.6 hectares, provided for Portarlington in the County Development Plan Core Strategy.

Mr. Condrón brought the members attention to the application of a pro rata growth figure per year of the Draft Local Area in order to align the different plan periods of the Draft Plan and the Offaly County Development Plan which would increase the area of 'New Residential' zoned land by 0.73 hectares with the potential to yield an additional 40 residential units above the County Development Plan Core Strategy provisions for the Offaly side of the town.

Mr. Condrón outlined the role of the Office of the Planning Regulator (OPR) in relation to all statutory land use plans and informed the members that If an adopted plan is not considered to be consistent with any statutory recommendations, the OPR may issue a notice to the Minister recommending that a Ministerial direction, specified under Section 31 of the Act, be issued to compel the local authority to address the matter.

It was noted the Office of the Planning Regulator (OPR) identified a small number of matters that require further consideration prior to the adoption of the Joint Local Area Plan:

- 1) Opportunity Sites - Additional detail & guidance on the future development of Kilmalogue Crossroads; (including density, layout, massing, permeability, heights, materials, connectivity to existing and proposed pedestrian and cycling routes etc.).
- 2) Integrated land use and transport planning - More ambitious modal share targets for cycling, timelines for strategic measures related to walking, cycling, public transport and the roads network, clarity and policy regarding and the River Barrow active travel bridge.
- 3) Economic development and employment - Evidence base employment strategy, conformation that lands zoned are serviced and support sustainable transport options.
- 4) Flood Risk Management - Review mapping to ensure alignment with SFRA, ensure justification tests are carried out consistent with Flood Guidelines and requirement for policy to support mitigation measures outlined in SFRA.

Mr. Condrón outlined the CE recommendations in this regard:

- That Table 11 be amended to show permeability links on the map showing the opportunity site and that planning criteria be expanded to provide guidance to developers on how to design schemes for this important site such as providing for a compact urban form, healthy place making, good permeability links, a density of 30-50 units along with requirements for masterplans and design statements.
- Table 18 of the Draft LAP and Table 5.7 of the LTP be amended to increase in modal share target for cycling from 5% to 10% in respect of School, College or Childcare Trips.
- Table 18 of the Draft LAP and Table 5.7 of the LTP be amended to incorporate timelines for strategic measures related to walking, cycling, public transport and the roads network, outlining whether measures are short term (1-2 years), medium term (3-5 years) or long term (6-10 years).
- Objective 15.1 be amended to make provision to "investigate the feasibility of providing a bridge crossing and walkway over the River Barrow in the indicative location to the south-west of the town".

- The amending of the Industrial and Warehousing zoning objective in Table 21 to refer to low intensity employment uses, such as industry, distribution, warehousing, storage and logistics.
- Addition of objectives supporting mitigation measures outlined in the SFRA regarding appropriate uses in flood zones and updating of maps so the Draft Plan and the SFRA align.

Mr. Condrón proceeded to summarise the points that Uisce Éireann raised in their submission in relation to the town's sewer network. Portarlinton is a constrained agglomeration due to WWPS operational issues in the west of the town with Avondale Wastewater Pumping Station (WWPS) requiring upgrade while the Kilmalogue area is not presently serviced and would require network extension /WWPS upgrade also. Any new development in the short-term, will need to provide offsetting measures to ensure no detriment to the environment. He provided members with the CE response to each matter above.

Mr. Condrón advised that other submissions were received from the Environmental Protection Agency, Department of Transport, Department of Environment, Climate and Communications, National Transport Authority, The Heritage Council, Office of Public Works, Department of Education and the HSE and that no significant issues were raised in these submissions for the Offaly side of the Plan Area.

Mr. Condrón continued to summarise zoning submissions P/LAP-D-01, P/LAP-D-02 and P/LAP-D-03, and the CE recommendations in relation to same contained in the CE Report.

Cllr. Fitzpatrick put forward a proposal to reject the CE recommendation P/LAP-D-01 and to retain the zoning 'Industrial and Warehousing' for the entirety of the site. Cllr Fergus McDonnell seconded Cllr Eddie Fitzpatrick's proposal.

Mr. Condrón stated that such a course of action zoning Flood Zone A lands as 'Industrial and Warehousing' would comprise the proposed Portarlinton Flood Relief Scheme, which was designed to protect 64 houses and 8 businesses in the town in addition to risking a Ministerial Direction to change the Draft LAP as this change would be at variance with the Planning System and Flood Risk Management Guidelines (2009) and objectives in both the National Planning Framework and the Eastern and Midland Regional Assembly Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy.

Ms. Lorraine Mitchell stated that as she mentioned previously the members are restricted to considering Section 20(3)(r) of the Planning and Development Act 2000 as amended. Accordingly, government policy or objectives should be considered in making an LAP, such as:

- The National Planning Framework 2018 includes National Policy Objective 57 which states that it is an objective of government to "enhance water quality and resource management by ensuring flood risk management informs plan making by avoiding inappropriate development in areas at risk of flooding in accordance with the Planning System and Flood Risk Management Guidelines for Planning Authorities".
- The Flood Guidelines 2009 state that Industrial and Warehousing uses are classified as 'less vulnerable development' and are considered 'appropriate' on Flood Zone B, whereas such uses would have to pass a justification test for Flood Zone A lands. Such a use would fail a justification test as there are alternative suitable lands available to accommodate that particular use in areas at a lower risk of flooding.

- The Climate Action Plan 2024 states that ‘the most immediate risks to Ireland from climate change are predominantly those associated with changes in extremes, such as floods, droughts and storms.

Ms. Mitchell stated that the Floods Directive (2007/60/EC) requires us ‘to take adequate and coordinated measures to reduce this flood risk’.

Ms. Mitchell also made the point that the Council has not zoned land inappropriately on flood plains in recent land use plans such as the County Development Plan, the Edenderry LAP and the Birr LAP. Zoning land inappropriately on floodplains would be setting an undesirable precedent. Ms. Mitchell concluded by stating that the OPW and the OPR would not welcome zoning flood zones inappropriately and to do so would increase the likelihood of a Ministerial Direction being issued in relation to the JLAP.

Cllr. Neil Feighery asked if the meeting could be suspended for a couple of minutes so that the councillors could have a brief discussion on the motion.

Following the break, Cllr. E. Fitzpatrick then proposed three motions in relation to zoning changes:

**Motion 1:** Proposes that the zoning of the lands, designated Flood Zone B, within the site outlined in the accompanying image, be changed from ‘Open Space, Amenity and Recreation’ to ‘Industrial and Warehousing’ in the Draft Joint Local Area Plan.



**Motion No. 1:**  
**Cllr. Eddie Fitzpatrick**

Proposes that the zoning of the lands, designated Flood Zone B, within the site outlined in the accompanying image, be changed from ‘Open Space, Amenity and Recreation’ to ‘Industrial and Warehousing’ in the Draft Joint Local Area Plan.



Flood Zone B (Excluding Flood Zone A areas)  
0.1 per cent (1 in 1000) or greater chance of flooding each year  
Natura 2000 Sites



**Comhairle Chontae Uíbh Fhailí**  
Offaly County Council

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This motion went to a vote for elected members and the motion was carried. All 16 members present were in favour of Cllr. E. Fitzpatrick’s motion.

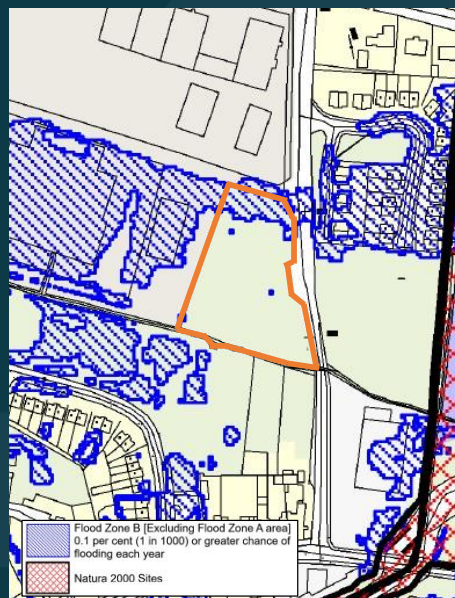
**Motion 2:** Proposes that the zoning of the lands, designated Flood Zone B, shown within the site outlined in the accompanying image, be changed from ‘Open Space, Amenity and Recreation’ to ‘Industrial and Warehousing’ in the Draft Joint Local Area Plan.





## Motion No. 2: Cllr. Eddie Fitzpatrick

Proposes that the zoning of the lands, designated Flood Zone B, shown within the site outlined in the accompanying image, be changed from 'Open Space, Amenity and Recreation' to 'Industrial and Warehousing' in the Draft Joint Local Area Plan.



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This motion was put to a vote for elected members and the motions was carried. All 16 members present were in favour of Cllr. E. Fitzpatrick's motion.

**Motion 3:** Proposes that:

(a) the lands outlined in the townland of Kilmalogue, as shown in the accompanying image, be zoned 'Strategic Residential Reserve' in the Draft Joint Local Area Plan.

(b) Map 2 Objectives of the Draft Joint Local Area Plan be amended to provide for indicative future access to these lands as shown in the accompanying image.

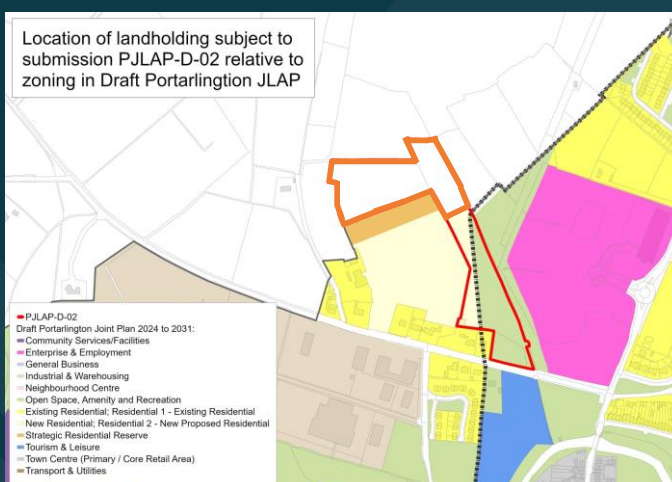


## Motion No. 3: Cllr. Eddie Fitzpatrick

Proposes that;  
(a) the lands outlined in the townland of Kilmalogue, as shown in the accompanying image, be zoned 'Strategic Residential Reserve' in the Draft Joint Local Area Plan;  
(b) Map 2 Objectives of the Draft Joint Local Area Plan be amended to provide for indicative future access to these lands as shown in the accompanying image.



Location of landholding subject to submission PJLAP-D-02 relative to zoning in Draft Portlannington JLAP



Comhairle Chontae Uíbh Fhailí  
Offaly County Council

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This motion was put to a vote for elected members and the motions was carried. All 16 members present were in favour of Cllr. E. Fitzpatrick's motion.

Mr Condrón continued to summarise zoning submissions P/LAP-D-04, P/LAP-D-05, LS-C104-22, LS-C104-23 and LS-C104-24 and the CE recommendations in relation to same contained in the CE Report.

Mr. E. Fennell read out the following resolution for the members; "Having considered the Draft Portllington Joint Local Area Plan 2025-2031 and the Chief Executive's Report circulated to the members on 12<sup>th</sup> February 2025, in accordance with the provisions of Section 20(3)(d)(ii) of the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended), the members agree, by resolution, to amend the Draft Portllington Joint Local Area Plan 2025-2031, as recommended by the Chief Executive and as further amended by way of motions and resolutions at the Council Meeting on 24<sup>th</sup> March 2025 and to proceed in accordance with Section 20(3)(d)(ii) of the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended)."

This was proposed by Cllr. E. Fitzpatrick and seconded by Cllr. S. Murray.

## **7. 2024 Annual Report of Offaly Local Community Development Committee (LCDC)**

Ms. A. Dillon, Director of Service, advised the members that under Section 128B of the Local Government Reform Act 2014 the Local Community Development Committee (LCDC) is required to prepare, adopt and submit an Annual Report to the Local Authority no later than 31 March each year, in respect of the performance of its functions in the previous calendar year. She acknowledged the co-operation and contribution of all parties in relation to the delivery of initiatives which led to many successful achievements as outlined:

- Offaly Local and Community Development Committee continues to be a leading performer in delivering nationally funded programmes.
- The Framework Local Economic and Community Plan (LECP) 2024 – 2029 and initial two-year LECP Implementation Plan 2024 – 2025 were adopted in 2024. Monitoring of implementation of actions and reporting on progress will be the responsibility of the LCDC and Economic Strategic Policy Committee (SPC).
- The new Social Inclusion and Community Activation Programme (SICAP) 2024-2028, with a budget of €1,117,567 for 2024, commenced and a strong and focused programme was delivered in year one.
- Approval and implementation of the Local Enhancement Programme 2024 in the sum of €162,599.36.
- Completion of works in October 2024 of 26 projects approved under Community Recognition Fund 2023 amounting to €669,691.
- Approval and implementation of Window 1 of the Community Recognition Fund 2024 in the sum of €702,000.
- Funding Roadshows were organised by Offaly PPN and the Community Section in February 2024 and were held in Tullamore, Birr and Edenderry.
- Offaly Sports Partnership secured almost €640,000 in funding to deliver a range of inclusive measures to increase and sustain participation in sport in Offaly.
- Healthy Offaly Actions grew significantly under the Offaly Healthy Ireland Fund.

Ms. Dillon thanked the Chairperson Cllr. J. Leahy for his contributions as chairperson for the last two years of the LCDC, the Local Development Committee members, LCDC Sub-Committee members, all collaborative partners and staff members for their support during the year.

Members commended staff of the LCDC and the outstanding work they have achieved in local communities.

## **8. Litter Management Plan Review**

Ms. C. Clancy, Environmental Liaison Officer, presented the members with the work achieved by the Litter Management Team from January 2022 – December 2024 and outlined how Offaly County Council wish to extend the Litter Management Plan for a further 3-year period.

Ms. Clancy highlighted that The Green Schools Programme continues to be promoted and supported in Offaly County Council both in terms of financial support and resource support. She noted that at present all primary and secondary schools in Offaly are involved in the Green Schools Programme, as well as Youth Reach Centres, the Early Learning Network, Offaly School of Special Education.

She noted that Offaly County Council encourages schools to participate in programmes such as composting for schools and how some primary schools have been selected to engage with a composting expert to investigate how the school manages their organic waste and to build a composting unit/wormery to best suit the needs of the school.

Ms. Clancy acknowledged how Offaly County Council continues to support Tidy Towns Groups through talks and financial support. Presentations have been given at the Municipal Districts Public Participation Network Meetings to promote awareness relating to litter and waste as well as at Tidy Towns meetings. She mentioned the National Spring Clean, an annual event promoted by Offaly County Council in conjunction with An Taisce. Local Tidy Towns groups and volunteers select an area within their town or village which requires a litter pick. The council provides resources in terms of bags, gloves, litter pickers and the council's Litter Wardens collect and dispose of the litter collected.

She highlighted the street cleaning which is carried out by the Municipal districts and includes mechanical and manual methods and mentioned the introduction of Solar Compaction Litter Bins. At present there are 15 solar compaction litter bins across the county.

Members credited the work of the Litter Wardens, environment staff, Tidy Towns and the many volunteers throughout the County.

On the proposal of Cllr. F. McDonnell seconded by Cllr. S. Murray the members resolved to extend the Litter Management Plan for 3 years.

## **9. Roads Programme 2025**

Mr. B. Lennon, A/ Director of Service, provided the members with a presentation on the 2025 Annual Roads Programme. He highlighted to members the achievements of the Offaly County Council 2024 Roads Programme such as the opening of the Edenderry Inner Relief Road which helps to reduce traffic congestion in the town centre. It includes paths for cyclists and pedestrians and has several green sites adjacent to the new road which allows for future development.

He mentioned the R400 Peat pilot and how 32% of County Offaly lies upon Peat subgrades. He noted that the longevity of RI and RM interventions in some areas are significantly compromised by the net negative effects of Climate Change and Seasonal variations.

He highlighted the Leabeg to Boora Link on the Grand Canal Greenway and the NTA Pathfinder Project Edenderry Harbour to the Greenway were both completed in 2024. He went on to discuss Own Resources Funding and how this funding will help deliver localised improvements within each Municipal District while also providing additional financial support to service delivery programs partially funded from the TII (Winter Services) and the Department of Transport such as:

- Winter Services Plan
- Severe Weather Response Plan
- Footpath Improvements
- Minor Road repairs/drainage schemes
- Grass Cutting
- Street Cleaning
- Operation of 3 velocity Patchers
- Event Management
- Public Lighting is fully funded by Own Resources

Mr. B. Lennon noted there are 21 schemes included under the Active Travel Investment Programme for the 2025 programme for Offaly. 13 schemes are underway since 2022/2023/2024 with 8 new schemes due to commence in 2025. He outlined the proposed deliverables in the 2025 Roads Programme such as:

- Construction of the Birr North Distributor Road.
- Construction of the Monasteroris Road Widening Scheme subject to Department of Transport approval and funding under the Specific Improvement Grant program.
- Continue to prioritise and promote the N52 Tullamore to Kilbeggan Link design in collaboration with the TII, Westmeath National Design office and Consulting Engineers.
- Delivery of Stage 2 of the R400 Peat Pilot Project.
- Delivery of the N62 Pavement Renewal Works at Crancreagah and Doon.
- Appoint Technical Consultancy Services for the design of the Clara Western Relief Road Project subject to the Department of Transport approval and funding in 2025.
- Progress the Birr Transport Options assessment.
- Deliver the Ferbane to the Grand Canal Greenway Link.
- Continue to work with the NTA to deliver Active Travel and Safer Route to Schools schemes in Offaly.
- Progress the N52 Durrow Safety Improvement Scheme.
- Implement the requirement of RW18 of 2024 with regards to the assessment of Exceptional Abnormal Load Permits and modernise and update our Abnormal Load permitting process in line with the ethos of RW 18 of 2024.
- Complete the Ballycommon Trailhead scheme.
- Deliver the new Default Speed Limits in line with Department of Transport direction across our Local, National and Urban Road network.
- Continue with the delivery of the Taking in Charge of Estates program.
- Engage in a positive, proactive manner with all stakeholders to deliver the optimum positive output in any given scenario.
- Bridge Management and upgrades.
- Safety Improvement Schemes.

In conclusion, Mr. Lennon thanked the Elected members of Offaly County Council, Management Team, all Administrative and Technical staff within the 3 Municipal Districts, Roads and Transportation Team, Funding Partners, Stakeholder colleagues in the ESB, and Uisce Eireann. Mr. Lennon gave a special thank you to former staff members, Mr. John Connolly, Municipal District Engineer and Mr Tom Shanahan, Director of Services, for helping formulate and streamline the template for program delivery over their time with Offaly County Council.

Members thanked Mr. Lennon and the Roads Team.

On the proposal of Cllr. F.McDonnell, seconded by Cllr. P.Ormond, the members resolved to adopt the Roads Programme 2025.

Cllr. A. Masterson expressed concern over the Tullamore to Kilbeggan Road and how it needs to be prioritised and proposed writing to the government to address this. This was seconded by Cllr. S. Maher.

## **10. Monthly Management Report**

Ms. A. Delaney, Chief Executive, brought the Members attention to the February monthly management report. She highlighted that the Draft RZLT Map for 2026 was published by the Council on February 1<sup>st</sup>, 2025, and submissions can be made to the Local Authority by April 1<sup>st</sup> requesting that lands be removed from RZLT mapping or requesting a change of zoning of their site in the County Development Plan.

She noted that on 25th February 2025, the Minister for Environment, Climate and Communications, Mr. Darragh O'Brien, announced that €1 million in funding from the EU Just Transition Fund 2021 – 2027 has been awarded for the upgrading of the Dalton Centre in Shannonbridge.

She noted the EU Just Transition Investment Grant Aid Scheme for Private and Community SMEs. The scheme attracted 29 applicants, resulting in 27 successful applications with Offaly County Council providing extensive support to applicants throughout the application process.

She highlighted the recent Local Enterprise Week that took place between 3<sup>rd</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> of March which aimed to help start and grow businesses. She also reminded members of the upcoming events being held by the Local Enterprise Office.

## **11. Corporate Policy Group Report**

Cathaoirleach A. Hennessy Kennedy informed the Members that at the Corporate Policy Group meeting the March Council meeting agenda was discussed.

Chief Executive, Ms. A. Delaney, informed members of her and Cllr. Audrey Hennessy Kennedy's, recent trip to New York for St. Patricks Day which included meeting with Enterprise Ireland and Tourism Ireland. They attended the Irish Flag raising and Mass at St. Patricks Cathedral in New York City. She thanked the Offaly Association in New York and Mr. Paddy Hogan.

### **Cllr. A. Masterson**

Cllr. A. Masterson proposed the following - "Offaly County Council fully recognises the positive role the tenant in situ scheme has played in preventing families across Offaly from entering homelessness.

To prevent more families from becoming homeless, through no fault of their own, we call on the Department of Housing to agree targets and release funds to Offaly County Council as a matter of urgency".

This was Seconded by Cllr. S. Maher.

### **Cllr. A. Masterson**

Cllr. A. Masterson proposed the following - "Offaly County Council fully recognises the importance of having women's voices heard at every level of society and the barriers still facing many women entering politics.

To encourage and facilitate more women to enter politics, we call on Offaly County Council to provide a live streaming and playback facility similar to those already in operation in other councils such as Dublin County Council, Cork County Council and Roscommon County Council".

This was Seconded by Cllr. S. Maher.

Ms. A. Dillon, Director of Service, highlighted the different initiatives currently available to encourage women into politics such as workshops held by Offaly County Council for women who consider running for election. Members agreed and spoke of who Beneficial these workshops were for them.

Ms. A. Dillon noted this could possibly be considered in the 2026 budget and that costs and licencing issues needed to be considered.

### **Cllr. Claire Murray-Smale**

Cllr. C. Murray-Smale proposed the following - "*OCC to take charge of the safety checks in all Offaly Public Playgrounds* - I would like Offaly County Council to investigate the possibility of the Council conducting safety checks on all public playgrounds throughout Offaly. It is becoming increasingly difficult for the playground committees across the county to facilitate these checks as it quite often falls back on the same people."

This was seconded by Cllr. O. Bryant.

Ms. A. Dillon informed the members that there are 32 playgrounds in Offaly and 19 of which are run by Offaly County Council. There is a policy due for review in 2025.

### 13. Comhdhálacha / Conferences

The members noted the training and conferences as approved at CPG.

### 14. Comhfhreagras / Correspondence

The members noted the correspondence on the agenda.

### 15. Any Other Business

None

**MINUTES CONFIRMED**

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**CATHAOIRLEACH**

\_\_\_\_\_  
**RUNAÍ**

**28 April 2025**

