

## Minutes of Monthly Meeting of Offaly County Council

Held on 16 June 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)
Harvey, Declan	O'Brien, Sean
Leahy, John	Ormond, Peter
Maher, Sean	Quinn, Liam

### Apologies

None

### Officials in Attendance

Ms. AM. Delaney, Chief Executive; Ms. C. Gleeson, A/D.O.F.; Ms. A. Dillon, D.O.S.; Mr. B. Lennon, A/D.O.S.; Mr. P. McLoughlin, D.O.S.; Mr. A. Murray D.O.S.; Mr. E. Fennell, S.E.O. Meetings Administrator; Ms. AM. Kelly, Administrative Officer; Ms. L Mitchell A/Senior Planner; Mr. J. Condon, A/Senior Executive Planner; Ms S. Krishnan, Assistant Planner; Ms. E. Sutton, C.O.

### Suspension of Standing Orders

On the proposal of Cllr. N. Feighery, seconded by Cllr. D. Harvey, the members resolved to suspend Standing Orders for a vote of sympathy to the family of Mr. Christy Maye.

Cllr. N. Feighery and Members extended their sincere sympathies to Mr. Maye's Family on his passing. He expressed Mr. Maye's commitment to Tullamore and how he was a stalwart member of the business community. He advised that Mr. Maye had developed the Bridge House Hotel, Tullamore, and was one of the founders of the Tullamore Show. Cllr. D. Harvey and Members acknowledged the employment he brought to Tullamore and his charitable contributions.

### **Vote of Sympathy**

A Vote of sympathy were unanimously extended to the following:

Ellen Maye, Lake Lodge, Cullionmore, Mullingar, Co. Westmeath, on the death of her husband, Christy Maye.

The Chief Executive, on her own behalf and on behalf of the staff of Offaly County Council, joined with the members in this vote of sympathy.

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

On the proposal of Cllr. F. Moran, seconded by Cllr. D. Harvey, the members resolved to adopt Minutes of the ordinary meeting of Offaly County Council held on Monday 19 May 2025.

### **2. Amendment to Council Meeting Minutes of November 2024**

Mr Evan Fennell, Meetings Administrator, sought Members approval to amend the minutes of a resolution proposed and seconded under Item 6 of the November meeting dealing with the Local Economic and Community Plan 2024-2029 - Local Government Reform Act 2014.

The amendment is required to include the adoption of the 6-year LECP 2024-2029 as well as the adoption of the LECP Implementation Plan 2024-2025 in the resolution agreed by members. Both plans were presented and considered by members at the meeting but only one was noted as adopted in the Minutes.

The amendment read:

Ms. A. Dillon brought the members attention to the Local Economic and Community Implementation Plan 2024-2025. She informed the members that the implementation plan covers the first 2 years of the 6 year Local Economic and Community framework 2024-2029.

On the proposal of Cllr. P. Ormond, seconded by Cllr. J. Leahy, the members resolved in accordance with Local Government Reform Act 2014 to adopt the Local Economic and Community Plan 2024-2029 and the associated Local Economic and Community Implementation Plan 2024-2025.

On the proposal of Cllr. P. Ormond, seconded by Cllr. F. Moran, the members resolved to adopt the amended Minutes of the ordinary meeting of Offaly County Council held on Monday 18<sup>th</sup> November 2024.

### **3. Minutes for Noting**

The Members noted the minutes of the Meetings below:

- Minutes of Corporate Policy Group Meeting held on 14.04.2025
- Minutes of Corporate Policy Group Meeting held on 12.05.2025
- Minutes of Climate Action, Transportation and Environment Strategic Policy Committee held on 19.02.2025
- Minutes of Community, Culture & Emergency Services Strategic Policy Committee Meeting held on 20.02.2025
- Minutes of Housing & Integration Strategic Policy Committee Meeting held on 11.03.2025
- Minutes of Economic Development, Planning & Regeneration Strategic Policy Committee held on 03.12.2024
- Minutes of Economic Development, Planning & Regeneration Strategic Policy Committee held on 05.03.2025

#### **4. S183 of the Local Government Act 2001 - Proposal in relation to Edenderry Community Garden**

Mr. A. Murray Director of Service, brought the members attention to the Proposed Lease for part of Blundell Park site, Edenderry to ‘Edenderry Community Garden’

He noted that Edenderry Community Garden is a voluntary community organisation in Edenderry, and their main activity will be the maintenance and upkeep of a community garden facility within Blundell Park. He highlighted that the purpose of the lease is to allow Edenderry Community Garden to have the use of the site for a community-based garden within the town of Edenderry.

He outlined the lease terms between Offaly County Council and “Edenderry Community Garden” will be:

- Commencement date approx. 30/06/2025.
- Term of 5 years.
- Rent fee of €100.00 per annum.
- Other conditions will apply regarding Insurances, an Opt-out Clause for Offaly County Council, Compliance with future Offaly County Council allotments / community gardens policy, Maintenance and Repairs and No Permanent Structures to be erected.

Cllr. N. Cribbin welcomed the proposal, noting that it would greatly enhance the whole area. On the proposal of Cllr. H. Egan, seconded by Cllr. F. McDonnell, the Members resolved to adopt Section 183, Local Government Act 2001, to lease part of the Blundell Park site, Edenderry to Edenderry Community Garden.

#### **5. Chief Executives Report on Submissions made to the Material Alterations of the Draft Portarlington Joint Local Area Plan 2025-2031**

**Please note that proposed additions to Draft JLAP from presentation are shown in red text while proposed deletions are represented by strikethrough.**

Mr. Andrew Murray, Director of Services, informed the members that the presentation would focus on the submissions received on the Material Alterations to the Draft Portarlington Joint Local Area Plan (PJLAP) 2025-2031 that are of most relevance to the Offaly side of the town. However, the Elected Members have been encouraged to read all of the Chief Executives Report.

Mr. A. Murray 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.'

Ms. Lorraine Mitchell stated that;

- Material Alterations were proposed to the Draft PJLAP at the Full Council meetings of Offaly County Council on March 24<sup>th</sup> and Laois County Council on March 21<sup>st</sup>;
- Proposed Material Alterations were placed on public display from April 9<sup>th</sup> to May 10<sup>th</sup>, 2025 with 11 submissions received in total, 2 of which were by Offaly County Council.
- The CE Report was issued to the elected members on May 30<sup>th</sup>;
- The PJLAP must be adopted by July 10<sup>th</sup>.
- In accordance with Section 20 (3)(r) members 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 any Minister of the Government.

Mr. James Condon, A/Senior Executive Planner, advised the Members of the Statutory Requirements in the Planning and Development Act 2000 as amended, regarding section 20(3) in relation to the consideration of Material Alterations and further modifications.

Mr. J. Condon brought Members attention to the Office of the Planning Regulator (OPR) who has the responsibility for independently assessing all statutory county development and local area plans to ensure;

- All legislative and policy matters are addressed.
- Local authorities implement national and regional policies.

He highlighted that the local authority must then outline how these observations and recommendations will be addressed, taking account of the proper planning and sustainable development of the area.

If an adopted plan is subsequently not 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.

He explained the Voting process that if the members are satisfied with a CE recommendation in the CE Report, in relation to significant changes proposed to a material alteration, then a proposer and seconder is required (at the end of each slide). However, a full vote is required if there is a desire to go contrary to the CE recommendation.

Ms. Sruthi Krishnan, Assistant Planner, provided members with the Summary of OPR recommendations Ref: PJLAP-MA-01 & LS-C1118-6 (p.8 of CE Report). The OPR states in its submission that it acknowledges the extensive work undertaken by both Planning Authorities in responding to the issues raised by the Office in its recommendations and observations, which have been undertaken in a very constructive manner.

1. Overview - Active Travel Routes - Providing Active Travel measure in relation to the Community Use Lands to the northwest of Bog Road.
2. Recommendation 1 - Economic Development - Minor modification to MA 31 (Objective in Table 21 of the Draft Plan) to ensure that the development of the Industrial and Warehousing zoned land is primarily for low intensity employment uses.
3. Recommendation 2 - Flood Risk Management - Minor modification to MA 4 (Objective 6.12) to amend the wording to be consistent with *Climate Action and Energy Policy (CAEP-53) of the Offaly CDP, Policy Objective Flood Risk Management (FRM-1) of Laois CDP, and Regional Policy Objective (RPO 7.12) of RSES*, to avoid inappropriate land use zonings and development in areas of risk flooding in accordance with the Flood Guidelines.

Ms. S. Krishnan, brought Members attention to Chief Executive recommendation in response to OPR Overview (p. 8-14 of CE Report)

She noted the CE recommends that the JLAP and Local Transport Plan (LTP) should be amended as follows;

- **MM1** - It is recommended that the Table 5-1 of the LTP is amended to include Active Travel Route AT2-Phase 3 to serve the following land:

New Residential and Community Use lands to the northwest of the town off Bog Road from Coláiste Íosagáin to White Heart Lane '.

These additional measures are referred to in the LTP on Page 45, Table 5-1 (MCA Matrix- Pedestrian, Cycle & Permeability Measures).

- **MM2** - It is recommended that the Table 18 of the JLAP and Table 5-7 of the LTP is amended to include Active Travel Route AT2-Phase 3 to serve the following land:

New Residential and Community Use lands to the northwest of the town off Bog Road from Coláiste Íosagáin to White Heart Lane '.

On the proposal of Cllr. E. Fitzpatrick, seconded by Cllr. N. Cribbin, the Members resolved to adopt MM1 and MM2. Cllr. E. Fitzpatrick wanted It noted that the Bog Road should be widened.

Ms. S. Krishnan advised of the next CE recommendation in response to OPR Overview entailing the following:

**MM3** - It is recommended to amend Drawing 22073-C-DR-01 of the LTP providing for an additional Active Travel Route on the Bog Road;



**MM4** - It is recommended to include Drawing 22073-C-DR-01 of the LTP, as an additional map in the JLAP.

On the proposal of Cllr. E. Fitzpatrick, seconded by Cllr. N. Cribbin, the Members resolved to adopt MM3 and MM4.

Ms. S. Krishnan introduced the next Chief Executive's recommendation in response OPR Recommendation 1 (p. 17-18 of CE Report) outlining the following:

CE recommends to amend the Land Use Zoning (for Industrial & Warehousing) Objective in Table 21 as follows:

**MM6** - Provide for industrial and warehousing development in suitable and accessible locations including primarily for low intensity employment uses, such as industry, distribution, warehousing, storage and logistics.

CE Recommendation in response to OPR Recommendation 2 (p. 19 - 28 of CE Report)

CE recommends to make the following changes:

- (i) **MM7** – It is recommended to amend Objective 6.12 as follows:

Development within flood risks areas shall be limited to that appropriate to the level of flood risk, as identified in Map 3 (Land use Zoning, SAC and Flood Zoning) in accordance with the provisions of the Planning system and Flood Risk Management Guidelines for Planning Authorities (2009), as amended. New development within this area is limited to water compatible uses in Flood Zone A and less vulnerable or water compatible uses in Flood Zone B except where all criteria of the Plan Making and Development Management Justification Tests have been shown to have been satisfied and a detailed SSFRA has been provided.

On the proposal of Cllr. E. Fitzpatrick, seconded by Cllr. N. Cribben, the members resolved to adopt MM6 and MM7.

Ms. S. Krishnan introduced the next Chief Executive's recommendation in response OPR Recommendation 2:

- (ii) **MM8** - It is recommended to add a new Policy Objective in Chapter 13 of the Draft Plan.

*Development within flood risks areas shall be limited to that appropriate to the level of flood risk, as identified in Map 3 (Land use Zoning, SAC and Flood Zoning) in accordance with the provisions of the Planning system and Flood Risk Management Guidelines for Planning Authorities (2009), as amended. New development within this area is limited to water compatible uses in Flood Zone A and less vulnerable or water compatible uses in Flood Zone B except where all criteria of the Plan Making and Development Management Justification Tests have been shown to have been satisfied and a detailed SSFRA has been provided.*

- (iii) **MM9** – CE recommends to amend Table 23 Land Use Zoning Objectives – Offaly (c) of the Draft Plan as follows:

## Land Use Zoning Objective – Constrained Land Uses

It is an objective of the Council to:

Facilitate the appropriate management and sustainable use of flood risk areas designated as 'Constrained Land Use' in the zoning map in accordance with the provisions of the Planning System and Flood Risk Management Guidelines for Planning Authorities (2009), as amended, in consultation with the OPW. New development within this area is generally limited to water-compatible uses in Flood Zone A and less vulnerable or water compatible uses in Flood Zone B (~~although these restrictions do not apply where a Plan-making Justification Test has been passed~~) and ~~a detailed SSFRA will be required~~ **except where all criteria of the Plan Making and Development Management Justification Tests have been shown to have been satisfied and a detailed SSFRA has been provided.**

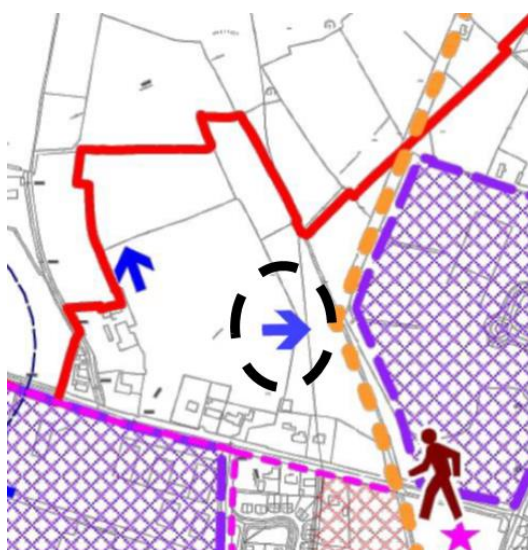
On the proposal of Cllr. E. Fitzpatrick, seconded by Cllr. C. Murray-Smale, the members resolved to adopt the above amendment to MM8 and MM9.

Ms. S.–Krishnan introduced the next Chief Executive's recommendation in response OPR Recommendation 2:

(iv) **MM10** – The CE noted that the extent of the Constrained Land Uses Designation (Offaly) is represented in Map 3: Land Use Zoning, SAC and Flood Zoning. However, it is recommended that the legends of Flood Zone A and Flood Zone B in 'Map 3: Land Use Zoning, SAC and Flood Zoning' be amended as follows:

Replace with Flood Zone A - **LCC (Constrained Land Use – OCC)** and with Flood Zone B - **LCC (Constrained Land Use – OCC)**. It is also recommended to add this cross-reference to Map 3 in section 16.12 Designations (Offaly).

(v) **MM12** - It is considered appropriate to show an indicative access to the lands (in MA 40 in Laois side) from the west (from Offaly side), which is deliverable as the lands are within the same ownership.



On the proposal of Cllr. E. Fitzpatrick, seconded by Cllr. F. McDonnell, the members resolved to adopt MM10 and MM12.



Ms. S. Krishnan introduced the next Chief Executive's recommendation noting Ref. No. LS-C118-1 Inland Fisheries Ireland (p. 33)

**MM14** – CE recommends that Section 6.10 be amended as follows;

**6.10 Bridges, culverts and weirs**

Where a planning application includes proposals to amend an existing bridge, culvert or weir, or introduce a new in-channel structure, it will be necessary for the applicant to seek OPW's approval under Section 47 (weirs) and Section 50 (bridges and culverts) of the Arterial Drainage Act 1945. It should be noted that OPW approval under Section 47 and / or 50 does not influence or determine the outcome of the Planning Application process. **IFI should also be consulted, where such structures must also take into consideration IFI's Guidelines on Protection of Fisheries during Construction Works in and adjacent to Waters (2016).**

Cllr. E. Fitzpatrick supported the amendment while stressing the need for adequate flood defences on the above area.

On the proposal of Cllr. E. Fitzpatrick, seconded by Cllr. N. Cribben, the members resolved to adopt the above amendment to MM14.

Ms. S. Krishnan introduced the next Chief Executive's recommendation noting Ref. No. LS-C118-4 Office of Public Works (OPW).

**Additional Policies and Objectives**

Text included in Objective 6.12 is unclear might be clarified to confirm that the Justification Test provides for an exception to the sequential approach where the specific requirements of the test have been satisfied, and that prior to development of such areas a Site- Specific Flood Risk Assessment would be required rather than a Strategic Flood Risk Assessment.

**MM17**- CE recommends to amend the wording of Objective 6.12 as contained in MA4:

**From**

New development within this area is generally limited to water compatible uses in Flood Zone A, and less vulnerable or water compatible uses in Flood Zone B where a Plan-Making Justification Test has been passed and a detailed SFRA has been prepared

**To**

**New development within this area is limited to water compatible uses in Flood Zone A and less vulnerable or water compatible uses in Flood Zone B except where all criteria of the Plan Making and Development Management Justification Tests have been shown to have been satisfied and a detailed SSFRA has been prepared.**

On the proposal of Cllr. E. Fitzpatrick, seconded by Cllr. C. Murray-Smale, the members resolved to adopt MM17.

Mr. James Condon, continued the presentation bringing members attention to the Zoning Submission in the Offaly side of the Plan Area, Ref: PJLAP-MA-02 (Page 55, CE Report)

Summary: Submission requests that site be zoned in its entirety as 'Industrial and warehousing' or a combination of 'Industrial and warehousing' and 'Open Space and Amenity' as per the current PJLAP 2018-2024 as;



1. Flood defence being carried out will deem the site dry;
2. Draft LAP 04/06/2024 proposed the site as all industrial;
3. The site was sold by Offaly County Council as industrial, and now this proposed rezoning would render the site worthless;
4. Site levels on the OPW flood map are outdated.

CE Response: CE Recommendation: No amendment to **MA 49**

1)

- (a) The part of the site which has been identified as Flood Zone A in the SFRA fails the Plan Making Justification Test.
- (b) The remaining part of the site which has been designated as Flood Zone B is considered appropriate for an 'Industrial and Warehousing' zoning as industrial and warehousing developments are deemed less vulnerable development on such lands in the Planning System and Flood Risk Management Guidelines for Planning Authorities (2009).
- (c) Notwithstanding the sites inclusion in the Portarlington Flood Relief Scheme (FRS), it should be noted that whilst the FRS has gone through design and development, it has not been completed and as such the lands remain unprotected from flooding.

2) The map included in Mr Wards submission labelled 'Draft 04/06/2024' showing the zoning of the entirety of the site as Industrial and Warehousing is from an internal working copy zoning map from a point in time of early to mid-2024 and is not from the Draft Joint Portarlington Local Area Plan. It has no statutory basis.

The preparation of the Draft Plan to date has involved significant public consultation, in which two submissions were received on the zoning of this site at Draft stage which were addressed as part of the CE Report on submissions received to the Draft JLAP; PJLAP-D-03 and LS-C104-9.

3) Land values are not a material consideration in the zoning of land. In accordance with Section 20(3)(c) of the Planning and Development Act 2000.

4) The CE is satisfied with the detail of the flood mapping which has informed this Draft Plan. The CFRAM study has now been superseded by the Portarlington Flood Relief Scheme, which built upon CFRAM dataset and would have reviewed the survey, hydrology, updated the baseline flood mapping and mapped the floodplain to a high level of detail.

Mr. James Condrón, noted the submission also attaches:

- A request made to Offaly County Council for items and responses under Freedom of Information (Fol) and the Sales of Goods and Services (SGS) Act; and
- A copy of a previous submission made in relation to the zoning of the site in the Draft Joint Local Area Plan.

He highlighted the CE Responses noting the following:

- Both the Fol and SGS Act requests are considered outside the remit of this CE Report which summarises the issues raised on submissions or observations made on Material Alterations to the Draft Plan and outlines the recommendations of the Chief Executive in relation to the manner in which those issues and recommendations should be addressed in the JLAP.

- The previous submission made in relation to this site was addressed as part of the CE Report on submissions received to the Draft Joint Local Area Plan, Ref. No's: PJLAP-D-03 and LS-C104-9.

Mr. J. Condrón brought members attention to the SEA/AA Procedural items. He advised that an 'AA Determination' is presented in advance of the adoption of the LAP taking account of the advice and documents throughout the plan-preparation/ AA process (following any further minor modifications). He presented a signed copy of the Chief Executive's AA Determination

Mr. J. Condrón advised of the steps that are taken following the proposed Adoption.

Cllr. E. Fitzpatrick thanked Ms. AM. Delaney, Mr. A. Murray, Mr. J. Condrón, and Ms. S. Krishnan for the presentation and dedicated efforts. He acknowledged the challenges involved in coordinating between two local authorities, particularly given the River Barrow's division of the town and the complexities of managing flood zones.

Having considered the Draft Portarlinton Joint Local Area Plan 2025-2031, the proposed material alterations which were placed on public display and the Chief Executive's Report on submissions received on the proposed material alterations which was circulated to the members on May 30<sup>th</sup> 2025 and;

- The Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) Environmental Report for the Draft JLAP
- The Appropriate Assessment (AA) Natura Impact Report for the Draft JLAP
- The Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (SFRA) for the Draft JLAP
- The Screening for SEA Report for the Proposed Material Alterations
- The SEA for the Proposed Material Alterations
- The Screening for AA Report for the Proposed Material Alterations
- Screening for SEA and AA determinations to date
- Written submissions relating to SEA, AA and SFRA made during the Plan preparation process
- Ongoing advice on SEA, AA and SFRA from the Council's agents
- The final, consolidated Natura Impact Report
- The final AA Determination,

in accordance with the provisions of Section 20 of the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended), the members agreed, by resolution, to make the Portarlinton Joint Local Area Plan 2025-2031, as recommended by the Chief Executive and as further modified by way of motions and resolutions at the Council Meeting on Monday June 16<sup>th</sup> 2025 and to proceed in accordance with Section 20 of the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended) to publish notice of the making of the JLAP.

On the proposal of Cllr. E. Fitzpatrick, seconded by Cllr. N. Cribbin the Members resolved to formally adopt the Portarlinton Joint Local Area Plan 2025-2031.

Mr. J. Condrón informed the meeting that the Joint Local Area Plan will take effect on July 28<sup>th</sup>, 2025.

**1. Part 8 of the Planning & Development Act 2000, (as amended) Planning and Development Regulations 2001, (as amended) - Collins Lane, Tullamore**

Mr. Paul McLoughlin, Director of Services, brought members attention to the Chief Executives Report on Collins Lane Active Travel Scheme proposed South Link Road.

He outlined the report and advised that following public consultation no submissions or observations were received, due to that fact no modifications to the published Collins Lane Active Travel Scheme Proposed South Link Road Part 8 are proposed.

Cllr. S. O'Brien welcomed the proposed development noting the importance of having a safe cycling route to school and the urban area. Cllr. N. Feighery joined with members in support of this significant Active Travel development and queried if the layout had taken into consideration and ensured the potential for maximising the housing density on the lands to the north and south.

In response to Cllr. N. Feighery's query, Mr. Paul McLoughlin, Director of Services, advised that the Part 8 was considerate of design standards for the active travel infrastructure and housing density. Mr. McLoughlin advised that some amendments/modifications may be required at the detailed design stage to ensure that both requirements were achieved but that the scheme would materially be the same. The same start and end point, same cross section and have potential for the internal junctions to move east or west as required. Cllr. N. Feighery expressed his satisfaction with the response.

Cllr. A. Masterson raised a concern noting it was unusual for us not to receive any submissions and queried how this development plan was advertised. She enquired if there are plans for traffic management as much of the land in this area is earmarked for development.

In response to Cllr. A. Masterson's query on the advertisement procedure of Part 8 Planning and Developments, Mr. Paul McLoughlin, Director of Services, advised that the public consultation process was followed, details of which are recorded in the Chief Executive report provided to Members. He noted the Part 8 process was advertised in the local print media, online on the council's consultation portal, on social media and that the requisite site notices were placed on the public road approaches to the site. Mr McLoughlin also outlined the timelines for public consultation were observed.

In response to Cllr. Masterson's traffic management enquiry, Mr. McLoughlin advised that masterplans take into account all considerations including plan layouts and density, and they set out a design solution to meet the requirements of the development and the intentions of the proposed Tullamore Cycle Network.

On the proposal of Cllr. S. O'Brien, seconded by Cllr. N. Feighery, 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 Collins Lane Active Travel Scheme - proposed South Link Road, Collins Lane, Tullamore, Co. Offaly.

## **2. S11 of the Roads Act 1993; S180 of the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended) – Taking-In- Charge Rathcarn, Moneygall**

On the proposal of Cllr. P. Ormond, seconded by Cllr. J. Leahy, the members resolved in accordance with Section 11 of the Roads Act 1993 and Section 180 of the Planning and Development Act 2000, as amended, to Take in Charge of Estate- Rathcarn, Moneygall, Co. Offaly.

### **3. Adoption of Annual Report (2024) in accordance with Section 221 of the Local Government Act 2001**

Ms. Ann Dillon, Director of Service, brought the members attention to the Annual Report 2024 in accordance with Section 221 of Local Government Act 2001. She outlined that it provides an opportunity to reflect on the work of the Council in delivering important public services during the year. She noted achievements made with overarching reference to the four strategic goals set out in the 5-year Corporate Plan. Ms. Dillon thanked all the staff involved for their hard work on compiling the Annual Report, particularly Ms. A. M. Kelly.

Neil Feighery thanked Ms. A. Dillon for the report noting that it is very informative. Cllr. J. Leahy joined with the Members in thanking all staff involved in the production of the comprehensive Annual Report.

On the proposal of Cllr. N. Feighery, seconded by Cllr. J. Leahy, the members resolved to adopt the Annual Report 2024.

### **4. Local Neighbourhood and Destination Electric Vehicle Charging Infrastructure Strategy for the Counties of Offaly, Laois, Westmeath, Longford & Roscommon - in accordance with Ireland's Electric Vehicle Charging Infrastructure Strategy 2022-2025**

Mr Paul McLoughlin, Director of Service, brought members attention to the Regional Strategy for the delivery of Electric Vehicle Infrastructure. He introduced Mr Barry Lennon, A/Director of Service, who presented the Regional Strategy to the Members.

Mr. B. Lennon gave a summary of the Strategy outlining the following:

- Offaly County Council are the Lead Authority for the delivery of this strategy which was delivered in collaboration with our colleagues in Laois, Westmeath, Longford and Roscommon.
- It aims to strategically deliver EV charging infrastructure for destination and neighbourhood areas, in support of national-level policy and strategy objectives, in order to meet current and future EV user needs now and into the future.
- The targets within the Strategy will be delivered by a combination of Privately owned and funded Charge Point Operators and Publicly Funded Charger delivery via Capital and Operational funding from ZEVl (Zero Emission Vehicles Ireland).
- It is not the intention or focus of this strategy that any of the Local Authorities will becomes a large-scale Charge Point Operator.
- Delivers on commitment made within our National Carbon Action Plan and respective Local Climate Action Plans to Decarbonise our Transport system.

He advised Members of the dependencies of the strategy plan which included:

- Identification of Suitable Site's and application of Universal Design Guidelines (2 for 1)
- Availability of 3 Phase Power for chargers above 50 kw (Neighbourhood AC/Destination DC)

- Communal Charging locations
- Managing Multi use locations (nighttime charging/security/public lighting/24hrs access)
- User Need - Number of EV vehicles – Currently we have 369 PHEV(1%) 519 BEV (1.36%)
- EV Costs and ability to hold Value.
- Capital and Operational Funding requirements.
- Assigned AFIR (Alternative Fuel Infrastructure Regulations)

He provided members with the key outputs, and user need was noted as a key driver of commercial viability. He advised the 2025 AFIR (Alternative Fuels Infrastructure Regulation) target would benefit from hotel charging. He noted 2030 targets depended on ESB capacity and creating grid capacity would aid charger placement. He outlined the strategy would align with Fáilte Ireland and stakeholder engagement was planned. He outlined that private operators would deliver most of the AFIR target, with the council filling gaps and that ZEV (Zero Emission Vehicles Ireland) funding was confirmed.

Mr. B. Lennon advised the proposed strategy, if adopted, would provide a roadmap for EV infrastructure planning. He noted that the business model and partnering approaches for the EV charger delivery would need to be finalised.

Cllr. O. Bryant, Chair of the Strategic Policy Committee (SPC), thanked Mr. Barry Lennon and Mr. Paul McLoughlin for their detailed presentation. He noted that the Electric Vehicle (EV) Strategy Policy was brought before the SPC, where it was the subject to thorough and constructive debate. It was supported by the SPC noting it was a step in the right direction.

On the proposal of Cllr. O. Bryant, seconded by Cllr. Leahy, the members resolved to adopt the Local Neighbourhood and Destination Electric Vehicle Charging Infrastructure Strategy for the Counties of Offaly, Laois, Westmeath, Longford & Roscommon - in accordance with Ireland's Electric Vehicle Charging Infrastructure Strategy 2022-2025.

Discussion arose with Members raising concerns regarding the report. Cllr. P. Ormond stated that without committed funding, the project's completion was uncertain. He also noted the report's focus on Kilcormac, highlighting that not all villages were included in the programme, mentioning the exclusion of Shinrone.

Cllr. F. Moran joined with Members thanking Mr. P. McLoughlin and Mr. B. Lennon for the presentation but voiced his concern that new developments will require electric vehicle charging infrastructure at new homes and developers will pass on the related costs to new home-owners.

Cllr. D. Harvey welcomed the EV policy, describing it as a step in the right direction. He emphasised the importance of the policy for residents who do not have access to private driveways, noting that this presents a significant barrier to electric vehicle ownership.

Cllr. F. McDonnell queried how privately funded charge point operators would operate in practice and whether EV infrastructure would be integrated into future social housing.

Cllr. J. Leahy expressed agreement with fellow Members concerns and acknowledged Cllr. P. Ormond's point regarding the need for funding and infrastructure. He noted that implementation may still be three years away and questioned the feasibility of relying solely on private investment. He enquired the projected increase in electricity demand from 2,074 kilowatts by 2030, and how many EV chargers this would support.

Cllr. S. Maher stressed the need to prioritise the installation of EV chargers at key tourist destinations such as Clonmacnoise, Lough Boora, and Slieve Bloom.

Cllr. A. Masterson agreed with Cllr. P. Ormond on the importance of ensuring a balanced distribution of EV chargers across the County. While she welcomed the proposal, she expressed concerns about the reliability of the existing infrastructure and stressed the need for increased investment in grid capacity by Government.

At this stage Mr. Evan Fennell, Meetings Administrator, advised that Standing Orders were required to be suspended to allow the Annual Meeting to start later than the scheduled time of 3.30pm. On the proposal of Cllr. Ormond and seconded by Cllr. N. Cribben the members resolved to suspend standing orders to facilitate same.

Cllr. E. Fitzpatrick inquired whether GAA Clubs would be eligible to receive EV charging infrastructure. He noted that, based on his experience, the community group in Garryhinch had previously attempted to install an EV charging point but faced significant challenges, particularly the requirement to provide three-phase power, which proved to be a major obstacle and cost.

Cllr. S. Murray stated that the inclusion of EV charging units and solar panels should be a standard requirement for all new housing developments.

Cllr. N. Feighery noted that, based on his experience, he believes it is unfair to require homeowners to incur additional costs of solar panels, and EV chargers at the time of construction. He suggested these could be added at a later stage.

In response to Cllr. P. Ormond's concern, Mr. B. Lennon confirmed that funding would be available. He explained that the majority of the AFIR (Alternative Fuels Infrastructure Regulation) targets would be delivered by private operators, with the Council addressing any service gaps. He also noted that additional support would be provided through funding from ZEV (Zero Emission Vehicles Ireland).

In response to concerns from Cllr. P. Ormond and others about EV charging in rural areas, Mr. B. Lennon acknowledged the challenges and noted that community-led initiatives and working groups would help fill gaps through communal charging points in and around towns.

In response to concerns raised by Cllr. F. McDonnell, Mr. B. Lennon confirmed that EV parking spaces will be allocated within social housing developments.

In response to Cllr. Leahy's query regarding the 2,074 kilowatts, Mr. B. Lennon explained that this figure represents the total projected capacity. He also noted that individual EV chargers typically deliver around 50 kilowatts per unit.

In response to Cllr. S. Maher, Mr. B. Lennon confirmed that Fáilte Ireland is aligning with the EV strategy and that key tourist locations will be identified for the installation of EV infrastructure.

In response to Cllr. E. Fitzpatrick, Mr. B. Lennon noted that the risk register includes cost and capacity considerations, with the aim that these builds will be delivered by relevant stakeholders. He added that projects linked to sports schemes and the Just Transition region will also be reflected in the AFIR (Alternative Fuels Infrastructure Regulation) figures.

## 5. Monthly Management Report

Chief Executive, Ms. AM. Delaney brought the Members attention to the May Monthly Management Report. She noted the Regional Strategy Plan, which was brought before the Climate Action, Environment, Water & Transportation SPC for consideration and approval

She highlighted the official launch of the Offaly County X account by the Climate Action Team. She noted that the X account was advertised by Midlands Radio 103 with Offaly County Council Climate Action Co-Ordinator John McNally appearing as a guest speaker on 'Taking Care of Business with Ronan Barry' discussing how Offaly County Council is stepping up their local sustainability efforts.

She noted the Clonbullogue Sustainable Energy Community Energy Master Plan Launch. She outlined the important step towards gaining ISO 50001 Energy Management System accreditation by procuring an independent external Auditor and an update will be given to members in due course.

She brought Members attention to the Green Schools Awards Ceremony was held and 19 schools from Offaly were awarded their Green Flag. She gave special mention to Scoil Mhuire in Cloneygowan who were the first Offaly school to receive the Primary Climate Ambassador Flag, having participated in the programme for 20 years.

She mentioned that works are now complete on the Pavement and Renewal program for works to the N62 at Crancreagh and Doon, this project was funded by Transport Infrastructure Ireland (TII). She noted the project has successfully upgraded the pavement infrastructure, delivering significant improvements in road safety and driving conditions for all users.

She advised the members that the National Transport Authority (NTA) has allocated an additional €500,000 for the Cox's Bridge Project, bringing the total to €750,000 as part of the Active Travel scheme aimed at enhancing traffic flow and safety. She highlighted that the overall 2025 allocation for Active Travel Infrastructure is now €3,250,000.

She noted the impressive achievements of Sacred Heart School Tullamore All female robotics team winning the prestigious Judges Award at the VEX Robotics and Coláiste Choilm VEX Robotics Team representing Offaly on a global stage in Dallas, Texas.

She highlighted to members that DTS (Decontamination Technical Services Ltd) was crowned the Midlands Region Award Winner at the National Enterprise Awards. She noted how DTS was supported by Offaly's Local Enterprise Team, and she congratulated all involved on their achievement.

Cllr. O. Bryant echoed Chief Executive, Ms. AM. Delaney, in congratulating DTS on their Midlands Region Award. He advised that he attended the award ceremony in the Mansion House where all 26 counties were represented, and he also thanked the Local Enterprise Office.

Cllr. D. Harvey requested to be associated with Cllr. Bryant's remarks and wanted to acknowledge the Chief Executive noting that this would be her last Annual Meeting with Offaly County Council.



Cllr. H. Egan thanked the Chief Executive for the report. He noted the water quality farm inspections which are ongoing, and he queried how many inspections had been carried out. He also requested to know if Offaly's water quality had improved. He highlighted that farmers are putting in the work to improve water quality to pass EU regulations on Low Emissions Slurry Spreading.

In response, Ms. AM. Delaney advised there are meetings with Teagasc and the Irish Farmers Association throughout the year. She suggested a presentation be arranged for the Members on Water and River quality in Offaly.

## **6. Corporate Policy Group Report**

Cllr. Audrey Hennessy Kennedy, Cathaoirleach, informed the Members that at the Corporate Policy Group meeting held on the 9<sup>th</sup> the Council meeting agenda was discussed. The CPG members also discussed four items for noting, one from Fingal County Council and three from Carlow County Council. She noted there was one conference for noting in respect of the AILG training module.

She highlighted the recent Civic Reception held in Offaly County Council for Heritage Groups on the 11<sup>th</sup> June, which was a huge success. In addition, she noted that a Local Democracy Taskforce is to be set up to reform and strengthen Local Government and that the details are to be circulated to the Elected Members.

## **7. Notices of Motion**

There were no Notices of Motion on the agenda.

## **8. Comhdhálacha / Conferences**

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

## **9. Comhfhreagras / Correspondence**

The members noted the correspondence on the agenda.

## **10. Any Other Business**

Cllr. O. Bryant, Leas Cathaoirleach, congratulated Cllr. A. Hennessy Kennedy on her term as Cathaoirleach. He commended her common-sense approach to the role. He also expressed his honour in representing the council at various events as Leas Cathaoirleach, highlighting the National Enterprise Awards in the Mansion House, Dublin, Seachtain na Gaeilge week, and New Staff Induction Day.

**21 July 2025**

