**MINUTES OF MARCH MEETING OF BIRR M.D. HELD ON MONDAY 10TH MARCH, 2025 AT BIRR CIVIC OFFICES, WILMER ROAD, BIRR AT 4.30 P.M.**

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| **MEMBERS PRESENT:** | **Cllrs P Ormond, E Clendennen, J Leahy, A Hennessy – Kennedy, H Egan, S Maher,**  |
| **IN ATTENDANCE:** | **Ms A Dillon, DOS, Mr P Dermody A/SEE, Mr N Hogan, EE, Mr B Keenaghan SEE, Ms M Flynn AO Birr MD, Mr J Cunningham SE Housing, and Ms. D Molloy Meetings Administrator** |

1. **Adoption of Minutes of Meeting in Committee held on 10th February 2025**

On the proposal of Cllr Leahy and seconded by Cllr Hennessy-Kennedy the Minutes of Meeting in Committee of Birr MD on the 10th February, 2025 were adopted.

1. **Adoption of Minutes of Monthly Meeting held on 10th February 2025**

On the proposal of Cllr Maher and seconded by Cllr Clendennen the Minutes of the Monthly Meeting of Birr MD on the 10th February, 2025 were adopted.

1. **Matters arising from February meeting.**

There are no matters arising from the February meeting.

1. **Housing Services Update**

Mr John Cunningham, SE Housing Services OCC presented a Housing Activity report to the Members. The Members thanked Mr Cunningham for his report and the work carried out to date and raised the following:

* The Members enquired if a breakdown could be provided of the number of applications for housing in Birr MD only. Mr Cunningham advised that the system does not provide a breakdown of applicants per specific MD area.
* The Members enquired if vacant properties are being identified to see how many there are and a policy be devised to bring these properties back in to use. The SE advised that there is a vacant homes office within the Regeneration team in OCC, and they are investigating and identifying properties at present.
* The Members welcomed the establishment of 17 professionally supported emergency beds at Clonamore House in Tullamore and enquired if there are any vacancies there at present. Mr Cunningham advised that the property is full at present and that a manager is currently being recruited. The Members also welcomed the establishment of Safe Homes to support victims of domestic violence.
* The Members welcomed the completions under the Housing Adaptation Grant Scheme but acknowledged that more funding would need to be provided and there is a need for the projects to be completed expeditiously for the applicants.
* The Members acknowledged the Mortgage to Rent Scheme as a great asset to people who find themselves in difficulty, but also enquired about people who are on the cusp of the threshold for council housing and are mostly working people who fall into this category and what is being provided to help these families to get a home.
* The Members raised the issues of Approved Housing Bodies in the county and how many are operational in Birr MD. They advised that they need to be encouraged to look at the maintenance of their buildings that they are kept to a good standard. The Members also enquired about inspections on our own housing stock and in particular to disposal of refuse. The SE advised that it is intended to inspect 10% of stock annually.
* The Members raised concerns in relation to the number of applicants for social housing and also the amount of people on the HAP scheme who still want to be considered for social housing. They advised that there is a lack of houses being provided by the Council in areas outside of Birr town. They asked that all land suitable for housing would be identified and look to the Dept for approval to proceed with construction. The SE advised that at present all available sites are being investigated.
1. **Roads Programme 2025**

Mr Niall Hogan EE, BMD presented the proposed Roads Programme for 2025 to the Members. The Members thanked Mr Dermody and Mr Hogan for all the work carried out in the MD in delivering the 2024 programme and works currently being carried out and raised the following:

* The Members acknowledged the great work that was carried out in putting the Programme together and requested that the Members would be provided with a map indicating the works to be carried out, the Executive agreed to circulate same. The Members also noted that the road network is much greater than that in the other MDs, but this is not reflected in the funding allocations.
* The Members enquired if the increase in funding is in line with inflation or are we getting less work carried out now because of the hike in construction costs. The Executive advised that this programme only covers local and regional roads but that other funding streams will become available that we can tap in to for further resources.
* The Members highlighted the issue of poor condition of footpaths and in particular the footpaths on Main St and the surface in Emmett Sq. in Birr, the Executive advised that there is limited funding made available for footpaths but other streams of funding such as Active Travel and CIS are being looked at.
* The Members enquired about Contractors carrying out works that could be done by Council own staff and the need for further staff to be taken on to fill this need, Mr Hogan advised that five new General Operatives had actually commenced work in Birr MD today, but for very specialised work it will always be necessary to employ Contractors.

The Members were advised that the complete Roads Programme for 2025 would go before the full Council Meeting later in the month but on the proposal of Cllr Leahy and seconded by Cllr Clendennen the works for Birr MD were approved in principle.

The Meeting then concluded.

SIGNED: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

 **CATHAOIRLEACH MEETINGS ADMINISTRATOR**