

COMHAIRLE CHONTAE UÍBH FHAILÍ

**MINUTES OF SEPTEMBER MONTHLY MEETING
OF OFFALY COUNTY COUNCIL**

**HELD IN ÁRAS AN CHONTAE, CHARLEVILLE ROAD, TULLAMORE
ON MONDAY, 18TH SEPTEMBER 2017 AT 2.00 P.M.**

PRESENT:	Cllr. L. Quinn, Cathaoirleach (Presiding), Cllrs. N. Bourke, J. Carroll, J. Clendennen, N. Cribbin, D. Dolan, E. Fitzpatrick, J. Foley, D. Harvey, B. Killeavy, J. Leahy, S. Maher, Cllr. T. McCormack, T. McKeigue, F. Moran, M. O'Reilly P. Ormond and D. Owens.
APOLOGIES:	Cllr. E. Dooley.
IN ATTENDANCE:	Ms. A. Delaney, Chief Executive; Mr. F. Heslin, D.O.S; Mr. S. Murray, D.O.S; Mr. D. Conlon, H.O.F; Mr. T. Shanahan, A/D.O.S.; Ms. M. Cleary, Meetings Administrator; Mr. T. Mawe, Financial Management Accountant; Ms. B. Maher, E.P.; Mr. J. Connelly, S.E.E.; Mr. Meehan, E.P.; and Ms. L. Carbery. C.O.
VOTES OF SYMPATHY:	<p>Votes of sympathy were unanimously extended to the following: -</p> <p>The Murray Family on the death of their mother, Mrs. Nuala Murray.</p> <p>Mr. Paddy Minnock on the death of his uncle, Mr. Paddy Minnock.</p> <p>Mr. Seamus Dolan on the death of his father, Mr. Andy Dolan.</p> <p>Mrs. Antoinette Geoghegan on the death of her father, Mr. Sean Doolan.</p> <p>Mrs. Patricia Kidney on the death of her mother Mrs. Maureen Berry.</p> <p>Mr. Tony Arnold on the death of his wife, Mrs. Marion Arnold.</p> <p>Mrs. Patsy Dempsey on the death of her husband, Mr. Michael Dempsey.</p> <p>The Chief Executive, on her own behalf and on behalf of the staff of Offaly County Council, joined with the members in these votes of sympathy.</p>
CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES:	On the proposal of Cllr. J. Leahy, seconded by Cllr. N. Cribbin, the members resolved to adopt the minutes of the July meeting of Offaly County Council held in Áras an Chontae, Charleville Road, Tullamore, on Monday, 17 th July 2017.

<p>MINUTES FOR NOTING:</p>	<p>The following minutes were noted by the members:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Corporate Policy Group Meeting held in Áras an Chontae, Charleville Road, Tullamore, on Monday 19th June 2017; and, - Housing, Social & Cultural Strategic Policy Committee Meeting held in the Charleville Room, Áras an Chontae, Tullamore on Tuesday 23rd May 2017.
<p>FILLING OF CASUAL VACANCY:</p>	<p>Ms. M. Cleary, Meetings Administrator informed the members that that a casual vacancy had arisen in the membership of Offaly County Council following the resignation of Cllr. Sinead Dooley. She outlined the procedure for the filling of the casual vacancy as prescribed in the Local Government Act 2001, as amended and in the Council's Standing Orders.</p> <p>Ms. M. Cleary, Meetings Administrator informed the meeting that a nomination had been received from the political party which had caused the casual vacancy to arise, i.e., Fianna Fáil. She informed the meeting that Mr. Tony McCormack, Daingean Road, Tullamore had been selected by Fianna Fáil to fill the vacancy and acknowledged that Mr. T. McCormack had provided his written consent to the nomination.</p> <p>Cllr. D. Harvey proposed that Mr. T. McCormack be co-opted onto the Council. He advised that Mr. T. McCormack had previously served as an elected member of Tullamore Town Council and was involved in Tullamore Chamber and on many other local committees, including Sister Cities. The proposal was seconded by Cllr. D. Owens and agreed. The members welcomed Cllr. T. McCormack to the Council. Cllr. T. McCormack thanked the members for their good wishes, paid tribute to his predecessor Cllr. S. Dooley, and advised that he hoped to work with the members and executive in promoting the county.</p>
<p>LOCAL PROPERTY TAX:</p>	<p>Mr. D. Conlon, H.O.F., gave a detailed presentation to the members on the Local Property Tax (LPT). He advised that the public consultation period closed on 31st August 2017 and that one submission was received. He provided an overview of the estimated Income and Expenditure for 2018 and informed the members that an increase in the LPT percentage would provide discretionary funds that could be utilised at Municipal District level. Mr. D. Conlon, H.O.F., proposed an increase of 15%, noting the impact this would have for householders in the various property bands. He advised that a 15% increase would provide funding in the sum of €737,000.</p> <p>Cllr. L. Quinn, Cathaoirleach thanked Mr. D. Conlon, H.O.F., for his presentation. He noted that the LPT had remained the same in Offaly since its introduction and reiterated the Head of Finance's comments regarding the limited opportunities available to the Council to raise discretionary funding. A lengthy discussion ensued.</p> <p>Cllr. J. Clendennen proposed an increase of 10% to the LPT which he advised would result in an increase in funding in the sum of €495,000. He detailed a number of community projects,</p>

including swimming pools, playgrounds and the Slieve Bloom trails that could benefit from this additional funding. He proposed that the funding be allocated to the three Municipal Districts for allocating within their areas.

Cllr. D. Dolan noted that commercial rates were harmonised in recent years and that the LPT valuation bands are scheduled to be reviewed in 2019. Cllr. D. Dolan proposed that the LPT be maintained at its current rate.

Cllr. E. Fitzpatrick informed the meeting that Fianna Fáil had received no confirmation that the LPT valuation band review scheduled for 2019 would be postponed and accordingly he advised that Fianna Fáil were not in favour of increasing the LPT.

Cllr. T. McKeigue seconded Cllr. J. Clendennen's proposal stressing that the Council needed to provide matching funds in order to maximise grant opportunities and support local communities.

Cllr. B. Killeavy advised that Sinn Féin supported Cllr. D. Dolan's proposal to maintain the rate at its current level.

Cllr. J. Foley informed the meeting that he was not supporting any increase in the LPT for the coming year.

Cllr. J. Leahy advised that he did not agree with the principal of the LPT as, in his opinion, rural dwellers do not benefit to the same degree from services. However, he noted that there is 97% compliance rate in Offaly and that the council have no other mechanism to raise discretionary funding. He proposed an increase of 10% and proposed that the funding be directed towards affordable housing and towards providing resources for matching funding requirements.

Cllr. P. Ormond acknowledged the difficulty that community groups have in gaining funding but as many householders are in negative equity he advised that he supported the motion to leave the LPT rate at its current level. Cllr. D. Owens noted his concerns regarding the pending review of the valuation bands and advised that he was not in a position to support a LPT increase.

Cllr. J. Carroll highlighted the need for community funding. He stated that he did not believe that the property valuation bands would increase in 2019 and if they did change to the members would have the opportunity to decrease the LPT at that time. He advised that he supported the motion to increase the LPT by 10% on the basis that the income raised would be assigned to the Municipal Districts for distribution to community groups, be clearly reported on in the Council's finances, and thereby give the members the opportunity to influence developments in their areas.

Cllr. M. O'Reilly stated that he supported the motion that there would be no change to the LPT.

	<p>The Cathaoirleach sought clarification on the motion proposed by Cllr. J. Clendennen and seconded by Cllr. T. McKeigue. Cllr. J. Clendennen clarified that the proposed 10% increase was for 2018 only and the €490,000 would be allocated as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - €90,000 to each of the Municipal Districts - €65,000 towards Swimming Pools - €80,000 towards playgrounds - €75,000 towards the Slieve Bloom Mountain Bike Trail (noting that it had received a grant of €1.5m) <p>Cllr. N. Cribbin seconded Cllr. J. Leahy's motion which he clarified would be an increase of 10% with €190,000 of the funds raised being directed towards affordable housing initiatives and the balance to be directed towards matched funding programmes, thereby maximising funds for community and economic projects.</p> <p>Following a short debate, it was agreed to amalgamate the two proposals, i.e., those proposed by Cllr. J. Clendennen and Cllr. J. Leahy seeking an increase of 10%.</p> <p>A roll was called on increasing the LPT for 2018 by 10%.</p> <p>In favour: Cllrs. J. Carroll; J. Clendennen; N. Cribbin; J. Leahy; T. McKeigue; L. Quinn</p> <p>Against: Cllrs. N. Bourke; D. Dolan; E. Fitzpatrick; J. Foley; D. Harvey; B. Killeavy; S. Maher; T. McCormack; F. Moran; M. O'Reilly; P. Ormond; D. Owens</p> <p>Absent: Cllr. E. Dooley</p> <p>Cllr. L. Quinn, Cathaoirleach declared the motion defeated and the members resolved to maintain the basic rate of LPT for 2018.</p>
<p>SECTION 183, LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 2001, AS AMENDED – SALE OF LANDS 10 PARK AVENUE, TULLAMORE:</p>	<p>On the proposal of Cllr. D. Harvey, seconded by Cllr. D. Owens, the members resolved to the sale of lands at 10 Park Avenue, Tullamore in accordance with the terms of the Section 183 Notice dated 6th September 2017 which had previously circulated to the members.</p>
<p>TAKING IN CHARGE OF PRIVATE HOUSING ESTATES:</p>	<p>The members considered the notice which had issued in in relation to the Taking in Charge of a number of private Housing Estates.</p> <p>The members resolved, in accordance with the terms of the notices dated 15th August 2017, as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - On the proposal of Cllr. J. Clendennen, seconded by Cllr. J. Leahy, the members resolved to the Taking in Charge of Kylebeg, Banagher; - On the proposal of Cllr. J. Foley, seconded by Cllr. N. Cribbin, the members resolved to the Taking in Charge of Carrick Vale, Edenderry;

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - On the proposal of Cllr. F. Moran, seconded by Cllr. D. Dolan, the members resolved to the Taking in Charge of Heather Grove, Clara; - On the proposal of Cllr. D. Harvey, seconded by Cllr. D. Owens, the members resolved to the Taking in Charge of Arbutus Court, Tullamore; and - On the proposal of Cllr. J. Leahy, seconded by Cllr. S. Maher, the members resolved to the Taking in Charge of Glendine, Kilcormac.
<p>PART VIII, PLANNING & DEVELOPMENT ACT 2000 AS AMENDED - CHURCH STREET, MAIN STREET, THE SQUARE, KILBRIDE ROAD AND EGAN'S LANE, CLARA, CO. OFFALY:</p>	<p>Mr. S. Murray drew the members' attention to the circulated report. He advised that four submissions were received during the period of public consultation. He drew the members' attention to the Chief Executive's response as outlined in the report.</p> <p>On the proposal of Cllr. F. Moran, seconded by Cllr. D. Dolan, the members resolved to adopt the Part VIII proposal for Church Street, Main Street, The Square, Kilbride Road and Egan's Lane, Clara, as circulated.</p>
<p>CHIEF EXECUTIVE'S REPORT ON SUBMISSIONS RECEIVED TO THE MATERIAL ALTERATIONS OF THE DRAFT EDENDERRY LOCAL AREA PLAN 2017 – 2023:</p>	<p>Ms. B Maher, E.P., drew the members' attention to the Chief Executive report on the submissions received to the material alterations of the <i>Draft Edenderry Local Area Plan 2017-2023</i>. She advised that the material alterations to the <i>Draft Edenderry Local Area Plan 2017-2023</i> was placed on public display from 9th August to 7th September 2017 and that nine (9) submissions were received which were classified into four (4) groups in the report. Ms. B Maher, E.P., gave a detailed account of each grouping and noted the Chief Executive's responses to the submissions received.</p> <p>Ms. B Maher, E.P., advised that two (2) submissions were received from Prescribed/Environmental Authorities. On the proposal of Cllr. N. Bourke, seconded by Cllr. J. Foley, the members' resolved to adopt the Chief Executive's recommendation.</p> <p>Ms. B Maher, E.P., advised that seven (7) individual submissions were received.</p> <p>On the proposal of Cllr. N. Bourke, seconded by Cllr. J. Foley, the members' resolved to adopt the Chief Executive's recommendation with regard to submission 3/01 from Frank and Anne Kilrane.</p> <p>With regard to submission 3/03, Downey Planning on behalf of Carrick Hall Developments, the members' resolved on the proposal of Cllr. N. Bourke, seconded by Cllr. E. Fitzpatrick, to adopt the Chief Executive's recommendation.</p>

	<p>Ms. B. Maher, E.P. advised that five (5) submissions specifically relating to car parking were received and were grouped together in the circulated report. On the proposal of Cllr. N. Bourke, seconded by Cllr. N. Cribbin, the members' resolved to adopt the Chief Executive's recommendation.</p> <p>On the proposal of Cllr. N. Bourke, seconded by Cllr. N. Cribbin, the members agreed, pursuant to section 18(2) of the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended), to adopt the <i>Edenderry Local Area Plan 2017-2023</i> having been placed on public display as draft from 26th April to 9th June 2017, material alterations on display from 9th August to 7th September 2017 and as considered and agreed at the monthly meeting of Offaly County Council on 18th September 2017.</p> <p>Ms. B. Maher, E.P. informed the meeting that the <i>Edenderry Local Area Plan 2017-2023</i> would take effect in four weeks, i.e., from 16th October 2017.</p> <p>The members joined with the Cathaoirleach in thanking all the staff involved in the process.</p>
<p>ANNUAL FINANCIAL STATEMENT 2016:</p>	<p>Mr. D. Conlon, H.O.F., drew the members' attention to the <i>Annual Financial Statement 2016</i> which had circulated with the agenda. He noted that the Council's deficit had decreased by €2.1m since 2012 and that the current deficit is €3.6m.</p> <p>Cllr. D. Dolan commended the increase in the rates collection and queried the outstanding arrears for housing loans and rents. Mr. D. Conlon, H.O.F., in responding informed the meeting that staff in the Finance Section continue to work closely with those in arrears.</p> <p>Cllr. T. McKeigue enquired if the Council are reconstructing their loans to ensure that the lowest interest rates possible are being achieved. Mr. D. Conlon, H.O.F. advised that the Council currently had two loans, and that the interest rate that applies to these loans is the best rate achievable at this time.</p>
<p>STATUTORY AUDIT REPORT 2016:</p>	<p>Mr. D. Conlon, H.O.F., presented the <i>Statutory Audit Report 2016</i>. The members noted the contents of the report.</p>
<p>CORPORATE POLICY GROUP REPORT:</p>	<p>Cllr. L. Quinn, Cathaoirleach advised that the Corporate Policy Group met on Monday, 12th September and earlier that day to consider the Local Property Tax. They had also considered the monthly Council Meeting Agenda and approved the list of conferences and training courses for circulation.</p> <p>The Cathaoirleach advised that the Corporate Policy Group had proposed the holding of a civic reception for Ms. Jennifer Byrne to acknowledge her achievement on winning the 2017 Rose of Tralee and also a reception to acknowledge Tullamore Golf Club on winning the national Mixed Foursomes</p>

	<p>competition. The Cathaoirleach's proposals were seconded by Cllr. J. Leahy and agreed. Cllr. T. McKeigue proposal to hold the reception previously approved to acknowledge Stuart Grehan's golfing achievements be held at the same time as the Tullamore Golf Club presentation was agreed.</p>
<p>MONTHLY MANAGEMENT REPORT:</p>	<p>Ms. A. Delaney, Chief Executive, drew the members' attention to the <i>Monthly Management Report</i> which had circulated with the agenda.</p> <p>The Chief Executive wished the National Ploughing Championships every success over the coming three-day event. She highlighted the dates for Culture Night and the Comhairle na nÓg AGM. She thanked all involved in helping Tullamore secure the highest ranking in the Irish Business for Litter competition and noted the successful launch of Pfizer Healthy Town Tullamore.</p> <p>The members thanked the Chief Executive for the comprehensive report.</p>
<p>NOTICES OF MOTION:</p>	<p>(i) The following motion was proposed by Cllr. J. Carroll, seconded by Cllr. D. Dolan, and agreed:</p> <p><i>"That this Council calls for a complete overhaul of how our Social Housing Programme is administered by Department. We suggest that a Capital Housing Allocation (possible multi annual) be made available to each Council each year for the provision of suitable accommodation either to new build or purchase to meet the needs of our ever growing waiting lists. The present system has failed as is evidenced by the length of waiting lists in every Council area. We have successive Ministers blaming Councils for failing to provide houses, while their Department exert unbelievable bureaucratic control at every stage of building process from land purchase to approval of Tenders.</i></p> <p><i>Propose that this motion be circulated to all Councils."</i></p>
<p>COMHDHÁLACHA:</p>	<p>On the proposal of Cllr. D. Owens, seconded by Cllr. J. Clendennen, the members noted and approved the conferences and training seminars as follows:</p> <p>CONFERENCES:</p> <p>"A Practical Guide to Budget 2018" The Four Seasons Hotel, Carlingford, Co. Louth, 13th to 15th October 2017 It was agreed no Councillor would attend.</p> <p>"What does a Hard Brexit mean for Ireland" The Clonakilty Hotel, Clonakilty, Co. Cork, 20th to 22nd October 2017 It was agreed no Councillor would attend.</p> <p>"ICSH Biennial Social Housing Conference" Limerick Strand Hotel, 27th & 28th September 2017 It was agreed no Councillor would attend.</p>

