

**COMHAIRLE CHONTAE UÍBH FHAILÍ**

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

**HELD IN ÁRAS AN CHONTAE, CHARLEVILLE ROAD, TULLAMORE  
ON MONDAY, 21ST OCTOBER 2019 AT 2.00 P.M.**

<b>PRESENT:</b>	Cllr. P. Ormond, Cathaoirleach, Cllrs. J. Carroll, C. Claffey, J. Clendennen, N. Cribbin, E. Dooley, N. Feighery, E. Fitzpatrick, J. Foley, D. Harvey, P. Hackett J. Leahy, T. McCormack, R. McDermott, S. O'Brien, D. Owens, L. Quinn and K. Smollen
<b>APOLOGIES</b>	Cllr. F. Moran
<b>IN ATTENDANCE:</b>	Ms. A. Delaney, Chief Executive; Mr. F. Heslin, D.O.S; Mr. T. Shanahan, D.O.S.; Mr. E. O'Ceilleachair, A/D.O.S.; Mr. T. Mawe, A/H.O.F.; Ms. M. Flynn Kenny, Meetings Administrator; Ms. M. Cleary S.E.O.; Mr. J. Cunningham, S.E.E.; and Ms. L. Carbery, C.O.
<b>VOTES OF SYMPATHY:</b>	<p>Votes of sympathy were unanimously extended to the following: -</p> <p>Mrs. Evelyn Mulvin, JKL Street, Edenderry on the death of her son Tony Mulvin;</p> <p>Mrs. Anna Carroll, Jeand arc, New Road, Tullamore, on the death of her husband Seamus Carroll;</p> <p>Mrs. Violet O'Brien, The Bungalow, Cloneygowan, on the death of her husband Enda O'Brien;</p> <p>Mrs. Kay Whelan, Bishopswood, Portarlinton, on the death of her mother Betty Guinan.</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>
<b>CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES:</b>	<p>On the proposal of Cllr. N. Feighery, seconded by Cllr. J. Leahy, the members resolved to adopt the minutes of the In-Committee Meeting held in Áras an Chontae, Charleville Road, Tullamore, Co. Offaly on Monday 9<sup>th</sup> September;</p> <p>On the proposal of Cllr. E. Dooley, seconded by Cllr. E. Fitzpatrick, the members resolved to adopt the minutes of Ordinary Meeting of Offaly County Council held in Áras an Chontae, Charleville Road, Tullamore, Co. Offaly on Monday 16<sup>th</sup> September 2019</p>

<b>MINUTES FOR NOTING:</b>	The members noted – - Minutes of Corporate Policy Group Meeting held in Áras an Chontae, Charleville Road, Tullamore, Co. Offaly on Monday 15 <sup>th</sup> July 2019
<b>SECTION 183 OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT, 2001, OFFALY COUNTY COUNCIL PROPOSED SALE OF LANDS AT BALLARD, CLOONAGH, TULLAMORE, CO. OFFALY</b>	On the proposal of Cllr. D. Owens, seconded by Cllr. D. Harvey the members resolved to adopt the Section 183 of the Local Government Act, 2001, Offaly County Council proposed sale of lands at Ballard, Cloonagh, Tullamore, Co. Offaly
<b>SECTION 183 OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT, 2001, OFFALY COUNTY COUNCIL PROPOSED SALE OF LANDS AT ENDRIM, FERBANE, CO. OFFALY</b>	On the proposal of Cllr. E. Dooley, seconded by Cllr. J. Leahy the members resolved to adopt the Section 183 of the Local Government Act, 2001. Offaly County Council proposed sale of lands at Endrim, Ferbane, Co. Offaly
<b>NOMINATIONS TO THE STRATEGIC POLICY COMMITTEES</b>  <b>a. Housing Policy SPC</b> <b>b. Land Use, Planning and Economic Development SPC</b> <b>c. Climate Action, Environment, Water and Transportation SPC</b> <b>d. Community, Cultural and Emergency Services SPC.</b>	<p>Ms. M. Flynn Kenny, Meetings Administrator, noted that the members had adopted the Strategic Policy Committee Scheme at the September meeting.</p> <p>Ms. Flynn Kenny advised that Chambers Ireland had forwarded nominations for participation on the SPCs as follows: -</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Mr. John Carroll to the Housing Policy SPC;</li> <li>- Mr. Dominic Doheny to the Land Use, Planning and Economic Development SPC;</li> <li>- Mr. Roger Guiney and Mr. Padraic Hannon to the Climate Action, Environment, water and Transportation SPC.</li> </ul> <p>On the proposal of Cllr.E. Dooley, seconded by Cllr. D Harvey the Chambers Ireland nominees were agreed by the members.</p> <p>Ms. Flynn Kenny advised that the Farming Pillar had forwarded nominations for participation on the SPCs as follows: -</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Mr. Pat Walsh to the Land Use, Planning and Economic Development SPC;</li> <li>- Mr. Enda Bracken to the Climate Action, Environment Water and Transportation SPC.</li> </ul> <p>On the proposal of Cllr. E. Fitzpatrick, seconded by Cllr. N. Feighery the above nominations were agreed by the members.</p> <p>Ms. Flynn Kenny advised that the Trade Union pillar had forwarded nominations for participation on the SPCs as follows: -</p> <p>Mr. Don Gibney to the Land Use, Planning and Economic Development SPC;</p> <p>Mr. Shane Lambert to the Climate Action, Environment, Water and Transportation SPC.</p>

	<p>On the proposal of Cllr.N. Cribbin, seconded by Cllr. J. Carroll the above nominations were agreed by the members.</p> <p>Ms. Flynn Kenny advised that the Public Participation Newtwork (PPN) had forwarded nominations for participation on the SPCs as follows: -</p> <p>Ms. Annette Meacle, Ms. Jacinta Dillon and Mr Tony O’Riordan to the Housing Policy SPC;  Mr. John O’Connor to the Land Use, Planning and Economic Development SPC;  Ms. Doloreen Brereton to the Climate Action, Environment, Water and Transportation SPC;  Ms. Madeline Corboy to the Community, Cultural and Emergency Services SPC.</p> <p>On the proposal of Cllr. E. Fitzpatrick, seconded by Cllr. J. Clendennen the above nominations were agreed by the members.</p> <p>Ms. Flynn Kenny advised that the three final nominations will be brought to the Council at the November monthly meeting.</p>
<p><b>OVERDRAFT ACCOMMODATION 2020</b></p>	<p>On the proposal of Cllr. L. Quinn, seconded by Cllr. T. McCormack, the members resolved to approve a provision for Overdraft Accommodation for 2020 in the sum of €15million.</p>
<p><b>EMPLOYABILITY MIDLANDS PRESENTATION</b></p>	<p>Mr. Tom O’Reilly, Co-Ordinator, provided the members with a detailed presentation on Employability Midlands. He informed the members that the service is to support people with different types of disability excluded from employment through accident, illness or disability of any nature who receive different DEASP payments, to secure and maintain employment. He advised the members of the 23 employability service organisations available nationally and that their annual report is available on their website <a href="http://www.employabilitymidlands.com">www.employabilitymidlands.com</a> He outlined the statistics for 2018, noting that 46% exited the programme into paid work and after one year 72% retention had been achieved. He advised the members on the benefits, the difficulties and the governance of the organisation.</p> <p>The members joined with Cllr. P. Ormond in thanking Mr. O’Reilly for his informative presentation. Cllr. T. McCormack, Chairperson Employability Midlands commended Mr. T. O’Reilly and the staff for their excellent work and employers for their willingness to recruit people with disabilities. The members acknowledged the importance of this service and queried the age profile and types of disability that the organisation deals with. Mr. T. O’Reilly responded that the age profile ranges from 20s to 60s with majority in their 20s, all disabilities, physical, mental and in some cases hidden are included and that they liaise with Intreo to ensure people are in receipt of DEASP payments to avail of the service.</p>
<p><b>HOUSING PRESENTATION</b></p>	<p>Mr. T. Shanahan, D.O.S. invited Ms. M. Cleary to provide an update and presentation on housing. Ms. M Cleary outlined the</p>

current build programme with 51 houses under construction. She updated the members on the turnkey and assisted housing bodies programme providing 12 homes and 107 homes respectively. She advised the members of the current housing list, allocations and emergency accommodation figures. She updated the members on the status of the Rebuilding Ireland Home Loans and Housing grants, and requested the member's assistance in getting completed works submitted for grant drawdowns from the Department.

The members thanked Ms. Cleary for her update and acknowledged the excellent work of the housing staff under difficult circumstances. They responded that more assistance is required from national level to deal with number of families on housing waiting list. There is a need to re-let vacant houses as quickly as possible and provide suitable accommodation for elderly or disabled persons and felt that the process for approving housing schemes was very lengthy.

In responding to the members queries Mr. T. Shanahan advised that Offaly have a better turnover than the national average for re-letting houses and that a framework for contractors is in place. He further advised that due to slow private housing construction there has been no Part 5s to avail of. He informed the members that there is a full time member staff working on vacant premises and that he has identified over 200 vacant properties in 15 towns and villages in the county. He noted that the council is working with the vacant property owners, but for various reasons there that there is little take up of the Repair to Lease scheme.

Ms. M. Cleary advised the members that the allocations are made in line with the scheme of letting properties as agreed by the members and that it is not always possible to downsize tenants but that staff will work with anyone that wishes to downsize. Mr. J. Cunningham informed the members that the Department has applied a 59-week timeline which should assist in speeding up the 4 stage process.

The members noted that the Repair and Lease scheme is a good scheme but that the €40k may not be sufficient in many cases to bring a vacant property to required standards. They further queried the Government funding announced for retrofit of houses and if the Rebuilding Ireland Homeloan criteria is too strict and HAP threshold needs to be increased. Cllr. N. Cribbin informed that members that the Government is supporting a scheme to assist people to avail of housing suitable for their particular needs. The members queried the speed of the turnover of social housing, regulations on anti-social behaviour and the emergency accommodation timelines.

Ms. M. Cleary responded that a number of existing policies can be reviewed with the newly formed Housing Policy SPC. She advised that the Repair and Lease Scheme has been advertised a number of times, with many owners opting to complete the works themselves. She informed the members that the homeless numbers have decreased and the housing staff

	<p>continue to work closely with all parties and that unoccupied homes have to be brought up to certain standard before they can be allocated. Mr. J. Cunningham informed the members that various issues such as an abandonment notice requiring an 8-week period before the house can be touched, procurement and health and safety issues can delay the turnover of an unoccupied house. He advised that at planning stage various mix of houses for any development is encouraged, that 19 bungalows are planned for Clonminch and that representations have been made to the Department to increase the HAP threshold. He noted that the retrofit programme will provide funding to update social housing stock.</p>
<p><b>REGIONAL TRANSITION TEAM UPDATE</b></p>	<p>Ms. A. Delaney updated the members on the Regional Transition Team. She advised the members that the Midlands Region has been accepted into the EU Coal Regions in Transition Platform and confirmed that it would establish a Country Team to assist the Midlands in planning for the phase out of peat. An application has been submitted for technical assistance for 120 days to develop a holistic plan to ensure a just transition in the Midlands. She welcomed the €6m Just Transition funding noting that it would support important reskilling and training. She advised the members that more detail is pending on the funding.</p> <p>The members thanked Ms. A. Delaney for her update, they welcomed the funding announced for training and retrofitting housing, but raised some concerns regarding the pending redundancies for Bord na Mona employees, plans for Lough Boora, type of re-skilling required, IDA support and the role of the Just Transition Commissioner. Cllr. E. Dooley queried if Bord na Mona could advise the Council on their workshops and property available for refurbishment.</p> <p>In responding to the members queries Ms. A. Delaney advised a subcommittee has been formed to oversee funding for retrofit for both social and private and in addition the transition team are working with training bodies such AIT and LOETB to expand courses required. She informed the members that the Country team would be cross departmental with a midlands representative. She advised the members that Offaly County Council in conjunction with Bord na Mona have commissioned a report on how to develop Lough Boora, which should be available in the near future, lobbying has been made with regard to extending the PSO levy and she agreed to write to the Department to request setting up the Just Transition Commission Office in Offaly. She informed the members that the IDA have been invited to November Monthly Meeting and agreed that it is important to have projects ready to go in order to access the funding. She advised the members that the Regional Transition Team have agreed to partner with Trinity College with regard to an innovation programme application for EU funding. She agreed to write to Bord Na Mona and request a list of workshops and office space that may become available and noted that Offaly County Council is working with the Department and Bord na Mona to access Globalisation funding.</p>

**MONTHLY MANAGEMENT REPORT:**

Ms. A. Delaney drew the member's attention to the Monthly Management Report. She highlighted the recent successful National Business Conference on the Economic & Business Opportunities of Climate Change held in Tullamore on the 9<sup>th</sup> October in conjunction with Midlands Regional Enterprise Office, LEO Offaly and the Eastern and Midlands Climate Action Regional Office (CARO). She advised the members that a report on the submissions received in relation to County Development Plan will issue to the Members by the 20<sup>th</sup> November and a special meeting on the County Development Plan will be held on 16<sup>th</sup> December. She updated the members on the Fire Safety Week, the upcoming 1916 Commemorative Medals presentation and the Submission to the National Directorate Fire & Emergency Management for the expansion of Tullamore Fire Station Drill Yard. She informed the members of the announcement by Mr Michael Ring TD, Minister for Rural and Community Development, of the distribution of €5 million in additional funding for the top ten Counties that are most advanced in the delivery of the LEADER Programme, including €500,000 for Offaly. She noted that a lot of Age Friendly events have taken place and more are planned, the makeway day was successful and the finding of the routes will be made available to the members. She highlighted that Culture Night was a great success and Creative Edenderry is now underway.

Ms. A. Delaney informed the members that three Local businesses supported by the Local Enterprise Office Offaly went to The Netherlands to explore and target new business opportunities in mainland Europe and that Lumcloon Energy Ltd received planning permission for alterations to energy storage facilities on their sites in Lumcloon and Shannonbridge, marking the beginning of a €150m investment which will make the sites some of the largest facilities of that type in Europe. She highlighted that the Sunday Business Post are running a full profile on County Offaly and LEO and that Minister Moran has announced a new initiative to maintain and develop Clonmacnoise.

Cllr. Robert McDermott queried if more could be done to promote tourism in North Offaly.

Ms. A. Delaney responded that the tourism team are currently working on new material which will include more on North Offaly.

The members commended the staff of the LCDC in their success in achieving additional funding announced for the Leader Programme. Cllr. P. Ormond, Cathaoirleach, joined with the members in thanking the Chief Executive for her comprehensive report.

**CORPORATE POLICY GROUP REPORT:**

Cllr. P. Ormond, Cathaoirleach informed the members that the Corporate Policy Group met earlier that day and recommend that the Council recognise the achievements of Midlands United Powerchair Football Club by presenting a Certificate of Recognition to the group after the November Council meeting.

	<p>Corporate Policy Group further recommended the holding of a Civic Reception for Shane Lowry and it was agreed to write to his management team. The training and conferences were approved for the council agenda and a special meeting for the County Development plan was agreed for 18<sup>th</sup> November at 11.30. It was noted that the deadline for addition to Register of Electors is 25<sup>th</sup> November 2019.</p>
<p><b>NOTICES OF MOTION:</b></p>	<p>On the proposal of Cllr. J. Leahy amended his original motion, seconded by Cllr. K. Smollen:</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>“Offaly County Council calls on Dáil Eireann to legislate to ensure that pain relief can be administered for the termination of birth, so as to avoid unnecessary pain and suffering.”</i></p> <p>The members of Fine Gael, Fianna Fáil and Cllrs. J. Foley and K. Smollen abstained from the motion. Cllrs. C. Claffey, P. Hackett, S. O’Brien and J. Carroll voted against and Cllr. F. Moran was absent. The motion was not carried.</p> <p>On the counter proposal of Cllr. C.Claffey, seconded by Cllr. P. Hackett:</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>“That OCC acknowledges the result of the referendum on the 8th amendment in May 2018”</i></p> <p>The members of Fine Gael, Fianna Fáil and Cllrs. J. Foley and K. Smollen abstained from the motion. Cllr. J. Leahy voted against. Cllrs. C. Claffey, P. Hackett, S. O’Brien and J. Carroll voted for and Cllr. F. Moran was absent. The motion was carried.</p>
<p><b>COMHDHÁLACHA</b></p>	<p><b><u>Conferences</u></b></p> <p>Celtic Conferences, Emerging Threats and Persistent Conservation Challenges for Freshwater Biodiversity, 8th to 10th November 2019, O’Donovan’s Hotel, Main St., Clonakilty, Co. Cork, €100 plus travel and expenses; <i>It was agreed no member would attend</i></p> <p>Celtic Conferences, Entitlement to Health Services, 15th to 17th November 2019, O’Donovan’s Hotel, Main Street, Clonakilty, Co. Cork, €100 plus travel and expenses; <i>It was agreed no members would attend</i></p> <p>Celtic Conferences, Regional Development and EU Cohesion Policy beyond 2020, 22nd to 24th November 2019, The Four Seasons Hotel, Carlingford, Co. Louth, €100 plus travel and expenses; <i>It was agreed no member would attend</i></p> <p><b><u>Training</u></b></p> <p>AILG Module 5 “Climate Change and The Regional Climate Change Offices” Thursday, 21st November 2019: Hudson Bay Hotel, Athlone, Co. Roscommon (for Councilors whose parent Councils are within the area of the Northern &amp; Western and the Midlands &amp; Eastern Regional Assemblies) and Saturday, 23rd November 2019: Rochestown Park Hotel, Cork (for Councilors</p>

