

## Minutes of April Monthly Meeting

Held on 25<sup>th</sup> April 2022, in Áras an Chontae, Charleville Road,  
Tullamore and via Zoom

### Present

Cllr. Declan Harvey Cathaoirleach

Cllr. John Carroll	Cllr. John Leahy
Cllr. Clare Claffey	Cllr. Tony McCormack
Cllr. John Clendennen	Cllr. Robert McDermott
Cllr. Eamon Dooley	Cllr. Frank Moran
Cllr. Neil Feighery	Cllr. Peter Ormond
Cllr. Eddie Fitzpatrick	Cllr. Danny Owens
Cllr. John Foley	Cllr. Liam Quinn
Cllr. Mark Hackett	Cllr. Ken Smollen

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

### Apologies

Cllr. Noel Cribbin, Cllr. Sean O'Brien

### Officials in Attendance

Ms. A. Delaney, Chief Executive; Mr. T. Shanahan, D.O.S.; Ms. S. Kennedy, D.O.S.; Mr. M. Connolly, H.O.F.; Mr. B. Pey, A.O., Mr. E. Fennell, S.E.O. (R), Mr. G. Bruton, Meetings Administrator, Mr. C. Kelly, S.O.; and Ms. L. Carbery, C.O. (R)

### Votes of Sympathy

Votes of sympathy were unanimously extended to the following:

Arlene Guilfoyle and the Beatty family, Finter Lane, Killeigh, on the death of her husband, Donal Beatty;

Catrina Hilliard, Charleville Road, Tullamore, on the death of her father Oliver Hilliard.

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.

## **1. Confirmation of Minutes**

On the proposal of Cllr. T. McCormack, seconded by Cllr. M. Hackett, the members resolved to adopt the minutes of the Ordinary meeting of Offaly County Council held on 28<sup>th</sup> March 2022.

## **2. Minutes for Noting**

The members noted the following minutes:

- Minutes of Meeting of Land Use, Planning and Economic Development Strategic Policy Committee held on 7 December 2021
- Minutes of the Corporate Policy Group Meeting held on 18 February 2022

## **3. Section 183 of the Local Government Act 2001**

On the proposal of Cllr. E. Dooley, seconded by Cllr. J. Carroll, the members resolved to adopt Section 183 of the Local Government Act 2001, to sell Part of Site Number 19 Ferbane, Business and Technology Park, Ballylin, Ferbane to Wilton Accessories Ltd in the sum of €25,000.

## **4. Section 183 of the Local Government Act 2001**

On the proposal of Cllr. J. Carroll, seconded by Cllr. D. Owens, the members resolved to adopt Section 183 of the Local Government Act 2001, to dispose of land at Kylebeg, Banagher to ESB Networks Ltd, Zone A, Lynn Industrial Estate, Mullingar, Co. Westmeath, free of charge.

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

On the proposal of Cllr. T. McCormack, 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 the Proposed Development of Grand Canal Greenway – Shared walking & cycle route from Henesy's Bridge in the townland of Goldsmithslot, Rahan, to Plunketts Bridge, Pollagh.

## **6. National Waste Management Plan**

Mr. T. Shanahan advised the members that the National Waste Management Plan for a Circular Economy has been circulated for their information and noting. He outlined that Offaly is in the East and Midland Region and a new national singular waste policy is being developed. He advised that following the publication of the draft plan there will be a statutory period for public consultation prior to the final adoption of the completed plan. The regional waste management planning offices will be available during this period to meet with the sector to ensure that the final plan is the best possible plan for the sector and there will be further consultation with the members.

## 7. Local Property Tax (LPT) 2022 - Projects

Mr. M. Connolly updated the members on the Local Property Tax (LPT) and he welcomed the member's decision to maintain the LPT at its current rate, thereby ensuring €742k was made available to leverage funds for capital projects of scale across the county. He provided the members with an outline of the projects for 2022 as follows:

Projects to be considered for 2022 LPT funding (April 2022)	Proposed OCC LPT Funding	Additional Funding	Total Funds	Funding Partner
Banagher Rural Regeneration Development #	150,000	395,250	545,250	DRCD- RRDF
Portarlington Rural Regeneration Development ~	150,000	600,000	750,000	DRCD- RRDF
Clara Rural Regeneration Development ~	150,000	600,000	750,000	DRCD- RRDF
Tullamore Street Enhancement and UR (Call 2)*	200,000	600,000	800,000	DHLGH - URDF
Just Transition	92,378			
<b>Total</b>	<b>742,378</b>	<b>2,195,250</b>	<b>2,937,628</b>	
LPT (15%) for 2022	742,378			

Mr. M. Connolly updated the members on the projects from 2021, including the Banagher Marina and Environs, Portarlington Rural Regeneration, Clara Regeneration and Tullamore Urban Regeneration Development. He welcomed the successful grant applications for Kinnitty ORIS, Ferbane and the Edenderry Regeneration Phase 2, where demolition works have commenced and the tender for the library is almost complete.

The members thanked him for his update and they welcomed the funding that the increase in LPT has generated and the success of the projects across the county. They called on support for maintenance of the increase to further fund projects across the county and emphasised the need to provide funding for villages and rural areas. They acknowledged the public's contribution to the LPT and the work of the staff on the various projects.

Cllr. J. Leahy queried if there is a full guarantee of LPT funding from the Department as a result of the equalisation fund.

Cllrs. C. Claffey and K. Smollen voiced their concerns about the LPT funding and called on Central Government to fully fund these projects.

Mr. M. Connolly informed the members that the circular for 2022 has not yet been received but assurances have been given by Central Government that no Local Authority will be worse off in 2022.

Ms. A. Delaney, Chief Executive, acknowledged the member's commitment to the LPT projects and she highlighted the significant amount of work and difficult decisions taken by the council in last few years. She advised that many projects have been undertaken and many more are at the planning stage. She noted that community groups are working with the Council on further applications and she acknowledged the efforts of the communities in smaller towns and villages. She welcomed the visit of Minister Heather Humphreys the previous week to various projects across the county. She highlighted the works being carried in Edenderry that have been funded by LPT and noted that the match funding provided by the LPT has leveraged funding of €21m over last few years. She pointed out that the LPT represents good value for money and that the county is benefitting from same.

On the proposal of Cllr. E. Fitzpatrick, seconded by Cllr. F. Moran, the members resolved to adopt the LPT projects 2022.

## 8. Draft Annual Financial Statement 2021/ Over Expenditure

Mr. M. Connolly, H.O.F. brought the members attention to the Draft Annual Financial Statement 2021. He advised that there was an overall surplus of €24,266 and, as in previous years, recouplements, contra income, additional unbudgeted income and cost savings, had counterbalanced excess expenditure to give this net surplus in 2021. He acknowledged the funding provided by Central Government for reduced rates and Covid-19 expenses and that further savings were made by Offaly County Council. He sought approval for the Annual Financial Statement 2021.

On the proposal of Cllr. T. Mc. Cormack, seconded by Cllr. M. Hackett, the members agreed to the Draft Annual Financial Statement 2021.

Mr. M. Connolly sought approval for the Over Expenditure as outlined by him.

On the proposal of Cllr. T. McCormack, seconded by Cllr. J. Carroll, the members agreed to approve the Over Expenditure.

## 9. Draft Offaly Playground Strategy 2022

Ms. S. Kennedy, D.O.S. brought the members attention to the Draft Offaly Playground Strategy 2022, advising them that it had been reviewed by the Community, Culture and Emergency Services Strategic Policy Committee over the last year. She noted that it was comprised of a lot of elements. The policy may not cover all eventualities but it will try to bring a uniform approach to the management and maintenance of playgrounds owned by Offaly County Council and to support community playgrounds.

Mr. B. Pey, A.O. provided the members with a presentation on the Draft Offaly Playground Strategy 2022, noting it was approved by SPC members in February 2022. He outlined the main recommendations, provision of clear agreement on roles and responsibilities in Offaly County Council, additional supports for community playgrounds, conditions for approval of new playgrounds, procedures for inspection and maintenance and regular monitoring of policy and reporting.

He provided the members with a breakdown of the various playgrounds in the county and he advised that the day to day management will move from Housing to the Roads Section in Offaly County Council, including the budget of €40,000, with inspection and maintenance under the responsibility of Roads and Municipal Districts. He informed the members that the Community Section will monitor implementation of the strategy. He outlined the supports for community playgrounds, including ring fence funding under the annual Community Enhancement Programme. Also, Offaly County Council

will increase its budget by an amount of €10k to provide a total budget of €40k. A licence agreement will enable insurance costs to be covered through Offaly County Council insurance, and ROSPA training and inspections will be organised.

He advised that priority will be given to new playground proposals which are already part of an existing community structure. New applications must have agreement that a CE or TUS scheme will be in place for maintenance. Litter will be collected as agreed by the local Litter Wardens and Offaly County Council will investigate compost sites and assist in the Green Schools programme to teach children about composting, recycling and climate action.

He informed the members of the ROSPA training courses which had been held and that additional training is planned. Developments in management of playgrounds will be reported to Offaly County Council Management Team and to the Community SPC annually by the Community Section. The overall Policy will be reviewed by the Community, Cultural and Emergency Services SPC after 3 years.

Cllr. L. Quinn, Chairman of the SPC, acknowledged the work of the community playground committees in fund raising and highlighted the legacy issues and noted the policy delivers in a lot of the areas of concern. He further acknowledged the work of the MD staff and noted that resources will be required. He thanked the committees, the OCC team and the members of SPC for their contribution to this working document.

The members welcomed the document and its support for community playgrounds, ring fencing of funding and provision of insurance by Offaly County Council. They acknowledged the role playgrounds have in the community for young and old and the various issues of concerns such as vandalism. Ms. S. Kennedy confirmed that skate parks are included in the policy.

On the proposal of Cllr. L. Quinn, seconded by Cllr. J. Clendennen, the members resolved to adopt the Offaly Playground Strategy 2022.

## 10. Draft Annual Report 2021

Mr. M. Connolly provided an overview of the draft Annual Report 2021. On the proposal of Cllr. J. Leahy, seconded by D. Harvey, the members resolved to adopt the Annual Report 2021.

## 11. Just Transition

Mr. S. Duclot updated the members on Just Transition advising that the Final progress report has been published and is available online at <https://www.gov.ie/en/publication/e0e7e-climate-action-plan-to-tackle-climate-breakdown-just-transition/>

He informed the members that Mr. Kieran Mulvey's contract as Just Transition Commissioner has been extended. The Department of the Environment, Climate and Communication (DECC) and the East and Midlands Regional Authority (EMRA) are working on the Ireland Territorial Just Transition Plan and this is likely to be adopted by the European Commission at the end of 2022. He advised the members that a meeting with Bord na Mona has been arranged for 23<sup>rd</sup> May and he thanked them for the issues they had raised. He welcomed any further input from the members before the end of the week. The issues raised will be reviewed by the Corporate Policy Group.

Cllr. K. Smollen raised concerns about the affordability of Just Transition for the general public and the members queried if the meeting will be open to the public. M. S. Duclot advised that he can check if the meeting will be open to the public and he will revert to the members on same.

## 12. Monthly Management Report

Ms. A. Delaney brought the members attention to the monthly management report as circulated with the agenda. She advised that the Financial report and Chief Executive orders are listed for their information. She invited the members to submit nominations for the upcoming Volunteer Awards through the online portal at <https://submit.link/RV> which are open until the May 4th 2022 at 4pm. The awards are scheduled for 19<sup>th</sup> May in the Bridge House Hotel. She advised the members that Civic Receptions for the 2021 All Ireland final winning Offaly U-20 football team and the Offaly Minor Camogie team winners of the 2022 All B Minor Camogie final are being held in May. Further details will be circulated to the members. She brought the members attention to the update on the Council's response to the Ukraine crisis. She advised that the community forum is working well and has a good relationship with all relevant agencies. Information is available on the Offaly County Council website in relation to same.

She acknowledged the visit by Minister Heather Humphreys beginning with the opening of Edenderry Regeneration Project, followed by a visit to the Derrycastle Lakes and Trails and the official opening of the Slieve Bloom Mountain Bike Trails. She noted the Minister was very complimentary on all the developments and Ms. Delaney thanked the Regeneration team and the Municipal District Staff for their assistance.

The members thanked her for her comprehensive report. Cllr. F. Moran sought clarification on the progress of the housing development at Raheen in Clara and he advised that the Local GAA and Soccer Clubs have expressed interest in offering facilities to the Ukrainian Refugees. Cllr. K. Smollen also sought clarity on communities looking to assist in the Refugee crisis and on progress with the development of Drayton Villa, Clara.

In response, Ms. A. Delaney advised that in regard to the development in Clara, the lowest tendering Contractor has pulled out of the project stating material hyperinflation costs as the reason. The project will be re-tendered in May and the stage 4 application will be lodged with the Department in July 2022. She advised that meetings and on-going discussions are taking place with the LOETB with regard to the development of Drayton Villa. Ms. S. Kennedy advised the members that they can contact her or Ms. M. Cleary with regard to the emergency accommodation of refugees. Issues with more long term accommodation are being dealt with by the International Protection Accommodation Services (IPAS). She advised that Offaly County Council is working with all the relevant agencies and updates are received on a daily basis.

Cllr. E. Fitzpatrick thanked the Local Authority staff for their work on the visit of Minister Humphreys to Derrycastle Lakes and Trails. He raised an issue with the Walsh Islands sewerage plant overload and that a number planning applications are on-going in this area. He queried if Irish Water are committed to upgrading the plant. He welcomed the 25 families Ukrainian families accommodated at Riverside Estate in Portarlinton and he noted that accommodation is limited and to keep work ongoing in relation to current housing applicants.

In response Ms. A. Delaney, noted the accommodation at Riverside, Portarlinton and agreed that there is a finite amount of resources but the Housing team are looking for additional resources.

Mr. T. Shanahan confirmed that there are ongoing discussions with Irish Water in relation to Walsh Island Sewerage Plant.

Cllr. J. Clendennen welcomed the visit of Minister Humphreys to Kinnitty, he thanked the staff of Offaly County Council for arranging the visit and he expressed his hope that Offaly County Council are committed to continuing support for improvement of the facilities. He sought feedback on the meetings that took place in New York.

Ms. A. Delaney agreed that the visit of Minister Humphreys was a very positive day for the county and she advised that the New York meetings with IDA, Enterprise Ireland and Tourism Ireland were very productive. She informed the members that follow up meetings have taken place since, with Enterprise Ireland showing interest in renewable energy and Tourism Ireland looked for imagery to promote the county and this was provided to them. A meeting with the IDA is due to take place on 5<sup>th</sup> May and members will be updated further to same.

### 13. Corporate Policy Group Report

Cllr. D. Harvey, Cathaoirleach advised the members that at the Corporate Policy Group meeting they discussed the Council Agenda, dates for the Civic Receptions and the volunteer awards. He thanked the housing staff for their work on the Ukrainian crisis and with our own tenants. He also thanked the Chief Executive, the Regeneration team and all staff involved in Minister Humphreys visit noting that it highlighted County Offaly at its best.

### 14. Comhdhálacha / Conferences

On the proposal of Cllr. J. Leahy, seconded by Cllr. D. Harvey, the members approved the conferences and training.

Retrospective Approval was sought for member's attendance at AILG Module 1 in the Mullingar Park Hotel, Co. Westmeath on Thursday 17<sup>th</sup> February 2022 and in the Clayton Silver Springs Hotel, Cork on Saturday 19<sup>th</sup> February 2022.

### 15. Comhfhreagras / Correspondence

The members noted the correspondence issued with the agenda.

### 16. Any Other Business

**MINUTES CONFIRMED:**

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CATHAOIRLEACH

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RUNAÍ

16<sup>th</sup> May 2022

