

Minutes of June Monthly Meeting of Offaly County Council
Held on 20th June 2022 at 2.00 pm, 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
Cllr. Noel Cribbin	Cllr. Sean O'Brien

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

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.; Ms. A. Dillon A/D.O.S.; Mr. E. O'Ceilleachair, C.F.O.; Mr. E. Fennell, S.E.O., Mr. G. Bruton, Meetings Administrator, and Mr. C. Kelly, S.O.

Votes of Sympathy

There were no Votes of Sympathy expressed

1. Confirmation of Minutes

On the proposal of Cllr. E. Fitzpatrick, seconded by Cllr. R. McDermott, the members resolved to adopt the minutes of the Ordinary meeting of Offaly County Council held on 16th May 2022.

2. Minutes for Noting

The members noted the following minutes:

- Minutes of the Corporate Policy Group Meeting held on 25th April 2022

3. Part VIII Notice, under the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended) and the Planning and Development Regulations 2001 (as amended) for the Grand Canal Greenway Walking and Cycling Route, Convent View to Kilbeggan Bridge, Tullamore.

Mr. T. Shanahan briefed the members on the Part VIII Notice, under the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended) and the Planning and Development Regulations 2001 (as amended) for the Grand Canal Greenway Walking and Cycling Route, Convent View to Kilbeggan Bridge, Tullamore.

Following queries from the members Mr. Shanahan advised that the existing pedestrian crossings at the Kilbeggan Road Canal bridge and at Convent View would be retained. He also noted that the ongoing problem with storm-water drainage on a portion of the Greenway route at Convent View would be addressed in the preliminary design phase of this project.

On the proposal of Cllr. D. Harvey, seconded by Cllr. T. McCormack, 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 Grand Canal Greenway Walking and Cycling Route, Convent View to Kilbeggan Bridge, Tullamore

4. Part VIII Notice, under the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended) and the Planning and Development Regulations 2001 (as amended) for the Construction of a New Fully Equipped Fire Service Training and Development Centre, in Tullamore.

Ms. S. Kennedy briefed the members on the Part VIII Notice, under the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended) and the Planning and Development Regulations 2001 (as amended) for the Construction of a New Fully Equipped Fire Service Training and Development Centre, in Tullamore.

Ms. Kennedy responded to the comments made by the members. She advised that that the concerns expressed by the members and the residents in relation to the construction traffic would be addressed. Responding to Cllr. Dooley in relation to his comments on developing a “Centre of Excellence” for training in dealing with Bog Fires, she noted that that Service had made a submission in relation to developing a Training Centre under Just Transition Funding, without success, and she agreed that the Service would re-visit this proposal in the future.

On the proposal of Cllr. T. McCormack, seconded by Cllr. D. Owens, 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 Construction of a New Fully Equipped Fire Service Training and Development Centre, in Tullamore.

5. Just Transition

She noted that two conferences had been held in Tullamore relating to Just Transition in recent weeks. One was organised by the European Economic and Social Committee and the second was the Accelerate Green / Irish Sustainable Futures conference hosted by Bord na Móna.

She advised that the Department of Environment, Climate & Communications (DECC) had in recent weeks published its consultation report on the draft Territorial Just Transition Plan published December 2021. The recent report had ranked proposed actions under each of the 4 development needs identified in the draft Territorial Plan based on feedback from the consultation process. The Territorial Plan would now be finalised by the DECC in consultation with the European Commission and that the Operational Programme for the Just Transition Fund would be developed by EMRA in tandem with this process over a number of months. Once approved by the Commission the Territorial Plan would make the Just Transition Mechanism available to the identified Territory in Ireland. This will include the Just Transition Fund (Pillar 1), Invest EU supports (Pillar 2), and a Public Sector Loan facility (Pillar 3). The EU allocation to the Just Transition Fund (Pillar 1) will be €84.5 million. The agreed Territorial Plan will identify what matched contribution will be given by the Irish Government and what counties or parts of counties in the Midlands could benefit.

The members thanked Ms. Dillon for her report, and re-iterated that Offaly was the area worse affected by the decarbonisation process. They stressed the need for the various groups intending to make funding submissions to co-ordinate their efforts in order to make best use of the opportunity. Responding to a query from the members, Ms. Dillon clarified that the East and Midlands Regional Assembly is the designated Managing Authority for the Just Transition Fund and that they were finalising the Operational Programme while the DECC were finalising the Territorial Plan. Both were consulting with the European Commission. The meeting was advised that Cllr. Dooley, Fitzpatrick and McCormack represented Offaly County Council on the EMRA. Members sought further detail on supports that will be available through Pillars 2 and 3 of the Just Transition Mechanism.

6. Local Community Development Committee – Change of Membership

Ms. S. Kennedy briefed the members on the Local Community Development Committee – Change of Membership. She advised that following staffing changes in the Department of Social Protection the LCDC had been advised of a new staff representative.

On the proposal of Cllr. D. Harvey, seconded by Cllr. J. Carroll, the members accepted the resignation of Mr. Colm Purcell from the Local Community and Development Committee and agreed to his replacement Ms. Celine Kirwan.

Suspension of Standing Orders

The members agreed to suspend Standing Orders on the proposal of Cllr. E. Fitzpatrick, seconded by Cllr. R. McDermott to allow the Monthly Meeting to continue and the Annual Meeting to be held at 4.00 pm.

7. Monthly Management Report

The Chief Executive briefed the meeting on the **Monthly Management Report**, she noted the main items included in the Report. She noted that the Report on the Strategic Review of the Music Generation Offaly / Westmeath (MGOW) was published. She advised that Music Generation would

move to a single county based organisation, with Laois / Offaly ETB becoming the lead agency for Offaly Music Generation. The review followed consultation with all the stakeholders and the change-over would take place in January 2023, there would be a transition period to the end of 2022. She noted that LEO had provided an update on the Remote Working Hubs. She noted that the Minister had launched a Voucher Scheme for Connected Hubs, with a fund of €311k being provided for the hubs in Offaly. She advised that the Acoustic Interiors had won Best Start Up award in the National Enterprise Awards 2022.

The Cathaoirleach offered his congratulations to Acoustic Interiors on their success.

Responding to Cllr. McDermott, Mr. T Shanahan noted that there were increases in costs relating to the Roads Programme and following a request from the Dept. to each local authority, the Municipal District Engineers were reviewing the Programme as it related to their areas. He noted that the Roads Department had engaged with the Dept with a view to getting additional funding allocations for the Programme. Members noted the challenges facing the organisation arising from the sizable percentage of the roads in the county which were built on peat foundations and the increased maintenance costs involved.

Mr. Shanahan responded to the queries raised by the members in relation the Yellow River Windfarm Development; he noted that the Edenderry MD was engaging with the developers on this project. He responded to the query in relation Rural Community Group Sewage Schemes Programme.

The Chief Executive responded to the members comments in relation to the provision of Social Housing in the county and to the increasing withdrawal of private landlords from the housing rental market. She advised that the Housing Department was continuing to deliver on the agreed Housing Programme. She noted the comments made in relation to rent increases for some Council Tenants, and advised that she could not comment on individual cases; however she advised that the Council operated an appeals system to address tenants concerns.

In responding to comments on the Retrofit Programme, she advised that an update report on this Programme would be presented to members.

8. Corporate Policy Group Report

The Cathaoirleach reported on the meeting of the CPG held on Friday 17th June 2022.

9. Notices of Motion

On the proposal of Cllr. S. O'Brien and seconded by Cllr. J. Leahy the members resolved to adopt the motion in the name of Cllr. O'Brien. It was agreed that this motion would be circulated to other Local Authorities.

"Offaly County Council calls on the Minister of Finance to exempt AED Defibrillator Devices from VAT."

10. Comhdhálacha / Conferences

Training was noted.

11. Any Other Business

The Cathaoirleach advised that the terms of office of the Chairpersons of the Strategic Policy Committees (SPC) terminated in June 2022.

Cllr. P. Ormond nominated the following members as incoming Chairpersons of the SPC's

Cllr. Eamon Dooley,	Land Use, Planning and Economic Development SPC
Cllr. John Clendennen,	Community, Culture and Emergency Services SPC
Cllr. Robert McDermott	Housing Policy SPC
Cllr. Tony McCormack	Climate Action, Environment, Water and Transportation SPC

He also nominated Cllr. John Leahy to serve on the Land Use, Planning and Economic Development SPC and Cllr. Tony McCormack to serve on the Climate Action, Environment, Water and Transportation SPC.

Cllr. Ormond's nominations were seconded by Cllr. D. Owens and adopted by the members.

Cllr. K. Smollen raised the issue of street lighting and advised that in one housing estate a total of 7 street lights were not working, Cllr. Clendennen supported Cllr. Smollen in his comments and proposed that the "Dead Sure" App should be upgraded.

MINUTES CONFIRMED:

CATHAOIRLEACH

RUNAÍ

18th July 2022

