

## **Council Meeting 17<sup>th</sup> January 2022**

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Minutes of Ordinary Meeting held remotely over MS Teams.

**In attendance: All present attended remotely over MS Teams**

### **Presiding:**

Cathaoirleach: Councillor Pío Smith

### **Members:**

Councillors: Marianne Butler, Paula Butterly, James Byrne, Joanna Byrne, Kevin Callan, Emma Coffey, Bernie Conlon, Edel Corrigan, Tom Cunningham, Maria Doyle, Sean Kelly, Fiachra Mac Raghnaill, Pearse McGeough, Andrea McKeivitt, Paddy McQuillan, Kevin Meenan, Dolores Minogue, Declan Power, John Reilly, Liam Reilly, Tomás Sharkey, John Sheridan, Jim Tenanty, Eileen Tully, Antoin Watters, Maeve Yore

### **Apologies:**

Councillors: Michelle Hall, Conor Keelan

### **Officials:**

Chief Executive - Joan Martin

Directors of Services - Joe McGuinness, Paddy Donnelly, Catherine Duff and Frank Pentony

Head of Finance - Bernie Woods

Meetings Administrator - Gráinne Tuomey

CE Office Staff - Gemma Keenan, Celine Breen

### **Minute No. 01/22**

#### **Minute's Silence**

A minute's silence was held as a mark of respect for Ashling Murphy and to commemorate all the women killed by violence in Ireland.

### **Minute No. 02/22**

#### **Confirmation of Minutes**

Minutes of the Monthly Meeting on Monday 20<sup>th</sup> December 2021 were Proposed by Cllr. Antoin Watters, Seconded by Cllr. Jim Tenanty and adopted.

### **Minute No. 03/22**

#### **Matters Arising**

On foot of a request for an update on Minute 215/21 - Catherine Duff, Director of Services advised that there were no qualifying applicants for the initial tender on Anne Street low cost safety works. Subsequent tenders came in over budget. Active Travel will be examined to see if the scheme can assist.

A timeframe for repair works to Annagassan bridge along with additional signage to the bridge to improve safety warning of hazards was requested.

#### **Minute No. 04/22**

#### **Minutes of Municipal District Meetings - Noted**

The following Minutes were Noted by Members:

- Municipal District of Ardee 2nd December 2021
- Borough District of Drogheda 6th December 2021
- Municipal District of Dundalk 7th December 2021

#### **Minute No. 05/22**

#### **Minutes of Committee Meetings - Noted**

The following Minutes were Noted by Members:

- Corporate Policy Group Meeting 8th December 2021

#### **Minute No. 06/22**

#### **Report from Chairperson of Corporate Policy Group**

Cllr. Pio Smith informed the members that the meeting of the CPG was held remotely over MS Teams on Wednesday 5<sup>th</sup> January 2022 at 9.00am. Items discussed included:

- This County Meeting to be held online and then review
- Local Community Development Committee (LCDC) Nomination to be brought to Council
- Overview of the Council Meeting Agenda
- Revision of Service Delivery Plan
- SPC Work Programmes
- Office of the Planning Regulator (OPR) Report

#### **Minute No. 07/22**

#### **Breithniú ar Thuarascálacha agus ar Chomhréitigh ón bPríomhfheidhmeannach / Consideration of Reports and Recommendations from Chief Executive**

- Monthly Management Report
- Finance and Water Services
- Economic Enterprise, Planning and Infrastructure
- Operations and Waste Management
- Corporate and Emergency Services
- Housing and Quality of Life

Members discussed the report as issued and the following items were highlighted:

### **Finance and Water Services**

- Members were advised that the flushing programme was now complete. Remaining brown water pockets have been raised with Irish Water.
- Members were reminded to log all water issues on the Irish Water website but that if they also email details to Bernie Woods, Head of Finance she will raise again, including water pressure issues in Cooley.
- Well grants are not available to applicants with access to a mains supply.
- Members were advised that 2021 end of year accounts aren't yet finalised so the report showing under spend for 2021 is not representative of actual spend. Housing loans are paid in January. Miscellaneous expenditure includes rates waiver. Update will issue to Members in the next report.
- Concerns that water plant malodour will affect the new housing development at Newtown, Drogheda will be raised with Irish Water however recent odour improvement works to the plant should assist.
- A business case for Capital Works of extension of mains supply to Faughart should be made directly to Irish Water as the authorised body. Louth County Council has no authority on this matter.

### **Economic Enterprise, Planning and Infrastructure**

- A request for the CE report on the Strategic Housing Development (SHD) plan for lands on Old Slane Road as issued to An Bord Pleanála will be considered to see if it can issue prior to any planning permission decision.
- The Department of Education is the deciding body on number and type of classrooms at the Educate Together School in Ardee and recently advised the Council of a requirement for 4 more special needs classrooms which will require further Part 8.
- Issues with diversion routes and the traffic management plan at Termonfeckin and Clogherhead road works would be referred to the area engineer for direct contact.
- The judicial review of An Bord Pleanála decision on the N52 Ardee Bypass will delay matters but as the Council is only a notice party there is no further update at this time. Members expressed disappointment at any delay of the bypass.
- A request was made for a site visit by Council engineers at planned new industrial lands on Armagh Road, as concerns were raised that there is no filter lane into lands.
- Location of proposed Digital Hubs in Dundalk and Drogheda is under consideration.

### **Operations and Waste Management**

- A review of the MyWaste Scheme and its effectiveness will ultimately be required but in interim preferred method to discourage illegal dumping is engagement with householders.
- Disparity in litter fines issued in different ends of county noted. Members will be advised of reason.
- 'Children at Play' signs are not funded by Council as standard.

## **Corporate and Emergency Services**

- Dunleer Fire Station is progressing and awaits procurement of design team to be approved by the Department.
- Cyber security is treated as High Risk on the Corporate Risk Register and mitigations are being employed to prevent attack, however there is no guarantee that an attack won't happen. High levels of attempts to attack the system are being recorded.
- Dundalk Municipal Members should decide where and when they want their civic awards i.e. whether online or outdoors. Cllr. Kevin Callan acknowledging efforts of staff to host the Drogheda Mayoral awards in 2021 cautioned holding the event outdoors was very difficult - councillors came in with nominee then left.

## **Housing and Quality of Life**

- Promotional activity on new Local Authority Mortgages is not currently planned but any national campaign will be assisted.
- A number of events for International Women's Day on 5<sup>th</sup> March were being considered by the library.
- Following a call to request the Department to fund the urgent regeneration of Muirhevnamor, Members were advised that there was no existing regeneration scheme under 'Housing for All' but officials would continue to pursue.
- The number of Priority 1 applicants for grant assistance of elderly disabled works was requested.
- The Historic Towns Initiative, stream 2, up to 40k match funding with a closing date of 3<sup>rd</sup> February would be examined by the Director and Heritage Officer to see if any viable schemes could be submitted.

### **Minute No. 08/22**

## **Service Delivery Plan 2022 - Adjourned from December Meeting**

While amendment and work to the original Plan as submitted to Councillors was acknowledged and praised, Cllr. Joanna Byrne expressed disappointment on target figures as issued - particularly for Housing. She requested greater engagement with Members prior to drafting of the Plan, and asked whether the council aimed to keep percentage levels down as an intention to reduce the level of service

In response, the Chief Executive advised that the annual budget process was the engagement process with Members as the Service Plan was drafted with regard to the available budget. The Plan was dealing with 'great unknowns' as it is not known how many houses are going to become vacant and what will come up during the year. Louth County Council strives to deliver the best services with the available resources. If Members wish to make amendments to the plan they must state what they want changed, what targets they want in and ensure that the budget is there to provide it.

The Cathaoirleach, Cllr. Pio Smith suggested that perhaps the Cathaoirleachs/party leaders could meet with the Director of Corporate Services on the Service Delivery Plan sometime in the future, to consider the format for the following year and to get a greater understanding on how the targets are set and what cannot be set. Cllr. Maeve Yore seconded this suggestion.

The Chief Executive advised that the format of plan can be looked at, but targets are based on budget and the Plan responds to adopted budget.

It was proposed to adopt the Service Delivery Plan as presented at this meeting to Council. This was:

**Proposed by** Cllr. Liam Reilly  
**Seconded by** Cllr. Fiachra Mac Raghnaill  
**And adopted.**

#### Minute No. 09/22

#### Recommendation to Provide Financial Assistance to Creative Spark PLC under Section 66 of the Local Government Act, 2001

Frank Pentony, Director of Services advised of an application by Creative Spark PLC for funding under Border Enterprise Fund to rent premises for creation of office / hub space, which was supported by DEADco and Dundalk Credit Union. However, this did not allow sufficient funds for provision.

Members were requested to approve a €95,000 refundable grant repayable over 10 years, similar to funding previously offered to the Mill in Drogheda. Without the funding the project will not proceed.

Cllr. Marianne Butler advised she was on the board of Creative Spark and supported this venture which she described as great for Dundalk Town Centre and with 42 workspaces ties in with town centre first policy

Approval of provision of Financial Assistance to Creative Spark PLC as detailed to Members, and in accordance with Section 66 of the Local Government Act 2001 as amended was:

**Proposed by:** Cllr. Maeve Yore  
**Seconded by:** Cllr. Pío Smith  
**And agreed.**

#### Minute No. 10/22

#### Housing Estate Special Speed Limits - Recommendation to go to Public Consultation

Frank Pentony, Director of Services advised Members of submissions sought to reduce speed limits in taken in charge estates to 30kmph, with 19 new estates having being proposed before closing date in July. These 19 new estates are being added to existing for bye laws and he sought approval to commence the public consultation process.

Cllr. Paddy McQuillan asked if Ballsgrove, Finians Park and Rathmullen could also be included due to volume of traffic, number of residential premises, 3 schools and a church in the area. It had recently come to his attention that driving schools use this estate for lessons and it is on driving test route.

Cllr. Marianne Butler **proposed** to proceed to public consultation and to include the three estates named by Cllr. Paddy McQuillan. Cllr. Kevin Callan **seconded** the proposal.

The Director advised that the closing date was 6th July 2021 and he was not sure if extra estates could be included but he would see and revert.

**Minute No. 11/22**

**New Louth Volunteer Centre Nomination to the Louth Local Community Development Committee (LCDC)**

In accordance with S128c(3)(b) of the Local Government Reform Act 2014, a resolution to deselect Ms. Gráinne Berrill and appoint Ms. Kayleigh Mulligan to the Louth Local Community Development Committee was:

**Proposed by:** Cllr Marianne Butler

**Seconded by:** Cllr Joanna Byrne

And resolved.

**Minute No. 12/22**

**Allocation of Members Community Grants**

In accordance with Section 66 of the Local Government Act 2001 as amended, approval of Allocation of Members Community Grants as notified to the Elected Members was:

**Proposed by:** Cllr. Marianne Butler

**Seconded by:** Cllr. Andrea McKeivitt

And Resolved.

**Minute No. 13/22**

**Condolences**

Condolences were offered to the family and friends of:

- John Lennon, Corlea, Ballybay, Monaghan, brother in law of Cllr. Pearse McGeough
- Linda McEnteggart, St. Nicholas Avenue, Dundalk
- Cathal Cassidy, Willow Grove, Dundalk

**Minute No. 14/22**

**AOB**

The Cathaoirleach asked if Councillors would like to invite Drogheda Port to the next council meeting. This was:

**Proposed by:** Cllr. Joanna Byrne

**Seconded by:** Cllr. Kevin Callan

And agreed

**Minute No. 15/22**

**Notice of Motion**

**Proposed: Cllr. Declan Power**

**Seconded by: Cllr. Kevin Callan**

"I am calling on Louth County Council to write to the Minister For Health, Stephen Donnelly and Minister for Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth Roderic O' Gorman to fast track first hospital appointments for orthopaedics that includes consultations for tests or scans to access musculoskeletal problems affecting their bones, joints and muscles."

Reply:

*This is a matter for the Members.*

Speaking on this motion, Cllr. Declan Power said that over 4,000 patients were waiting for appointments, with over 900 children waiting for over 18 months, who if not fast tracked will become worse. Parents are living in fear that children will never walk. He recounted a story of a child waiting four years for surgery who was currently undergoing an operation due to his mother's persistence and outlined a lack of orthopaedic care in this country.

Members spoke in support of this motion and wished the child and his family well.

**Minute No. 16/22**

**Notices of Motion from other Councils**

Correspondence on resolutions of other Councils as follows was noted by Members:

- Donegal County Council 16th December 2021
- Monaghan County Council 20th December 2021
- Galway County Council 22nd December 2021

There being no other business, the meeting concluded.

The Minutes were confirmed at a meeting of the Council held on:

Date:

21 Feb 2022

Cathaoirleach:

Joe Smith

Meeting Administrator:

Aisling