



Miontuairiscí / Meeting Minutes

Monthly Meeting

8th September, 2014, Council Chamber

Presiding

Cathaoirleach, Councillor Jim Holloway

Councillors Present:

Councillors Joe Bonner, Sinéad Burke, Shane Cassells, Eugene Cassidy, Francis Deane, Seán Drew, Eimear Ferguson, Brian Fitzgerald, Enda Flynn, Wayne Forde, Joe Fox, Noel French, Michael Gallagher, David Gilroy, Trevor Golden, Johnny Guirke, Wayne Harding, , Tom Kelly, Sharon Keogan, Nick Killian, Caroline Lynch, Stephen McKee, Ronan McKenna, Paddy Meade, Maria Murphy, Gerry O'Connor, Claire O' Driscoll, Maria O' Kane, Damien O' Reilly, Darren O' Rourke, Bryan Reilly, Joe Reilly, Sarah Reilly, Tommy Reilly, Seán Smith, Alan Tobin, Sharon Tolan, Gillian Toole.

Apologies: Cllr. Suzanne Jamal

Officials in attendance:

County Manager: Jackie Maguire

Directors of Service: Kevin Stewart, Fiona Lawless, Joe Fahy(A), Tadhg McDonnell, Des Foley

Meetings' Administrator: Olive Falsey

Senior Executive Officers: Larry Whelan,, Ger Murphy, Michael Griffin

1 Confirmation of Minutes

1.1 Confirmation of minutes of Ordinary meeting held on 7th July, 2014.

The minutes of Ordinary meeting held on 7th July, 2014 were confirmed on the proposal of **Councillor Francis Deane** and seconded by **Councillor Tommy Reilly**.

2 Matters arising from the Minutes

No matters arising



3 Expressions of Sympathy and Congratulations

Sympathy was extended to:

- Cllr. Enda Flynn on the death of his brother Kieran Flynn.
- Robert O'Reilly (Finance Section) on the death of his father Michael O'Reilly.
- Sean Fleming, Environment and Noel Fleming, Kells Municipal District on the death of their mother Anne (Nancy) Fleming.
- John O'Reilly (Clerk of Works) on the death of his sister Jacinta Dean.
- Florrie Lynch (Motor Tax) on the death of her mother Maureen Tierney.
- Cllr. Paddy Meade on the death of his grandmother Shena (Jane) Meade.
- The family of the late Albert Reynolds former Taoiseach.
- Cllr Suzanne Jamal on the death of her father Jim Leonard.

Congratulations were extended to:

- Trim town on being awarded a gold medal in the National Tidy Towns competition.
- Moynalty on its achievement in the National Tidy Towns competition.
- Cultúr Migrant Centre, Navan, on receiving a recent award.
- Sr. Angela Reilly, Laytown, on celebrating her golden jubilee.
- Jenny Murphy of Flowers by Moira, Dunshaughlin, on winning a bronze medal at the Singapore Garden Festival.

4 Statutory Business

4.1 Community & Enterprise

- 4.1.1 To note the nomination of Des Henry, Principal Officer, Divisional Manager Midlands-North to replace Aisling Mulroe, as representative of the Department of Social Protection, on the Local Community Development Committee (LCDC).

Noted by the Councillors

- 4.1.2 To consider certain amendments to the Local Community Development Committee Regulations 2014 .



Kevin Stewart, Director of Services, informed the meeting of a change in the regulations which now allows for not more than 19 members of the LCDC and that a recommendation would be brought before the Council at the October meeting.

Noted by the Councillors

- 4.1.3 To receive a progress report on the Public Participation Network (PPN).

Kevin Stewart, Director of Services reported a relatively low uptake regarding the registration of community groups and that the closing date would be left as late as would be practical for the registration process.

Noted by the Councillors

4.2 Corporate Services

- 4.2.1 To note the 2013 Meath Local Authorities' Annual Report.

Noted by the Councillors

- 4.2.2 To consider submissions and approve the draft SPC Scheme 2014 – 2019.

Des Foley, Director of Services, provided an update on the process to date including the proposed membership of each SPC. It was explained that the next step would be to write to the National Pillars seeking confirmation of their representatives on each SPC and that the first meeting of the SPC's would be arranged in October.

The draft SPC Scheme was approved on the proposal of **Councillor Gerry O' Connor** and seconded by **Councillor Eugene Cassidy**.

- 4.2.3 To adopt revised Standing Orders for Meath County Council.

The revised Standing Orders were adopted on the proposal of **Councillor Gerry O' Connor** and seconded by **Councillor Eugene Cassidy**.

4.3 Finance

- 4.3.1 Appointment of three external members (Frank McLoughlin, Kate Williams,



John Kelly) to the Meath County Council Audit Committee in accordance with Section 122 of the Local Government Act, 2001 as amended by the Local Government Reform Act, 2014.

Approved on the proposal of **Councillor Nick Killian** and seconded by **Councillor Joe Fox**.

4.3.2 To receive half year financial update to the 30th June, 2014.

Fiona Lawless, Head of Finance, provided an update, which included financial information on Housing, Roads, Environment, Water and Waste Water. It was noted that, based on the full review of income and expenditure for the half year, it was anticipated that the Council would be on target to achieve its adopted budget for 2014.

Clarification was sought on a number of issues and responses were provided by the Head of Finance and the Management Team.

4.3.3 To receive the Audited Annual Financial Statement 2013 and to receive and note the Local Government Statutory Audit Report for Meath County Council Year Ended 31st December, 2013.

The Audited AFS, 2013 and the Local Government Statutory Audit Report for Meath County Council Year Ended 31st December, 2013 were received by the Councillors. Responses were provided by the Head of Finance regarding Councillors' questions and issues raised.

4.3.4 To fix a date (Monday 22nd September, at 10.00a.m.) to consider the report of the Chief Executive prepared in accordance with the provisions of the Local Property Tax (Local Adjustment Factor) Regulations 2014, for the purpose of resolving as follows:

- a) Vary the basic rate and set a local adjustment factor that will apply for a period of one year from the next Local Property Tax liability date, or
- b) Not vary the basic rate, or
- c) Decide to consider the matter further at a subsequent meeting of Meath County Council to be held not later than the 30th September, 2014.

It was agreed on the proposal of **Councillor Gerry O' Connor** and seconded by **Councillor Shane Cassells** that the Council would meet on Tuesday 23rd.



September at 10.00a.m. to consider the report of the Chief Executive prepared in accordance with the provisions of the Local Property Tax (Local Adjustment Factor) Regulations 2014.

- 4.3.5 To set dates for Municipal Districts to consider and adopt draft Budgetary Plan – proposed dates: Wednesday 8th October (Ratoath 10.00a.m. and Ashbourne 2.30p.m.) Thursday 9th October (Navan 10.00a.m. and Kells 4.00p.m.), Friday 10th October (Laytown/Bettystown 10.00a.m. and Trim 2.30p.m.)

The dates were agreed on the proposal of **Councillor Eugene Cassidy** and seconded by **Councillor Wayne Harding**. It was agreed that the Kells Municipal District meeting would take place at 2.30p.m. in Navan.

It was agreed on the proposal of **Councillor Darren O' Rourke** and seconded by **Councillor Joe Reilly** to write to the Minister for the Environment outlining the Councillors' dissatisfaction with the preparation timeframes in respect of the annual budget.

5 Report from Protocol Committee

The Meetings' Administrator informed the meeting of the recommendations of the Protocol Committee as follows:

- That the Council accepts a request from **Councillor Wayne Harding** for the Slane Bypass group to make a presentation to the Council at the November meeting.
- That, in response to correspondence received from the Ashbourne Municipal District, a protocol would be developed regarding the display of flags at all civic offices in the county.
- That a Chinese delegation from the Guizhou province and Guiyang city would visit County Meath on the 7th October for the signing of the twinning agreement between County Meath and Guiyang.

The recommendations were approved on the proposal of **Councillor Wayne Harding** and seconded by **Councillor Eugene Cassidy**.

6 Correspondence

6.1 Irish Water re. IW/Local Authority Elected Members Liaison



Noted. Councillors expressed dissatisfaction with the response from Irish Water. It was agreed on the proposal of **Councillor Ronan McKenna** and seconded by **Councillor Shane Cassells** that a letter would issue requesting Irish Water to reconsider its decision not to meet Councillors on the matter.

6.2 LG 21/2014 – Training for Elected Members

Noted

6.3 Circular WP 13/14 – S.I. No. 320 of 2014 – Waste Management (Facility Permit and Registration) (Amendment) Regulations 2014

Noted

6.4 Aarhus Convention Access to Justice Provisions - Notification of Public Consultation

Noted

6.5 Eastern Catchment Flood Risk Assessment and Management Study – Upcoming Public Consultation Days

Noted and welcomed by the Councillors

6.6 Water Framework Directive – 2nd Cycle of River Basin Management Plans

Noted

6.7 Department of Justice and Equality – Garda Síochána Act 2005 – Revised Guidelines for Joint Policing Committees

Noted

7 Notice of Question

7.1 Submitted by Councillor Wayne Harding



“Can I ask the Chief Executive for a full update on all data compiled in relation to the Slane Bypass?”

A response was provided by Joe Fahy, Director of Services, Transportation and Housing as follows:

Meath County Council appointed Halcrow Barry as consultants for the Slane Traffic Management Review Project. The consultants were appointed as part of the NRA Consultancy Services Call-Off (NRA Commission Number Lot 1 MH 01 2013).

The brief included a number of specific tasks including:

- Familiarisation and review of the current published papers on the N2 Slane Bypass and Traffic Management options.
- Undertaking a gap analysis of existing work to date on traffic management measures.
- Review of results from Toll Analysis carried out on behalf on NRA.
- Review results from the ‘Toll Holiday’ from November 2013 and identify any implications.
- Consider and analyse possible options (or combination of options) utilising the traffic model as required.
- Provide a report setting out the implications and impacts of the preferred traffic management option and a detailed management / implementation plan.

To date, Halcrow Barry has carried out a review of the exiting traffic model and existing reports including those produced since the Slane Bypass scheme was refused permission in 2012. They have also reviewed the traffic information provided by the NRA in relation to the ‘Toll Holiday’ from November 2013.

MCC Transportation staff met with Halcrow Barry on 12th May 2014 and following on from this meeting Halcrow Barry issued a technical note on the gap analysis they had carried out. A further meeting was held on 01st July to review this technical note, and following consultation with the NRA, Halcrow Barry are proceeding with the analysis of possible options (or combinations of various options) that have been identified with a view to providing a definitive position on what could be achieved in Slane by traffic management measures.

The response was noted by the Councillors.



7.2 Submitted by Councillor Gerry O'Connor

“Could the Chief Executive provide a written breakdown of the following:

How many staff did Meath County Council have in 2006, what was the breakdown of job categories, and what age profile in the following age brackets, under 30, 30-40, 50 -60, 60+. and could I have the same information for the current Meath County Council staff levels?”

A response was provided by Des Foley, Director of Services, Corporate Services and Human Resources as follows:

In this regard please see below the information requested outlined under the main staffing categories and an age profile for the organisation for 2014.

Please note that the Council’s current HR system cannot provide an age profile of staff in 2006. An accurate age profile for 2006 can only be provided following considerable analysis and manipulation of the pre-2008 HR system as well hard copy files/records. This can be arranged if necessary.

| STAFFING DEC 2006 | No. | WHOLE TIME EQUIVALENT (WTE) |
|-------------------------|------------|-----------------------------|
| Managerial | 8 | 8 |
| Clerical/Administrative | 285 | 258.9 |
| Professional/Technical | 115 | 114.8 |
| Outdoor | 282 | 250.13 |
| Contract Posts | 101 | 90.97 |
| NDP Project | 11 | 11 |
| Site Supervisory | 30 | 29.3 |
| Temporary/Seasonal | 0 | 0 |
| Fulltime Firefighters | 1 | 1 |
| Retained Firefighters | 71 | 11.6 |
| Non DoECLG | 2 | 2 |
| TOTAL | 906 | 776.6 |

| STAFFING JUNE 2014 | No. | WTE | AGE PROFILE 2014 | | | | | | |
|-------------------------|---------------|---------------|------------------|---------|---------|---------|------|------------|--|
| | | | < 30 | 30 - 40 | 40 - 50 | 50 - 60 | 60 + | | |
| Managerial | 6 | 6 | | | | 6 | | 6 | |
| Clerical/Administrative | 294 | 270.64 | 8 | 104 | 97 | 69 | 16 | 294 | |
| Professional/Technical | 132 | 132 | 0 | 62 | 48 | 18 | 4 | 132 | |
| Outdoor | 208 | 188.71 | 4 | 25 | 59 | 83 | 37 | 208 | |
| Contract Posts | 20 | 11.66 | 8 | 8 | 3 | 1 | | 20 | |
| NDP Project | 1 | 1 | | 1 | | | | 1 | |
| Site Supervisory | 0 | 0 | | | | | | 0 | |
| Temporary/Seasonal | 7 | 6.32 | 2 | 1 | 2 | 1 | 1 | 7 | |
| Fulltime Firefighters | 1 | 1 | | | 1 | | | 1 | |
| Retained Firefighters | 74 | 12.14 | 12 | 26 | 27 | 9 | | 74 | |
| Non DoECLG | 8 | 7.4 | | 1 | 3 | 4 | | 8 | |
| TOTAL | 751.00 | 635.55 | | | | | | 751 | |

The response was noted by the Councillors.



7.3 Submitted by Fine Gael Councillors Group

“What percentage of the overall 2014 budget did the LGF cover and has the Chief Executive and her Finance team received sufficient information from the various Departments who make up the balance of the overall figure for 2015, to enable her respond to the results of the public consultation on the reduction/increase of the LPT charge?”

A response was provided by Fiona Lawless, Head of Finance

The total budget for 2014 for Meath County Council was €97,284,572. The local government fund/General Purpose Grant totalled €8,799,199(9%). A report summarising the written submissions received from the public consultation has been prepared under the direction of the Chief Executive.

The estimate of the financial effects of varying the property tax are complex especially as this is the first year and not all the information is fully available. There is significant uncertainty in relation to the Grants from Central Government. All Councils have to determine the LPT adjustment by the end of September. It is only when this information is available to the department that decisions on other grant funding will be available.

The response was noted by the Councillors.

7.4 Submitted by Councillor Shane Cassells

“Given the statement from John Bruton, Chairman of the Meath Economic Forum, that he does not have to present a report to the elected members of County Meath on the work of this body (established by Meath County Council) can the Chief Executive please inform members 'very specifically' what has been accomplished by Mr Bruton and the forum given the fact that his appointment as Chairman was presented to us in the chamber as being a "major fillip for the attraction of jobs into County Meath."

A response was provided by Kevin Stewart, Director of Services, Planning, Community & Enterprise, as follows:

The Meath Economic Forum was established in April 2013 at the invitation of the then County Manager, Brendan McGrath. It is a voluntary forum of Meath connected business leaders, academics and statutory agencies with a general remit to advise the Chief Executive and the Council on high level strategic matters relating to economic development in the County and to lend their expertise and business experience to assist with the preparation of a Meath Economic Strategy.

There are currently 11 members on the Forum (see below). Former Taoiseach, John Bruton accepted the invitation from the County Manager to Chair the group. All of the members give their time voluntarily, there is no remuneration and no expenses are paid. The forum has met formally on three occasions since it was set up and there have



been numerous informal contacts with individual forum members on matters relevant to their area of expertise (e.g. education, property, manufacturing, etc.).

The Forum has a remit to meet formally twice a year and to assist with the development of an economic strategy for the county. It also has a general remit to provide advice and guidance, where requested and where appropriate, on business related matters. Where an opportunity arises, forum members act as ambassadors for Meath at home and abroad. The forum does not have any role in assessing or promoting individual development proposals nor does it, or any of its individual members, have a role in lobbying government, development agencies (I.D.A. / Enterprise Ireland etc.) or meeting with landowners/developers.

At its first meeting held in May 2013, forum members identified the lack of a clear strategy as a potential inhibitor to the county's ability to attract investment. They agreed to work with the Council both collectively and as individuals to advise on the terms of reference for the appointment of consultants to prepare a strategy. The Council will be aware that PMCA Economic Consulting were appointed in April 2014 to develop the strategy and action plan, the draft is now at an advanced stage and will be presented to the Council and the relevant SPC shortly.

In doing the research and preparation work to allow them an input into the strategy brief, the forum members requested a considerable amount of background information and specifically undertook the following at the three meetings held to date:

- Advised on the development of, and monitored the outcome of, a "baseline study" of the county carried out by Chris Van Egeraat of NUIM.
- Considered a retail strategy presentation by John Spain & Associates and measures that might be included in the strategy to address retail leakage.
- Received a presentation on the "business sentiment" survey carried out for the Council by IPSOS/MRBI which sought to gauge a business person's view of the advantages and disadvantages of being in business in Meath in order to address this issue in the strategy.
- Considered reports on the availability of services in the county including obvious gaps that might inhibit development. In this context the forum urged that the strategy would identify a number of key strategic sites to be marketed for development opportunities.
- Considered the remit of the newly established Local Enterprise Office and how it might develop its role in supporting small businesses.
- Met with Una Halligan, Chair of the EGFSN (Expert Group on Future Skills Needs) to examine the future education and skills requirements in the region.
- Met with PMCA Consulting to refine the strategy brief and individually met with PMCA as part of the consultation process.



The focus of the forum to date therefore has been the development of the economic strategy and this is the remit that it was given. Following completion of the strategy there will be a need to change the remit of the forum and task it with advising on implementation and delivery of the actions contained in the strategy. Membership of the forum is not fixed and there will be opportunities to bring others on board depending on the type of skills, advice and assistance needed. The forum has and will continue to be an asset to this Council. It is encouraging to see business people and others at a very senior level prepared to voluntarily assist the County to develop the strategies and actions needed to attract and support business. In summary there are Meath connected people willing to give their time and expertise to help this Council, we will take advantage of that willingness and we will continue to positively engage with them on an ongoing basis.

Forum Members (as of 1st September 2014)

John Bruton (Chair) – Former Taoiseach and E.U. Ambassador to the U.S. and Chair of I.F.S.C. Ireland

John Harkin – Managing Director, Boyne Valley Foods, Paul Gillett – Chief Executive Officer, Generali Pan Europe, Prof. Philip Nolan – President N.U.I.M., William Egerton – Managing Director, Dromone Engineering, Brendan Jennings - Managing Partner, Deloitte, Prof Gerry Boyle – Chief Executive Officer, Teagasc, Mick Flynn – Production Manager, Boliden Tara Mines, Miriam Doyle – Legal Affairs Director, Coca Cola, Cliona Mullen – Partner, KPMG, Bill Tuite – Retired Director, Jones Lang LaSalle (Commercial Property)

The response was noted by the Councillors.

7.5 Submitted by Councillor Wayne Forde

“To ask the Chief Executive, to outline to the Council, the steps that have been taken to secure the provision in Navan, of the proposed new regional hospital, for the Dublin North East area, including details of any studies carried out by Meath County Council. And also to ask the Chief Executive, to further confirm, that the Navan Development Plan, contains policies, and objectives, that support the proposal, and confirm that sufficient appropriately zoned land is available, for the hospital in Navan.”

A response was provided by Kevin Stewart, Director of Services, Planning, Community & Enterprise as follows:

A firm of consultants, The Health Partnership, was engaged by the H.S.E. in 2007 to *“recommend the location of a new regional hospital that will serve the needs of the people in the North East Region.”* taking into account various criteria including demographics, access, planning and development and interdependencies. Meath County Council was consulted as part of the process in relation to matters relevant to the Council’s remit such as planning policy, availability of services, infrastructure capacity etc.



The final report was published in April 2008 and concluded that *“examination, evaluation and sensitivity analysis of the evaluation criteria identified in this report leads to Navan being recommended by the Consultancy as the location for the new Regional Hospital for the North East Region”* (Paragraph 10.3 – page 64). The report did not recommend any specific site in Navan. Following publication of the report, the then County Manager met with senior representatives of the HSE to establish what their timeframe was for proceeding with the development and to discuss how Meath County Council, within its remit, would work closely with them to deliver the hospital. The HSE responded at the time that proceeding with the project required decisions at Government level including making funding available. Councillors will recall that this was at the start of the downturn and the H.S.E. officials expressed the view that in the circumstances it was very unlikely that public funding would become available in the short or medium term and therefore they were unable to outline a timeframe within which the project would proceed.

The County Manager offered to start a process to identify potentially suitable sites in Navan and to examine what changes would be needed to local planning policies and objectives to facilitate the planning process for the development. R.P.S. Planning & Environment were engaged by the Council to examine potential locations and to make recommendations on suitable sites. The R.P.S. report was concluded in January 2009. A total of 23 potential sites were examined of which 10 were shortlisted for further examination. Of these 3 were identified as potentially suitable as follows:

Site 22 – Nevinstown

Site 11 – Balreask Old & Limekilnhill (part of)

Site 10 – Limekilnhill

The Elected Council was briefed on the outcome of the study, the report was forwarded to the H.S.E. and it was indicated to them that the Council would immediately put a high level team in place to work with them to advance the project. To date, no proposals have come forward from the H.S.E. Councillors will be aware that the previous Council met on two separate occasions with local Oireachtas Members who indicated that there is a possibility of private funding being made available.

In relation to Planning policy, I confirm that both the County Development Plan and the Navan Development Plan support the development of the hospital and both plans contain appropriate policy statements and objectives to facilitate its development. I also confirm that sufficient land is zoned to support the project and that the plans are flexible to enable the hospital development on any of the preferred sites should a proposal come forward.

Meath County Council is fully committed to assisting the H.S.E. or the private sector to develop a regional hospital in Navan and this is supported by the policies and objectives contained in the County Development Plan and the Navan Development Plan. The Council will make all necessary resources available to assist anyone bringing forward a development proposal for a hospital in the town.

The response was noted by the Councillors.



7.6 Submitted by Councillor Francis Deane

"Following the abolition of Town Councils, can the Chief Executive please advise if the Municipal Districts will be taking a more active role in the estate taking-in-charge processes, and if so please also advise of the staff allocation for this purpose."

In May 2013 the Members of Meath County Council adopted a protocol which outlined the statutory obligations on each Planning Authority when dealing with requests from a developer or residents of an estate (in certain limited circumstances) to take that development in charge. I enclose a copy of the Protocol for your information.

A response was provided by Michael Griffin, Senior Executive Officer, Planning Department as follows:

Local Authorities must take all necessary steps to initiate the statutory process to take an estate in charge where a valid request has been received. The Council may not prioritise other estates for taking in charge over those where a valid request exists.

The Council is undertaking site inspections, compiling snag lists and issuing statutory notices to relevant estates based on this protocol.

Meath County Council is in receipt of just over 100 such requests and has initiated compliance inspections or other elements of the process. The Council is also undertaking compliance inspections on a further 50 estates where either the period for initiation of Enforcement Action or the period for call on a security are due to close over the next 12 – 18 months.

Such a workload places significant strain on the limited staff resources available to Meath County Council at this time. Staff have been redeployed to the planning compliance team which deals with Building Control, planning enforcement and taking in charge functions. That team consists of the Building Control Officer together with 4 technical officers and administrative support.

Members will also be aware that *"The making of an order declaring a road to be a public road and consideration of objections or representations in relation to such declarations* are devolved to the Municipal Districts following commencement of the Local Government Act 2014.

The response was noted by the Councillors.

7.7 Submitted by Councillor Nick Killian

"Further to media reports that in excess of €16m. is owed to Meath County Council in development levies, can the Chief Executive give a full breakdown on these levies, including the names of developers who owe these monies and indicate what efforts are or have been taken to recoup these outstanding levies up to and including 2013, by Municipal District?"



A response was provided by Michael Griffin, Senior Executive Officer, Planning Department as follows:

Meath County Council confirms that it holds information on the amount of development contributions owed by companies and individuals. These accounts are identified by the planning reference number which included a prefix based on the Electoral Area within which the site was located. Given that all historic planning permissions are referenced on that electoral area basis, it is not possible to provide the information sought on a municipal district basis at this stage.

Furthermore, the Council as a Data holder is prohibited from disclosing personal data and/or commercially sensitive data on individual accounts. Members are advised that the pattern of payment of contributions has changed significantly from full lump sum payments prior to 2008 to an instalment- agreement basis informed by the economic circumstances of the individual or company.

I set out below a breakdown of development contributions owed on Electoral Area basis.

Report on the development contributions due to Meath County Council as at 31/12/2013 based on the 2013 AFS.

| | | |
|---|---|------|
| Total amount due in development contributions | = | €23M |
| Developer / Commercial | = | €16M |
| One off / individual | = | €7M |
| Bad Debt provisions | = | €8M |
| Total due | = | €15M |

Broken down as follows:

| | | One offs / individuals | Number | Multi / Commercial | Number of developers |
|--------------|----------------|------------------------|--------|--------------------|----------------------|
| Trim | €3,760,311.60 | €1,593,013.77 | 198 | €2,167,297.83 | 42 |
| Slane | €9,635,585.81 | €1,086,846.70 | 133 | €8,545,739.11 | 53 |
| Navan | €2,552,531.45 | €1,402,912.95 | 180 | €1,149,618.50 | 24 |
| Kells | €2,592,359.92 | €1,972,464.97 | 245 | €619,894.95 | 14 |
| Dunshaughlin | €4,806,668.40 | €882,403.08 | 107 | €3,924,265.32 | 55 |
| Total | €23,347,457.18 | €6,937,641.47 | 863 | €16,406,815.71 | 188 |

These figures are based on Commencement Notices received by the Planning Authority. The Council acknowledges that the amounts shown above represent a worst case scenario and include an element of double counting where permissions are commenced and subsequently superseded by amended permissions. It should also be noted the “multi unit commercial “ balances referenced above represents contributions owed in respect of commenced units which have not yet been completed, sold or leased. It is evident from the current fiscal environment that development contributions are paid on closure of contracts rather than at commencement of development. The discharge of the development contribution is a standard requirement in the conveyancing of property.

Work on the reconciliation of the older files and the validation of those balances is ongoing in parallel with a very robust and proactive system for managing current debt triggered by the submission of commencement notices.

Current Debt Collection Procedure

Meath County Council pursues outstanding development contributions through the legislative provisions of the Planning and Development Acts 2000-2014 (i.e. Warning Letters and Enforcement Notices). In 2012, the Council put in place a debt collection system enabling us to more effectively manage debt collection. This system has resulted in the timely issue of invoices, notification of outstanding amounts and collection of development contributions, along with a reminder letter system and a formal agreement process. Warning letters which are the first step in the enforcement process are now being served as early as 2 months after the initial invoice issues. Every effort is made to work with applicants/ developers to ensure that the development contributions are discharged.

In line with Departmental Guidelines, the current Meath Co Council Development Contribution Scheme 2010-2015, offers a 10% discount to developers who pay in full within 28 days of their invoice date. The Planning Authority also engages with all developers to put in place formal agreements for phased payment of levies and have been active in implementing such agreements over the last number of years.

In line with best accounting practice a provision has been included for Bad Debts. This provision primarily relates to the oldest accounts which remain unpaid together with a number of larger developments where a commencement notice has been submitted and the Council is satisfied that the completion of the development as permitted is unlikely.

The Planning Financials Team collected a total of €4,230,953.69 in 2013 and has collected € 2,330,690 up to the end of June 2014.

The response was noted by the Councillors

7.8 Submitted by Councillor Claire O' Driscoll

"Can the Chief Executive update the Members on how many people, who own a house in Meath, have been issued with an invoice for monies owed with respect to the NPPR charge this summer? How much has been collected to date since the letters were issued? How many people have paid the whole fee, how many have entered into agreements about a payment plan to pay the outstanding balance and as of September 1st how many people have neither cleared their bill nor entered into an arrangement to pay?"

A response was provided by Fiona Lawless, Head of Finance.

The Non Principal Private Residence Tax was introduced in 2009. The tax was assessed on a self declaration basis. Invoices could not be issued by Meath County Council as there is no property data base in existence and also everyone's circumstances is different and this would affect their liability. The records held by the LGMA indicate that 8135 properties have been declared for NPPR in County Meath as of the 29/08/2014.

At the end of May a file containing over 47,000 lines of data was received from the Revenue Commissioners relating to persons that had paid the Local Property Tax (LPT) for an address other than their correspondence address. Meath County Council went through all of these records and in early July sent out 3436 letters. It was clearly our intention to get these letters out as early as possible so as to allow the maximum amount of time possible to check if there was a liability and to address the situation. The letter indicated the source of the data, information on the penalties and contact information in Meath County Council.

As of 27th August approximately €740,000 has been collected, exclusive of LGMA charges and fees. A total of 470 persons have paid the charge and penalties insofar as it applies to them. Data is not yet available as to how many payment plans are in place due to current volumes of queries and callers with the deadline 31/08/2014 approaching. All resources are dedicated to deal with as many queries as possible. All correspondence and queries will have to be dealt with on an individual by individual case taking into account individual circumstances

The response was noted by the Councillors.

8 Notice of Motion

8.1 Submitted by Councillor Wayne Harding

"I ask that this Council immediately calls on the Minister for Transport and Tourism to release funds for the spine road in Laytown, Bettystown. This is an essential piece of infrastructure that will relieve the chronic traffic congestion at Scoil Oilibhéir Naofa and Coláiste na hInse."

The motion was proposed by **Councillor Wayne Harding** and seconded by **Councillor Sharon Tolan**. Following a short discussion the motion was unanimously adopted.

An extension of time, 30 minutes, was agreed on the proposal of **Councillor Eugene Cassidy** and seconded by **Councillor Shane Cassells**.

8.2 Submitted by Councillor Seán Smith

“That the Chief Executive commits to an individual Engineering structure for each of the six Municipal Districts. This is to consist of a Senior Executive Engineer, a Executive Engineer and an Assistant Engineer for each Municipal District and is to be in place for the beginning of January 2015. These Engineering structures will be for each individual Municipal District and will not have responsibility for more than their own Municipal District.”

Supporting Information from Des Foley, Director of Services, Corporate Services and Human Resources.

Arising from the implementation of the Local Government Reform Act 2014 from 1st June 2014, the abolition of Navan, Trim and Kells Town Councils and the introduction of the new Municipal Districts, a new organisational structure and associated staffing arrangements is required to be put in place. The transfer of water services to Irish Water and the Council’s move to its new headquarters at Buvinda House in 2015 are also considerations to be taken into account in this context.

One of the features of the proposed new structure will be a strong focus on customer service and it is intended that a Customer Service Centre will be located in the Council’s new headquarters and that Customer Service Points will be located in each of the six Municipal Districts.

It is also intended that a new Operations structure will be put in place from 2015 onwards to co-ordinate and manage all day to day activities. Since June, and for the remainder of 2014, transitional arrangements will apply and current staffing in terms of administrative /engineering/technical and outdoor staff will continue to remain in place where possible.

Details of the proposed new organisational structure from 2015 onwards is in the course of preparation and will be subject to discussions with staff and union representatives and also subject to budgetary constraints and the current moratorium on recruitment.

Notwithstanding that staffing matters are solely the responsibility of the Chief Executive, it is proposed to make a presentation on the proposed new structure and associated staffing arrangements at the October meeting of the Council.

The Motion was proposed by **Councillor Seán Smith** and seconded by **Councillor Claire O’ Driscoll**.



Following a lengthy discussion the Chief Executive, Jackie Maguire advised that Councillors would be presented with an outline of the proposed staffing structure at the October meeting. The motion was noted.

An extension of time, 30 minutes, was agreed on the proposal of **Councillor Maria Murphy** and seconded by **Councillor Damien O' Reilly**.

8.3 Submitted by Councillor Wayne Forde

"This meeting of Meath County Council, calls on all Members to fully support the retention of emergency services at Navan A & E 24/7. It is our county Meath hospital, and we must send a clear message to the Government and the HSE, that we are fully united, in our support, for the A & E in Navan and there must be no service change to our A & E in Navan, until the new regional hospital is built in Navan, and is ready, to receive and treat patients, and I ask that this motion be sent to the Minister for Health, Leo Varadkar, and all Meath Oireachtas Members."

The motion, proposed by **Councillor Wayne Forde** and seconded by **Councillor Shane Cassells**, was unanimously adopted.

8.4 Submitted by Councillor Shane Cassells

"That the members of Meath County Council agree that in the event Irish Public Bodies pay Meath County Council a dividend in 2015 that this amount be divided among the 6 Municipal areas evenly for the specific purpose of the creation of a project beneficial to the community in that electoral area and end the practice of it being included in the annual budget as an "anticipated item of income" which goes against the ethos of the payment itself."

Supporting Information from Fiona Lawless, Head of Finance

There will be a very comprehensive budget process which will include a discussion on all sources of income including the Irish Public Bodies dividend and Municipal district allocations.

The motion, proposed by **Councillor Shane Cassells** and seconded by **Councillor Gerry O' Connor**, was unanimously adopted.

An extension of time, 30 minutes, was agreed on the proposal of **Councillor Gerry O' Connor** and seconded by **Councillor Shane Cassells**.

8.5 Submitted by Councillor Francis Deane

"I call on the Members of Meath County Council to support my motion in relation to charities in the Finance Bill i.e. to write to the Minister for Finance, Mr. Michael Noonan, to exempt the VRT obligation on a new patient transport vehicles purchased by

Alzheimer Associations. Such an exemption would be greatly beneficial to the Meath Alzheimer Day Care Centre who struggle to keep their service in operation.”

The motion, proposed by **Councillor Francis Deane** and seconded by **Councillor Trevor Golden**, was unanimously adopted.

8.6 Submitted by Councillor Damien O’Reilly

“That all new development levies in each municipal area are maintained within that area for local community amenities and infrastructure.”

Supporting Information from Michael Griffin, Senior Executive Officer, Planning

The Meath County Council Development Contribution scheme, as amended in 2013, is prepared on an all county basis. The amount payable by each developer varies depending on the extent of services availed of.

The scheme has been prepared in accordance with Department guidance and is adopted by the members of Meath County Council following a public consultation process. In preparing a development contribution scheme, planning authorities estimate the cost of providing a wide range of infrastructure such as roads, water and sewage schemes, and amenity infrastructure. The total estimated costs are then discounted for benefit to existing residents and a net figure is calculated. The scheme is therefore designed to provide a mechanism for a planning authority to generate the locally funded element of the total cost of providing necessary infrastructure. The balance of funding required is usually provided by Government grants.

The catchment area served by infrastructure schemes is generally not limited to the electoral area in which it is located. Major road schemes together with regional water and sewage schemes by their very nature serve a multiple electoral area and often provide services to inter county or regional catchments.

In respect of amenity levies, the first call on available funds is for ‘county at large’ projects i.e. projects which are deemed to be of wider community benefit beyond the Municipality Districts in which they are situated. Examples of such projects include Trim Sports and Leisure Centre and Solstice Arts Centre.

Meath County Council has however endeavoured to retain some development contributions for social infrastructure and amenities for use within the electoral areas in which they are generated. The rationale for this approach is that amenity infrastructure is often characterised by the delivery of smaller schemes and improvement works specific to a local area. I can confirm that this matter has been raised previously by Members of the Council and that social infrastructure contributions, where available, are dedicated to co-fund social amenities in the respective electoral areas.

The motion was proposed by **Councillor Damien O’ Reilly** and seconded by **Councillor Claire O’ Driscoll**. Following a short discussion on the matter, the motion was noted.



8.7 Submitted by Councillors Darren O'Rourke, Joe Reilly, Sinéad Burke, Eimear Ferguson, Michael Gallagher, Johnny Guirke, Caroline Lynch, Maria O'Kane

"In light of the number of people on Meath County Council's housing list, the number of people at risk of and threatened by homelessness, the lack of housing available to rent, the inadequate rent allowance rates available for those seeking to rent, Meath County Council calls on the Government to immediately initiate, in partnership with Meath County Council, a comprehensive house building programme."

Following a lengthy discussion, the motion proposed by **Councillor Eimear Ferguson** and seconded by **Councillor Darren O' Rourke** was unanimously adopted.

An extension of time, 30 minutes, was agreed on the proposal of **Councillor Gerry O' Connor** and seconded by **Councillor Shane Cassells**.

8.8 Submitted by Councillor Joe Reilly

"Sinn Féin believes the nine month internal investigation into alleged irregularities between a Meath County Council employee attached to the Housing and Construction Section of Meath County Council and a Construction company employed by Meath County Council lacks clarity, transparency and accountability. Sinn Féin therefore calls on the Chief Executive to immediately hold a full independent investigation into the alleged irregularities for which the employee has been suspended and to publish this report."

Supporting Information from Des Foley, Director of Services, Corporate Services and Human Resources.

I wish to advise that an independent investigation was initiated in December 2013 in accordance with Meath County Council's Grievance & Disciplinary Policy into alleged irregularities regarding repair works carried out on a number of Council houses.

Arising from the findings of this extensive, independent investigation, appropriate action has been taken in accordance with the Council's Grievance & Disciplinary Policy and this aspect of the matter is now concluded.

The Council is now putting the necessary arrangements in place to ensure that a number of outstanding repair works are carried out on the houses in question and that the Council is not at any financial loss.

The motion was proposed by **Councillor Joe Reilly** and seconded by **Councillor Darren O' Rourke**. Following a discussion, **Councillor Brian Fitzgerald** proposed a deferral of any decision on the motion and this was seconded by **Councillor Joe Bonner**. The motion was noted.



8.9 Submitted by Councillor Claire O' Driscoll

"That Meath County Council continues to engage with those individuals affected by the hefty fines associated with the NPPR charge, to work out a plan to ensure that monies are collected in a way that is acceptable to the homeowners and to Meath County Council, and that this Council collectively supports that the proposed increase in penalties that came into effect on the 1st of September 2014 be replaced with substantially lesser penalties."

Supporting Information from Fiona Lawless, Head of Finance

Meath County Council is currently engaging with all persons who have made contact with the Council with regard to the NPPR and in this regard issued the following:

"Meath County Council advises that making contact with their offices or the NPPR Bureau by e-mail before the deadline can freeze any additional penalties that might otherwise come into effect on 1st September.

*The six month period during which further NPPR late penalties cease to accumulate in respect of non compliant properties is due to expire at midnight on Sunday 31st August 2014. **Persons wishing to settle their liability can still do so online at www.nppr.ie***

Significant numbers have paid the NPPR liability since the 1st March and many more payments are being processed at present. Meath County Council is aware that many more people want to settle their NPPR liabilities before the expiry of the deadline on 31st August. Some people may need to clarify aspects of the liability and as a consequence significant numbers of people are making contact by telephone to the Council offices. Due to the huge increase in the numbers calling local authority offices, not all callers will get through and we apologise for this inconvenience.

*Any person who wishes to settle their NPPR liability and cannot get through to local authority offices by telephone **can have further late penalties frozen** by making contact with either the National Bureau by e-mail at support@nppr.ie or by making contact with Meath County Council by e-mail: nppr@meathcoco.ie before the expiry of the deadline on 31st August indicating the property for which they want to settle the NPPR liability and giving their contact details. Any person who doesn't have access to e-mail may correspond in writing with us at Meath County Council, County Hall, Railway St., Navan by the deadline of 31st August. Staff dealing with the NPPR liability will make contact as soon as possible after 1st September to make the arrangements for settling the liability."*

Meath County Council will deal with all cases presented to them on an individual basis taking into account the circumstances of the property owner.

The penalties that come into effect from the 1st of September 2014 are provided for in legislation and set by Government.

The motion was proposed by **Councillor Claire O' Driscoll** and seconded by **Councillor Sean Drew**.



Following a lengthy discussion, an amendment to the motion was proposed by **Councillor Maria Murphy** and seconded **Councillor Gerry O' Connor**.

"That Meath County Council continues to engage with those individuals affected by the hefty fines associated with the NPPR charge, to work out a plan to ensure that monies are collected in a way that is acceptable to the homeowners and to Meath County Council, and that this Council writes to the Minister requesting that the proposed increase in penalties that came into effect on the 1st of September 2014 would be reviewed."

Following a show of hands vote, the amended motion was unanimously adopted.

An extension of time, 15 minutes, was agreed on the proposal of **Councillor Shane Cassells** and seconded by **Councillor Joe Bonner**.

8.10 Submitted by Councillor Ronan McKenna

"That Meath County Council supports the call from the Restaurants' Association of Ireland for the ongoing retention of the 9% VAT rate for the food, tourism and hospitality sector that has helped create and sustain employment, and that Meath County Council asks the Minister for Finance to keep the VAT rate at 9% into 2015."

The motion proposed by **Councillor Ronan McKenna** and seconded by **Councillor Gerry O' Connor** was unanimously adopted.

8.11 Submitted by Councillor Joe Fox

"As the hedge cutting season started on the 1st September, I am calling on Meath County Council to be more proactive in encouraging landowners to keep their roadside hedges cut and trimmed. Overgrown and overhanging hedges are causing serious safety issues to motorists, cyclists and pedestrians alike."

Supporting information from Joe Fahy, Director of Services, Transportation and Housing.

Meath County Council acknowledges that a significant number of landowners are aware of their obligations regarding hedge cutting.

In advance of the hedge cutting season, overseers normally talk to landowners and encourage them to cut hedges where there are issues relating to overgrowth and overhanging branches.

In addition, Meath County Council puts a notice in the local papers every year highlighting the obligation on landowners to cut hedges on their land where there is an impact on people using the adjoining roads.

The motion proposed by **Councillor Joe Fox** and seconded by **Councillor Sarah Reilly** was unanimously adopted.



9 Chief Executive's Report and Schedule of Chief Executive & Approved Orders (For Information Only)

Noted by the Councillors

9.1 Schedule of Chief Executive's Orders – Transportation

9.2 Schedule of Chief Executive's Orders – Environment

9.3 Schedule of Chief Executive's Orders – Housing Construction

9.4 Schedule of Chief Executive's Orders – Community & Enterprise

Noted by the Councillors

10 Presentations by other Bodies/Statutory Agencies

10.1 Presentation by Meath Wind Turbine Information Group

Michael Newman and Seán Ryan from the Meath Wind Turbine Information Group make a short presentation on the concerns of the group in relation to the proposed development of wind farms in North Meath. Following the presentation, Councillors had an opportunity to make contributions on the subject.

Kevin Stewart, Director of Services, Planning and Community, provided information on the planning process and procedures in relation to wind farm development. The Cathaoirleach thanked the two representatives of the Meath Wind Turbine Information Group and the presentation was noted by the Councillors.

11 Any Other Business