



## *Miontuairiscí/ Meeting Minutes*

### *Ordinary Meeting 13<sup>th</sup> June 2011, Council Chamber*

An Cathaoirleach, Councillor Ann Dillon-Gallagher presided.

#### **Members Present:**

Councillors Joseph Bonner, Sirena Campbell, William Carey, Shane Cassells, Eugene Cassidy, Jimmy Cudden, Francis Deane, John V Farrelly, Jimmy Fegan, Brian Fitzgerald, Joe Fox, Oliver Fox, Wayne Harding, Jim Holloway, Eoin Holmes, Suzanne Jamal, Nick Killian, Noel Leonard, Tracy McElhinney, Niamh McGowan, Jenny McHugh, Maria Murphy, Gerry O'Connor, Seamus O'Neill, Tommy Reilly, Joe Reilly, Catherine Yore.

**Apologies:** Councillors Bryan Reilly

#### **Officials in Attendance:**

**County Manager** Tom Dowling

**Directors of Service:** Tadhg McDonnell, Kevin Stewart, Brendan McGrath, Fiona Lawless,

**Meetings Administrator** Martin Rogers

**Senior Executive Officers:** Larry Whelan, Ger Murphy (A), Brendan Fulham (A).

**Senior Executive Planner:** Bernard Greene

**Administrative Officer:** Olive Falsey

#### **1.0 Confirmation of Minutes**

- 1.1** Confirmation of minutes of monthly meeting held on 9<sup>th</sup> May 2011.  
The minutes of monthly meeting held on 9<sup>th</sup> May 2011 were confirmed on the proposal of **Councillor Tommy Reilly** and seconded by **Councillor Noel Leonard**.

#### **2.0 Matters arising from the Minutes**

No matters arising.

#### **3.0 Expressions of Sympathy and Congratulations**

Sympathy was extended to:

- Francis Maguire, Environment Department on the death of his father.
- The family of the late Brian Lenihan, T.D. and former Minister of Finance.
- The family of the late Garret Fitzgerald, former Taoiseach.
- The family of the late Michael Bell, former Louth Labour T.D.
- The family of Declan Costello, former President of the High Court.
- Paul Murphy, Meath Chronicle Journalist on the death of his brother.

Congratulations were extended to:

- The staff of Meath County Council who attended the Community Games in Cushinstown.
- The organisers of the An Post Rás and particularly the Meath Co. Council Civil Defence and area staff.



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### **4.0 Disposal of Land in accordance with Statutory Notices circulated pursuant to the provisions of Section 183 of the Local Government Act, 2001.**

### **5.0 Statutory Business**

#### **5.1 Planning**

- 5.1.1 To receive the Manager's report in respect of submissions and observations received as a result of the display of the Material Amendments to the Draft Navan Local Area Plan 1 in accordance with Section 20 (3) (k) of the Planning and Development Act 2000, as amended.

Report received. Tadhg McDonnell, Director of Services informed the meeting of the three submissions received from the Department of Education and Skills, the NRA and the Department of Communications, Energy and Natural Resources.

Councillors emphasised that (a) this amendment to the Draft Navan LAP should facilitate what is needed in terms of an education campus and (b) the CPO process should be completed in a timely manner. It was also suggested that a preschool should be included as part of the campus. It was noted that the Draft Plan will be placed for consideration on the agenda for the July meeting.

#### **5.2 Transportation**

- 5.2.1 To consider objection (s) / representation (s) and report presented to the Council meeting, and if thought fit to resolve to make an Order extinguishing the Public Rights of Way on the R158 Phase 2 Summerhill to Kilcock as detailed 1 to 30 on Schedule.  
It was agreed that this item would be referred to the Trim and Dunshaughlin Area meetings.
- 5.2.2 To resolve to enter into an Agreement in the terms set out with Cavan County Council pursuant to Section 85 of the Local Government Act 2001 whereby Meath County Council will exercise the statutory powers, functions and duties of Cavan County Council in relation to the carrying out of emergency repair works at Lisachunny Bridge (Cavan) which is described in the Schedule to the Agreement and to affix the seal of the Council to the said Agreement (considered and recommended by Kells Area Members).  
Resolved on the proposal of **Councillor J. V. Farrelly** and seconded by **Councillor Catherine Yore**.

#### **5.3 Housing, Social Community & Cultural**

- 5.3.1 To receive a report on the Draft Housing Allocations Scheme prepared in accordance with Section 22 of the Housing (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 2009 and to resolve if thought fit to adopt the said scheme.  
A lengthy discussion took place and the main issues raised were as follows:

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- A special Housing meeting should be held given the current situation where people are losing their homes and going on the Council's housing list.
- A national review of housing is urgently needed and that is what the Council should be seeking.
- People who are availing of RAS and Rent Relief have to be on the housing list, but are reluctant to take an offer of a house because they have better and more suitably located accommodation.
- The difficulty in having a sustainable housing policy with the high cost of land.
- The information being sought makes it very difficult for applicants e.g. father's income when applicant may be living in one room of the father's house.
- Council should not compound the problems by preventing the building of houses. Information should be gathered on planning permissions granted and not developed. This situation is inhibiting other willing developers. Core Strategy (Table Six) needs to be re-examined.
- While the waiting list is growing, there are still houses boarded up awaiting repairs. Difficult for people to qualify with the income limits in place.
- What will happen to the lands in NAMA?

Larry Whelan, A/Director of Services responded and informed that:

- The income limits were €35,000 for a single person and €42,000 for husband/wife and children.
- A Housing Policy review has been initiated.
- The housing assessment is being carried out at present.
- A special meeting can be arranged but it would be better to wait until the information gathering exercise had been completed.

Brendan Fulham, A/SEO Housing, explained that under the new regulations what is being requested is the income of the family that needs to be housed.

The Draft Housing Allocations Scheme was adopted on the proposal of **Councillor Willie Carey** and seconded by **Councillor Noel Leonard**.

### **5.4 Finance**

- 5.4.1 To receive update on Revenue Position for Quarter 1 of 2011.  
Fiona Lawless, Head of Finance informed the meeting that quarterly management accounts will be presented to the Councillors and it is expected that the target of a balanced budget at the end of the year should be achieved.

Councillors raised the following issues:

- Indoor staff working long hours due to staff embargo. It was felt that the embargo on recruitment should be reversed; this would solve the core problem.
- Work not being done due to reduced numbers of outdoor staff.
- Works being done by contractors that could be done by Council staff.

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- Ongoing loss of expertise and knowledge due to staff reductions and retirements.
- Council should be able to create its own funding – a lot of time wasted with communications to Government Departments.
- Conference money should be channelled into other things.
- There should be wide consultation re the impending Local Government Reform.
- Important to have a balanced budget and work programmes on target.

### **5.5 Corporate Services**

- 5.5.1 To receive Annual Report 2010 from the County Meath Joint Policing Committee.  
The Meetings' Administrator explained that the delay in organising a meeting of the JPC was in the main due to the change in the Oireachtas membership as a result of the General Election. The process of agreeing the Oireachtas membership of the JPC is now complete and a JPC meeting will be arranged before the next Council meeting. It was agreed to refer the Annual Report to that meeting.

### **5.6 Environment, Water & Emergency Services**

- 5.6.1 To agree date for Special Meeting to receive briefing on Water Services and Environmental Matters.  
It was agreed to have the special meeting on 27<sup>th</sup> June 2011 – proposed by **Councillor John V. Farrelly** and seconded by **Councillor Joe Bonner**.

### **5.7 Economic Development**

- 5.7.1 To receive presentation on Draft Economic Activity Plan (Kevin Stewart, Director of Services).  
The County Manager introduced the item and made the following key points:
- The knock-on social effects of the economic downturn are impacting on County Meath in terms of unemployment, business failures, emigration and financial debts.
  - The national measures being undertaken by Central Government are welcome but Meath cannot adopt a waiting approach and the challenge is to maximise the benefit from the stimuli coming from Government by bridging the gap between what happens at national level and how it translates at local level. The Council must take the lead role as the strategic authority within the county to drive Meath's economic growth.
  - The Council must proactively respond to every measure which is introduced at national level e.g. the VAT initiative, and make it fit for purpose in the context of the reality on the ground in Meath and drive forward with such actions as are necessary to create economic growth and job creation in this county.
  - Jobs already within the county must be protected and the business environment fostered to enable the expansion of existing businesses and the development of new enterprises that can develop and create long-term high quality jobs for the people of Meath.
  - This plan will contain strategic, focused and ready-to-implement action points which can create jobs on the ground in Meath. There is a



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commitment to implementing these action points in the coming weeks and months.

- The focus of the Plan is to assist the core business and economic sectors and the Council's resources will be directed into stimulating economic growth, providing supports and giving a helping hand to businesses who may be struggling on the ground.
- The Plan is focused on six target areas :
  - Small to Medium Term Enterprises (SME's)
  - Financial Supports Provided Directly and Supported by Meath County Council
  - Retail Sector
  - Tourism and Agri-Food
  - Foreign Direct Investment (FDI)
  - Promoting Meath

Following the County Manager's address, Kevin Stewart made the presentation and this was followed by an open discussion. The main points of note were:

- There should be a more flexible approach re signage as it is very difficult for businesses and organisations to advertise events and/or promote business activity.
- Meath's proximity to Dublin can be both an advantage and a disadvantage. This should be turned to an advantage.
- Research and innovation is very important.
- Lack of buildings available in the County to encourage business development.
- Any proposals need to be 'stress tested'.
- Area meetings should set aside time for a 'think tank'.
- Regional Hospital needs to be prioritised.
- What will happen to Quinn building? and can the Enterprise Centre be expanded?
- Need to support the Tourism and Agri sector and the County's archaeological heritage.
- The need to take into account proposed cuts to agricultural budget in the initiatives.
- Need for greater interaction between agencies and the Council – Meath Partnership initiative has no link to Meath Co. Council and seems to be duplicating the work of the Council's community initiatives.
- Business ideas such as 'pop up' shops should be explored.
- Bureaucracy attached to applications for grants should be examined.
- Navan to Kingscourt rail line as a tourist walk-way should be progressed.
- Urgent need for key economic development with built-in performance measurement.
- Workshop should be arranged and head-hunt people who would make a contribution to the implementation of the plan.
- Retraining on customer service and referral skills is required for all retailers.

Kevin Stewart responded and outlined that Meath Partnership has access to funding, met with the Council and recognises the need to work with Council for the delivery of the projects. He also pointed out that there will be initiatives re signage and tourism in the plan. He indicated that the comments of the Councillors would be taken on board and a series of specific measures would be launched in July.



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### **6.0 Report from Protocol Committee**

The Meetings' Administrator advised of requests from Sean Gallagher and Mary Davis, who are both seeking nominations to contest the forthcoming Presidential election. The Protocol Committee recommended they would both be invited to address the Council at the July meeting.

This was agreed on the proposal of **Councillor Suzanne Jamal** and seconded by **Councillor Nick Killian** to proceed with a letter of invitation to both parties.

### **7.0 Correspondence**

- 7.1 Circular F.06/11 – Nomination of candidates for President  
Noted
- 7.2 Correspondence from Dept of Transport re Additional Funding under the Restoration Improvement Programme.  
Noted
- 7.3 Correspondence from Environment, Community & Local Government re Position of councillors who are elected to Seanad Eireann.  
Noted
- 7.4 Correspondence from Department of Transport re Rail Line from Pace to Navan.

A number of Councillors expressed their disappointment regarding the contents of the correspondence from the Department of Transport and the refusal of Minister Varadkar to meet a delegation from the Council at this time. It was pointed out that the three predecessors of the current Minister had met the council. It was outlined that the rail line is still part of the revised capital expenditure programme sanctioned by the IMF. Some Councillors stated that they found it unacceptable that the Minister would not agree to a meeting whilst others felt that the meeting should wait until the completion of review of capital projects. Attention was drawn by Members to the current usage by commuters of the Pace to Dublin line. It was pointed out that the reason behind the meeting request was to make the case for the project and to bring the new Minister up to speed on the strategic importance of the link to Navan. Members were in agreement as to the importance of the rail project for the county and indicted that whatever influence could be exerted should be to ensure that the rail line to Navan would proceed.

- 7.5 Correspondence from Dept of Environment, Community & Local Government re Notification of Social Housing Investment Programme (SHIP) allocation for 2011.  
Noted
- 7.6 Correspondence from Dept of Transport re Revisions to the Disabled Parking Scheme Taking Effect as of 1<sup>st</sup> June 2011.  
Noted
- 7.7 Correspondence from Dept of Justice and Equality re target shooting ranges.  
Noted
- 7.8 Correspondence from Fingal County Council re Greater Dublin Drainage.  
Noted

### **8.0 Notice of Question**

#### **8.1 Submitted by Cllr John V Farrelly:**



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**“The Kells Area Members request an update on the protocol passed and implemented in relation to sludge disposal”**

A written response was circulated to the question.

### **8.2 Submitted by Cllr Tommy Reilly:**

*Can the Manager provide an update from the Economic Development Department of Meath County Council on developments, if any, on a new client for the Quinn Direct Building in Athlumney”.*

A written response was circulated to the question.

## **9.0 Notice of Motion**

### **9.1 Submitted by Dunshaughlin Area Members: Proposed by Councillor Brian Fitzgerald and seconded by Councillor Nick Killian.**

*“This meeting of Meath County Council calls on the N.R.A. to complete all works in relation to footpaths in accordance with the conditions laid down by Bord Pleanála on the granting of planning permission for the construction of the M3”.*

Following a discussion it was agreed that the circulated written response, which indicated that it was expected tenders for the works would be issued in September, would be accepted by the Members on the basis that the necessary works would be carried out without further delay.

### **9.2 Submitted by Dunshaughlin Area Members: Proposed by Councillor Brian Fitzgerald and seconded by Councillor Nick Killian**

*“This meeting further calls for the erection of a road sign indicating “alternative route” on the M3 prior to the last exit before the Toll Plazas”.*

Following a discussion it was agreed by the Members to accept the written response provided.

### **9.3 Submitted by Kells Area Members: Proposed by Councillor Catherine Yore and seconded by Councillor Oliver Fox.**

*“The Kells Area Members request that additional funding be put in place for class 3 roads in the Kells Electoral Area”.*

It was agreed by the Members to accept the written response circulated which indicated that there were no additional funds available at this time but that if any became available during the year the matter would be further considered.

## **10.0 Schedule of Manager’s & Approved Orders (For Information Only)**

10.1 Schedule of Manager’s Orders - Infrastructure

10.2 Schedule of Manager’s Orders - Environment

10.3 Schedule of Approved Orders – Housing Construction



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10.4 Schedule of Manager's Orders – Community & Enterprise

Noted.

**11.0 Presentations**

No presentations

**12.0 Any Other Business**