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Ordinary Meeting

2nd September 2019, Council Chamber

Presiding

Cathaoirleach, Councillor Wayne Harding

Councillors Present:

Councillors Yemi Adenuga, Tom Behan, Joe Bonner, Mike Bray, Eugene Cassidy, Francis Deane, Aisling Dempsey, Seán Drew, Eddie Fennessy, Brian Fitzgerald, Pdraig Fitzsimons, Joe Fox, Noel French, Deirdre Geraghty-Smith, David Gilroy, Trevor Golden, Johnny Guirke, Wayne Harding, Annie Hoey, Sharon Keogan, Nick Killian, Alan Lawes, Paul McCabe, Stephen McKee, Paddy Meade, Ronan Moore, Maria Murphy, Gerry O'Connor, Damien O'Reilly, Darren O'Rourke, Sarah Reilly, Tommy Reilly, Amanda Smith, Niamh Souhan, Alan Tobin, Emer Tóibín, Sharon Tolan, Gillian Toole, Conor Tormey.

Apologies: Councillors Suzanne Jamal

Officials in attendance:

Chief Executive: Jackie Maguire

Directors of Service: Fiona Lawless, Barry Lynch, Kevin Stewart

Meetings Administrator: Robert Collins

Senior Executive Officers: Larry Whelan, Dara McGowan, Ger Murphy, Sean Clarke, Fiona Fallon, Paul Timoney, Sheila Harkin,

1 Confirmation of Minutes

1.1 Confirmation of minutes of the Ordinary meeting held on 1st July 2019.

The minutes of the Ordinary meeting held on 1st July 2019 were confirmed on the proposal of **Councillor Brian Fitzgerald** and seconded by **Councillor Gerry O'Connor**.

2 Matters arising from the Minutes

There were no matters arising.



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3 Expressions of Sympathy and Congratulations

Sympathy was extended to:

- Thomas Byrne, T.D. on the death of his father, Tommy Byrne.
- Vivian Hoey (CS Facilities Management) and David Carpenter (TRA Kells Office) on the death of their brother/brother-in-law, David Hoey.
- Mary Gibney, Housing and retired staff member Jim Gibney on the death of their sister/sister-in-law, Bridie Morrisroe.
- Catherine McGuigan, Community Section on the death of her niece, Danika McGuigan.
- Des Foley, Director of Services on the death of his father, John Foley.
- Cllr. Alan Lawes on the death of his aunt, Mary Reid.
- Former Councillor Wayne Forde on the death of his mother, Pearl Forde.
- The family of the late Catherine Ginty, former employee.
- The family of the late Simon Sherry, employee Meath County Council.
- The Reynolds family on the death of their son Raymond.
- The Family of Richard Byrne, former employee of Meath County Council.
- The Leddy family on the death of their son Michael.

Congratulations were extended to:

- David Gough and his family members for officiating the All-Ireland Football Final 2019
- Organising Committee of the Royal Meath Show for a successful 2019 event
- Natalya Coyle for her qualification for the Olympic Games 2020
- Kerry Leonard of Archery Ireland
- Cór na Mí and Olive Falsey for their recent performance at St Patrick's College Chapel
- Fiona Foley, Dunshaughlin for her show at the Edinburgh Fringe Festival

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

5 Statutory Business

5.1 Finance

5.1.1 Update by Valuation Office on Revaluation 2019

Mr. Declan Lavelle, Head of Valuation Services, Valuation Office, gave a presentation on the National Revaluation Programme REVAL 2019 in Meath. He outlined the legal context, the revaluation



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process, how properties are valued for rating purposes, an overview of the revaluation outcomes, the appeals process and the next steps, including the circulation of the Final Valuation Certificates on September 10 and the publication of the Valuation List on September 17.

There were a number of interventions and questions from the following members: **Councillors Tom Behan; Sean Drew; Conor Tormey; Aisling Dempsey; Maria Murphy; Eugene Cassidy; Ronan Moore; Mike Bray; Sharon Keogan** and **Padraig Fitzsimons**. Some of the issues raised included: the valuation on licensed premises; the rating of sporting organisations, charity shops, businesses in stand-alone premises, family businesses, premises/offices of Councillors and Data Centres; the trends in rates in the north and south of the county; the information provided to rate payers and clarification on the appeals process and the potential impact that successful appeals will have on the Council's rates revenue. Mr. Lavelle provided responses to the contributions of Councillors.

5.1.2 **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.**

The Cathaoirleach proposed that Item 7.10 would be considered as part of this item. This was agreed and the item was noted by the meeting.

Head of Finance, Ms. Fiona Lawless presented a report on the Budget Process 2020 and made a presentation setting out the timelines, the contribution of the LPT revenues; an overview of the budgetary pressures being experienced by the Council; the estimated revenue from the LPT that Meath County Council will receive in 2020 and an overview of the results from the statutory local public consultation process on the LPT. Ms. Lawless also presented the Chief Executive Report which proposed to vary the basic rate and increase the local adjustment factor by 15% for the next period.

Councillor Noel French proposed that the monies (€3.5 million approximately) from the Equalisation Fund should remain in Meath. The following proposals were made to the meeting:

- Proposal to vary the basic rate, with a local adjustment factor of -15% (Proposed by **Councillor Darren O'Rourke** and seconded by **Councillor Edward Fennessy**);
- Proposal to vary the basic rate, with a local adjustment factor of -1% (Proposed by **Councillor Joe Bonner** and seconded by **Councillor Alan Lawes**); and a
- Proposal to not vary the basic rate (Proposed by **Councillor Damien O'Reilly** and seconded by **Councillor Brian Fitzgerald**).

As the last counter proposal, it was agreed to vote on the proposal not to vary the basic rate. A roll call vote was taken as follows:



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Councillor	For/Against	
Cllr. Yemi Adenuga	For	
Cllr. Tom Behan	For	
Cllr. Joseph Bonner	Against	
Cllr. Mike Bray	For	
Cllr. Eugene Cassidy	For	
Cllr. Francis Deane	For	
Cllr. Aisling Dempsey	For	
Cllr Sean Drew	For	
Cllr. Eddie Fennessy	Against	
Cllr. Brian Fitzgerald	For	
Cllr. Pdraig Fitzsimons	For	
Cllr. Joe Fox	For	
Cllr. Noel French	For	
Cllr. Deirdre Geraghty- Smith	For	
Cllr. David Gilroy	For	
Cllr. Trevor Golden	For	
Cllr. Johnny Guirke	Against	
Cllr. Wayne Harding	For	
Cllr. Annie Hoey	For	
Cllr. Suzanne Jamal		Not Present
Cllr. Sharon Keogan	For	
Cllr. Nick Killian	For	
Cllr. Alan Lawes	Against	
Cllr. Paul McCabe	For	
Cllr. Stephen McKee		Not Present
Cllr. Paddy Meade	For	
Cllr. Ronan Moore	For	
Cllr. Maria Murphy	For	
Cllr. Gerry O' Connor	For	
Cllr. Damien O' Reilly	For	
Cllr. Darren O' Rourke	Against	
Cllr. Sarah Reilly	For	



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Cllr. Tommy Reilly	For	
Cllr. Amanda Smith	For	
Cllr. Niamh Souhan	For	
Cllr. Alan Tobin	For	
Cllr. Emer Tóibín	For	
Cllr. Sharon Tolan	For	
Cllr. Gillian Toole	For	
Cllr. Conor Tormey	For	

Result: For = 33 votes; Against = 5 votes; Not Present = 2

The proposal to not vary the basic rate, for a period of one year from the next Local Property Tax liability date, was adopted.

5.1.3 To receive a year to date Financial Statement for Meath County Council as at 30th June 2019.

This was noted by the Elected Members.

5.1.4 To approve the raising of a loan of €9,743,690 from the Housing Finance Agency to provide finance for approved house purchase applications, loan restructuring and other housing loan related activities, as authorised by the Housing Acts 1966-1992.

The Cathaoirleach proposed that Item 7.11 would also be considered as part of this item. This was agreed and noted by the meeting.

The Head of Finance, Ms. Fiona Lawless informed the meeting on the state-of-play with the implementation of the Rebuilding Ireland Home Loan scheme, setting out the overall allocation received from the Department, total applications to date and the number of applications approved. There were interventions and questions from the following: **Councillors Tommy Reilly; Sean Drew; Alan Lawes; Nick Killian; Gerry O'Connor; and Damien O'Reilly**. The issues raised included: the number of applications; the source/origin of those seeking loans; the reason for delays, the size of loans and the timing for the drawdown of the allocation from the HFA. Other points focused on the availability of funding centrally for the scheme and the approach of the pillar banks.

On a proposal by **Councillor Gerry O'Connor** and seconded by **Councillor Sarah Reilly**, the Council approved the raising of the loan from the Housing Finance Agency (HFA).

5.1.5 To agree by resolution to set dates for the Budget 2020 meetings – proposed date: Monday 25th November (Preliminary Budget meeting @ 10.00a.m. and Statutory Budget



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meeting @ 1.30p.m.)

This was agreed by the Elected Members.

5.1.6 To note the dates for Municipal Districts to consider and adopt the draft Budgetary Plan.

The dates as presented were noted by the Elected Members.

Councillor Nick Killian proposed that a meeting with the Oireachtas members also be organised to discuss the current central allocations to the Council. The Chief Executive indicated that TDs and Senators would be approached.

5.2 Planning

5.2.1 To receive the Members' views in respect of a proposed development by Eirgrid PLC. (PL09.304862), for development described as proposed 220 kV Gas Insulated Switchgear substation, 2 no. 220 kV underground circuits forming a loop-in/loop-out to the existing Maynooth-Woodland 220 kV Overhead Line and 6 no. 220 kV underground circuits and associated low voltage and communication underground cabling connecting the proposed substation with electricity transformers within the Intel Ireland Facility, and all associated and ancillary site development works, within the townlands of Bogganstown, Co. Meath and Ravensdale, Kellystown, Blakestown (North Salt By) and Leixlip, Co. Kildare, the subject of the Chief Executive's Report to An Bord Pleanála of September 2019 (as circulated) and, if thought fit, to resolve to attach recommendations to that report in accordance with Section 37(E) of the Planning and Development Acts 2000-2018.

A presentation was given by Mr Feargal O'Bríc, Executive Planner, Planning Department, detailing the main points set out within the Chief Executive Report relating to the above application. The following elected members made contributions to the debate: **Councillors Brian Fitzgerald; Paddy Meade; David Gilroy; Maria Murphy; Darren O'Rourke; Gillian O'Toole; and Damien O'Reilly.** The elected members: welcomed that the cables were to be placed underground; asked why the North-South interconnector was not an underground project; and raised concerns about HGV movements on an already busy road.

5.2.2 To receive the Draft Meath County Development Plan 2020-2026 in accordance with Section 11 of the Planning & Developments Acts 2000-2018.

Ms Wendy Bagnall, Senior Executive Planner, Planning Department made a presentation setting out the regulatory framework within which the review of the Development Plan is taking place, a recap of the process to-date and a comprehensive overview of the structure and content of the draft Plan that is being made available to the Elected Members to consider. Director of Services, Mr. Kevin Stewart explained that the report is being made available electronically but that members would be



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facilitated with hard copies of sections/chapters, as required, or provided with copies on USB. The draft report and a hard copy of the accompanying maps would be available to members at the end of the meeting.

There were a number of interventions from **Councillors Tommy Reilly; Brian Fitzgerald; Eugene Cassidy; Alan Lawes; Nick Killian; Maria Murphy; Joe Fox; Deirdre Geraghty-Smith; Damien O'Reilly; Gillian Toole; Gerry O'Connor; and Sean Drew**. In response, Mr. Kevin Stewart reiterated that staff from the Planning Department will be available for questions, one-to-one or group meetings and to assist with submitting motions. The proposal to hold a workshop for Councillors would also be considered.

5.2.3 To consider a protocol to set aside standing orders for the receipt of notices of motion relevant to the development plan process.

Mr Sean Clarke, Senior Executive Officer, Planning Department, made a presentation setting out: the process; where to submit motions: cdpmotions@meathcoco.ie; and the deadline of 5pm, September 29, 2019. The Elected Members were also informed that any motions submitted would form part of a public document and were also reminded of the ethical framework, Part 15 of the Local Government Act. On a proposal from **Councillor Gerry O'Connor** and seconded by **Councillor Joe Fox**, the protocol was agreed by the Elected Members.

5.2.4 To receive the Chief Executive's Report on the proposed Variation No.3 (to give effect to an objective in the Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy for the Eastern and Midland Region in relation to providing further employment opportunities in Navan through the rezoning of a parcel of land) to the Navan Development Plan 2009-2015, together with the Chief Executive's report on submissions.

It was noted by Councillors that a presentation on the report will be made at the September meeting of Navan Municipal District. At the October Council meeting, Members will be asked if thought fit to resolve to make the variation, or to accept the Chief Executive's recommendations with or without further modification, or to refuse to make the variation, in accordance with Section 13 of the Planning & Development Acts 2000-2018.

5.2.5 To receive the Chief Executive's Report on the proposed Variation No.1 (to incorporate the key tenets of the Economic Development Strategy for County Meath 2014 – 2022, as they relate to land-use planning) to the Trim Development Plan 2014-2020, together with the Chief Executive's report on submissions.

It was noted by the Councillors that a presentation on the report will be made at the September meeting of Trim Municipal District. At the October Council meeting, Members will be asked if thought fit to resolve to make the variation, or to accept the Chief Executive's recommendations



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with or without further modification, or to refuse to make the variation, in accordance with Section 13 of the Planning & Development Acts 2000-2018.

5.3 Corporate Services

5.3.1 To receive the Chief Executive's Report on submissions received during the display period of the draft Strategic Policy Committee Scheme and to approve the Strategic Policy Committee Scheme for 2019-2024.

The Meetings Administrator outlined the consultation process that had taken place following the adoption of the draft SPC Scheme at the July Council Meeting. The public consultation process was open for a five week period up to August 9, 2019, with the draft Scheme available on the Council's consultation portal, its website and links from social media platforms. The consultation was also advertised in the local media and copies of the draft Scheme were sent to the national sectoral partners. A total of four submissions were received and the Chief Executive Report summarised these, with the draft Scheme amended to reflect comments received.

There was a discussion on the draft Scheme with **Councillors Damien O'Reilly** and **Sharon Keogan** requesting an SPC for European Affairs. Following a proposal from **Councillor Brian Fitzgerald** and inputs from **Councillors Paddy Meade** and **Gerry O'Connor**, it was agreed that the SPCs should be established as soon as possible, that European Affairs be included in the Economic Development SPC and that this SPC considers the need for a specific European Affairs SPC.

5.3.2 To note the appointments to committees, as referred to the Municipal Districts at the Annual Meeting on 7th June.

These were noted by the meeting.

5.3.3 To appoint a replacement Councillor to the Eastern and Midland Regional Assembly following the resignation of Councillor Conor Tormey

On a proposal from **Councillor Sean Drew** and seconded by **Councillor Nick Killian**, it was agreed that **Councillor Damien O'Reilly** would be appointed to the Eastern and Midland Regional Assembly to replace Councillor Conor Tormey.

5.4 Community

5.4.1 To approve a replacement member of the Meath LCDC & LAG, Garret O'Brien, representing the Community & Voluntary Pillar of the PPN.

On a proposal from **Councillor Tom Behan** and seconded by **Councillor Sharon Keogan**, the proposal was approved by the Elected Members.



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- 5.4.2 **To approve a replacement member of the Meath LCDC & LAG, Susuana Komolafe, Afro in Diaspora Centre, representing the Social Inclusion Pillar of the PPN.**

On a proposal from **Councillor Sharon Tolan** and seconded by **Councillor Sharon Keogan**, the proposal was approved by the Elected Members.

- 5.4.3 **To receive details of and approve the allocation to Flexibus for the Windtown Transport Initiative for school year 2019/20**

Director of Services, Mr. Barry Lynch gave a short presentation on the background to the issues and the rationale for this proposal. He emphasised that this was a once-off arrangement for the current school year only and that a more sustainable solution was required from the Department of Education. On a proposal from **Councillor Edward Fennessy** and seconded by **Councillor Alan Lawes**, the proposal was approved by the meeting.

5.5 Transportation

- 5.5.1 **To enter into an agreement with Louth County Council pursuant to Section 85 of the Local Government Act, 2001, whereby Louth County Council will exercise the statutory powers, functions and duties of Meath County Council in relation to the refurbishment and repair works to the Obelisk Bridge in the townlands of Oldbridge, Co. Meath and Tullyallen, Co. Louth which are described in the Schedule to the Agreement.**

On a proposal from **Councillor Sharon Tolan** and seconded by **Councillor Paddy Meade**, the proposal was approved by the Elected Members.

- 5.5.2 **To enter into an agreement with Louth 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 Louth County Council in relation to a cycle and walking scheme namely the Drogheda to Mornington Greenway linking Drogheda Town through to Mornington which are described in the Schedule to the Agreement.**

On a proposal from **Councillor Stephen McKee** and seconded by **Councillor Tom Behan**, the proposal was approved by the Elected Members.

5.6 Environment

- 5.6.1 **To receive the Chief Executive's Report on Submissions received during the display period of the draft Climate Action Strategy "Making Meath Climate Ready" and to resolve if thought fit, to adopt the strategy which incorporates the adaptation plan prepared in accordance with the National Adaptation Framework 2018 and the Climate Action and Low**



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Carbon Development Act 2015.

A short presentation was made by Ms. Caroline Corrigan, Senior Engineer, Environment Department on the public consultation process and the submissions received.

On a proposal from **Councillor Alan Tobin** and seconded by **Councillor Noel French**, the Strategy was adopted by the Elected Members. There was a short discussion on the committee established to further the implementation of climate action measures, with **Councillor David Gilroy** clarifying that this is an open, voluntary committee with the objective of ensuring that Meath best meets its climate action targets.

On a proposal from **Councillor Damien O'Reilly** and seconded by **Councillor Aisling Dempsey**, it was agreed to extend the meeting to 6.30pm.

6 Reports

6.1 Chief Executive's Report

Clarification was sought by **Councillors Nick Killian; Sarah Reilly; Sharon Keogan; Tom Behan; Maria Murphy; Alan Tobin, Gillian Toole** and **Gerry O'Connor** on a number of matters in the Chief Executive's report. The main issues focused on: housing; Irish Water; non-national roads; planning, the environment, library facilities and Development Contributions per MD.

Responses were provided on the issues raised by the Chief Executive and Management Team.

6.2 Report from the Corporate Policy Group

The Meetings Administrator advised that the Corporate Policy Group reviewed the agenda for the full Council meeting and received information on the particulars of some items. The CPG noted an initial draft Corporate Plan 2019-2024 which would be used as the basis for an internal and external consultation process to further develop the strategic objectives of the Council for the next five years. The draft Corporate Plan would come before the Council at its meeting in December for adoption.

6.3 Report from the Protocol Committee

The Meetings Administrator advised that the Protocol Committee agreed a revision of the Standing Orders and a draft Protocol on Deputations at Municipal District Meetings. Both of these would come before the full Council for adoption. The Protocol Committee approved conferences and seminars and training events open to the Elected Members to attend, details to be circulated.



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7 Correspondence

- 7.1 Correspondence from the National Transport Authority in response to Notice of Motion 9.7 adopted at the July 2019 meeting of the full Council re. Extension of the rail line from M3 Parkway to Navan.**

Noted by the Elected Members.

- 7.2 Correspondence on the public consultation on the draft Ministerial Direction relating to the Eastern and Midland Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy (RSES) 2019-2031**

Noted by the Elected Members.

- 7.3 Correspondence from the Department of Housing, Planning and Local Government in response to Notice of Motion 9.4 adopted at the February 2019 and Item 7.1 at the July 2019 meeting of the full Council re. publication of the review of the Wind Energy Guidelines.**

Noted by the Elected Members.

- 7.4 Correspondence from the Department of Health in response to Notice of Motion 9.9 adopted at the July 2019 meeting of the full Council re: introduction of Psychiatric Emergency Response Teams.**

Noted by the Elected Members.

- 7.5 Correspondence from the Minister for Finance and Public Expenditure and Reform in response to Notice of Motion 9.4 adopted at the March 2019 meeting of the full Council re. insurance reform.**

Noted by the Elected Members.

- 7.6 Correspondence from the Department of Transport, Tourism and Sport in response to Notice of Motion 9.4 adopted at the April 2019 meeting of the full Council re. fast tracking learner drivers' applications.**

Noted by the Elected Members.

- 7.7 Correspondence from the Minister for Housing, Planning and Local Government in response to Notice of Motion 9.6 adopted at the March 2019 meeting of the full Council re. policy on planning densities.**



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Noted by the Elected Members.

- 7.8 Circular LG 04/2019 – Department of Housing, Planning and Local Government re. Domestic subsistence rates for elected members of local authorities.**

Noted by the Elected Members.

- 7.9 Circular Letter: NRPPS 01/2019 - Department of Housing, Planning and Local Government re: Local Government Rates and Other Matters Act 2019 (Commencement) Order 2019 Commencing Technical Amendments to the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended).**

Noted by the Elected Members.

- 7.10 Circular Fin 05/2019 – Department of Housing, Planning and Local Government re. Provisional Local Property Tax Allocations 2020 – Meath County Council.**

Noted by the Elected Members as part of Item 5.1.3.

- 7.11 Department of Housing, Planning and Local Government re. Rebuilding Ireland Home Loans (RIHL) – Capital Allocation, Updated Reporting Requirements and Amendments to Scheme.**

Noted by the Elected Members as part of Item 5.1.4.

- 7.12 LG 06/2019 - Department of Housing, Planning and Local Government Guidelines for Local Authorities in the Preparation of Corporate Plans for 2019-2024**

Noted by the Elected Members.

- 7.13 Circular Letter PL 05/2019 – Department of Housing, Planning and Local Government re. Regulation of Short Term Letting – New Rent Pressure Zone Designations.**

Noted by the Elected Members.

- 7.14 Circular EA 1/2019 – Department of Communications, Climate Action & Environment re. Community Environment Action Fund (Local Agenda 21).**

Noted by the Elected Members.



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8 Notice of Question

8.1 Submitted by Councillor Francis Deane

“With regard to Japanese knotweed, may I ask the amount of money that Meath Co. Council has invested in the county with a view to eradicating such a harmful plant? Furthermore, are owners of derelict sites on which the knotweed is growing ever informed or does Meath County Council follow up if there are complaints made by the general public?”

Response:

While the local authority treats Japanese Knotweed when encountered during normal road maintenance duties on non-national roads, there is no budget code to account for this expenditure separately, as there is no specific funding available to local authorities for dealing with Japanese Knotweed or other invasive species.

When the presence of this species is encountered along the non-national roads within the public road network, Meath County Council puts signage in place to mark the location and sprays with a herbicide. The signage also advises that the species should not be cut, as cutting is considered to promote the spread of the species. The more effective treatment is spraying with a suitable herbicide.

On the national road network, Transport Infrastructure Ireland (TII) has engaged specialist contractors to record and treat instances of the species within the public road on a regional basis covering a number of counties. The cost of these works is funded directly by the TII.

To date, none of the sites which have been subject to notices by the Council under the Derelict Sites legislation has involved the presence of Japanese knotweed. However, should same arise in the future, then measures for dealing with the problem will be specified for action in the notice.

Noted by the Elected Members

8.2 Submitted by Councillor Maria Murphy

“What policy and power does Meath County Council have to deal with Hogweed and Ragwort along our roadside verges and on private land.”

Response:

Meath County Council has no specific policy or power with regard to the control of Giant Hogweed. Transport Infrastructure Ireland has circulated guidelines on The Management of Noxious Weeds and Non-Native Invasive Plant Species on National Roads to local authorities. This document provides guidance on recognizing and treating the most common and prolific species found in



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Ireland. Instances of Giant Hogweed are estimated to be less common in Meath than other invasive species. In general, contact with skin should be avoided. The slightest contact with the plant can result in the release of sap which then gives rise to severe and painful blistering of the skin. The reaction may take up to 24 hours to occur and may result in permanent recurrent phytophotodermatitis – a type of dermatitis that flares up in sunlight. Specialist advice should be sought before dealing with the plant.

Giant Hogweed is classified as a non-native Plant Species and the legislative framework for the control of these species is currently provided for in the Wild Life Act 1976 & 2000.

Ragwort is classified as a Noxious Weed under the Noxious Weed Act 1936. It is an offence not to control or prevent the spread of Noxious Weeds.

The Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine wrote to all local authorities in 2019 seeking their co-operation in the eradication of these weeds from public roads and land under the control of local authorities.

Noted by the Elected Members

8.3 Submitted by Councillor Mike Bray

“To ask Meath County Council to provide in tabular form the number of HAP applications which are, at present, approved as well as the number and percentage which are drawn down (active) and the number and percentage waiting to be drawn down?”

Response:

The full status of HAP applications for Meath County Council as of the 26th August 2019 was:

Local Authority	Total HAP Tenancies Set-up	Total Active HAP Tenancies	2019 HAP Tenancies Set-up	2019 Rent Supplement Transfer Setups (2019 only)	Avg. Weekly Set-up 2019
Meath County Council	2560	1970	473	68	14

After some clarification, noted by the Elected Members.

8.4 Submitted by Councillor Damien O’Reilly

“How much funding has the NTA provided Meath County Council for new bus shelters / stops in the last 5 years in tabular format?”



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Response:

The provision of bus stops and related infrastructure is now a matter for the National Transport Authority and the bus operators in the first instance. The role of the local authority relates to the approval of stopping places for pick up/ drop off and set down as part of the licensing arrangements administered by the NTA. New bus stops or upgrade of existing bus stops is considered as part of wider roads schemes and is done in consultation with the NTA. In relation to bus shelters, these are also a matter for the National Transport Authority and the bus operators. The NTA has a contract in place with a bus shelter provider to install and maintain bus shelters nationally.

Noted by the Elected Members

8.5 Submitted by Councillor Emer Tóibín

“To ask Meath County Council has all of the money stolen from Meath County Council in the 2016 cyber theft incident been returned to Meath County Council and what steps have been taken by the council to ensure that such an event cannot happen again, have criminal prosecutions been undertaken against the perpetrators of this crime and what has been the outcome of these prosecutions? Can the Council detail the full cost of the incident to the council i.e. what has been spent to date on the retrieval of the money?”

Response:

Meath County Council was successful in securing the return of all the funds, the subject of an attempted cyber fraud in October 2016. Following international police investigations at the time, the Council understands that the matter remains under review by the police authorities.

Since then the Council has put in place a number of additional controls and procedures, in particular with regard to ICT infrastructure and financial controls. Some of the additional measures which have been undertaken include a Sender Framework Policy and additional checks on incoming email. A full review of ICT infrastructure was carried out by an independent IT consultant in order to identify additional measures to combat the threat of cyber related fraud. In addition, PwC were engaged to conduct a high level review of financial controls and their recommendations have been accepted and implemented in full. The publication of internal reports in relation to the controls and procedures in place would undermine their effectiveness and would be counter-productive. These controls are considered to be robust and effective and are continually reviewed in terms of new or emerging risks facing the organisation. It is noted that all staff continue to receive training in relation to potential cyber attacks and regular alerts are issued to staff to remain vigilant at all times and to immediately report anything of a suspicious nature.

Noted by the Elected Members



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8.6 Submitted by Councillor Ronan Moore

“To ask Meath County Council the number of Council owned/controlled housing properties that currently meet Universal Design requirements.”

Response:

For new capital build projects, the Department of Housing Planning and Local Government (DHPLG) does not fund Universal Design requirements but all projects comply with current building regulations applicable at the time of construction. The DHPLG, will fund specific disability units as part of a scheme based on need. Funding is awarded for the provision of suitable housing for specific prospective tenants on the basis of an Occupational Therapist’s report. Apart from the foregoing the Council’s existing housing stock is of standard design but, the Council carries out physical adaptations on a number of units each year to facilitate the needs of tenants living with a disability under the Local Authority Adaptation Scheme.

After some clarification, noted by the Elected Members.

9 Notice of Motion

9.1 Submitted by Councillor Noel French

“That Meath County Council provides campervan stopping points (Aires) to make the most of this growing tourism market.”

Supporting Information subject to the motion being proposed, seconded and considered.

Meath County Council will investigate the feasibility of providing campervan stopping points to make the most of this growing tourism market.

The supporting information was accepted and the motion, proposed by **Councillor Noel French** and seconded by **Councillor Alan Tobin**, was agreed.

9.2 Submitted by Councillor Gerry O’Connor

“That Meath County Council requests from their pension provider disclosure of what portion (if any) of the pension fund is made up of fossil fuel assets, and to provide an option which does not include fossil fuel.”

Supporting Information subject to the motion being proposed, seconded and considered.



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Payments in respect of pensions and gratuities are charged to the revenue account in the accounting period in which the payments are made. The cost of salaries and wages in the accounts includes deductions in respect of superannuation (including Widows and Orphans) benefits under the Local Government Superannuation Scheme and the Single Public Service Pension Scheme. The Single Public Service Pension Scheme ("Single Scheme") commenced with effect from 1st January 2013. Employee contributions for the Single Scheme continue to be deducted by Local Authorities but are remitted centrally to DPER.

The supporting information was accepted and the motion, proposed by **Councillor Gerry O'Connor** and seconded by **Councillor Alan Lawes**, was agreed. It was further proposed by **Councillor Gerry O'Connor** and agreed that the motion be forwarded to the Department of Finance and Public Expenditure.

9.3 Submitted by Councillor Gerry O'Connor

"That Meath County Council when reviewing the rolling capital plan, ensures that Low Carbon designs and investments are prioritised going forward."

Supporting Information subject to the motion being proposed, seconded and considered.

This proposal can be included in the rolling capital plan 2020-2022. However, it is pointed out that the Council's draft Climate Action Strategy titled "Making Meath Climate Ready" contains specific objectives in relation to ensuring that climate change considerations are mainstreamed into all activities and operations including Council led developments.

Objective B 1.2, for example, sets out to "Incorporate climate considerations into the planning and design stage to future proof all future Council led developments for projected temperatures, heavy rain and local flooding."

The National Climate Action Plan 2019 also focuses on the need for low carbon designs e.g. - Action 13: "Ensure that, within their mandates, the selection criteria for each of the Project Ireland 2040 Funds will operate to promote low-carbon investments. Review the selection criteria for each capital funding scheme to ensure that low carbon designs and investments are prioritised."

The supporting information was accepted and the motion, proposed by **Councillor Gerry O'Connor** and seconded by **Councillor Maria Murphy**, was noted.

9.4 Submitted by Sinn Féin Councillors



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"Given the state's central role in the fight against climate change, that Meath County Council will engage with the relevant departments and other Local Authorities to explore the possibility and practicality of bringing domestic waste collection back into the control of Local Authorities."

Supporting Information subject to the motion being proposed, seconded and considered.

Notwithstanding the absence of any quantifiable benefits, from a climate change perspective, in bringing waste collection services back under the control of the Local Authorities, it is submitted that such a move would entail a very significant investment in both personnel and capital equipment and require consideration of a variety of other complex issues including technology, market competition, waivers, commercial waste, disposal costs etc.

Following completion of a regulatory impact assessment by the Department of the Environment in 2012 the decision was taken to preserve the current market structure of side by side competition rather than a franchise bidding process, and to strengthen significantly the regulation of household waste collection.

The Competition and Consumer Protection Commission (CCPC) published a report in September 2018 on the operation of the household waste collection market which made a number of recommendations, including that an economic regulator with powers to, *inter alia*, design and introduce targeted competitive tendering for certain areas.

Since the Council exited the waste collection market in 1990/91 there have been many legislative changes in this area which is now almost exclusively the domain of private waste collection companies and including requirements for all waste collection companies to operate in accordance with waste collection permits which are issued by the National Waste Collection Permit Office (NWCPO).

It is pointed out that such permits are conditioned to require collectors to promote sound environmental practices which protect the environment and counteract the effects of climate change – e.g. to operate an incentivised charging system which promotes the reduction of residual waste and the segregation of recyclables and food waste.

Finally, the Council has no plans to consider bringing the domestic waste collection service back under its control.

The motion was proposed by **Councillor Darren O'Rourke** and seconded by **Councillor Edward Fennesy**. After a short debate, it was agreed that the motion be referred to the Environment and Climate Change Strategic Policy Committee for consideration.

9.5 Submitted by Councillor Emer Tóibín



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“That Meath County Council when undertaking significant works on roads within towns and villages in Meath ensures that there is proper consultation with businesses, community groups and residents, that they also seek to deliver the works in a timely and efficient fashion, that night time work and weekend work should be considered to make this happen.”

Supporting Information subject to the motion being proposed, seconded and considered.

When planning significant capital road works Meath County Council engage with all affected landowners, businesses and residents. Schemes of this nature may often require statutory consultation with the public in accordance with the Planning Regulations.

Maintenance works carried out on existing roads are generally of shorter durations and generally do not require statutory planning procedures. Where these works are likely to cause significant disruption to traffic the Council endeavours to communicate the works through the use of local and national media and also through social media platforms in addition to the Council’s web site. The Council also notifies a number of agencies such as A Garda Síochána, Ambulance Service, AA Road Watch, Fire Brigade and Bus Éireann with regard to the traffic restrictions necessary for the completion of the works.

The Council generally appoints Contractors to undertake significant road construction works and in the normal course the Contractor is also appointed as the Project Supervisor Construction Stage for the works in accordance with the Construction Safety Health Welfare & Work Regulations. The detailed programming and execution of the works at construction stage, in a safe manner is one of the duties assigned to the Contractor pursuant to the Construction Regulations. The contractor is required to liaise with the public and private property owners with regard to access arrangements.

The Council seeks to deliver works in a timely and efficient manner and this is particularly the case where works may impact significantly on road users, residents and businesses. Depending on the nature and location of the works various methods of execution of the works can be employed such as weekend works, nighttime works or extended working hours to minimize the disruption caused by the works. The most appropriate method to be used will often require the consideration of a number of factors including safety of roads users and workers and the nature and location of the works. While one method of execution might have a minor impact on one group of stakeholders, it may negatively impact on another group of stakeholders. While the Council’s intention is to minimize disruption to road users, unforeseen events such as weather events, unchartered buried services or ground conditions can impact on planned work programmes.

The supporting information was accepted and the motion, proposed by **Councillor Emer Toibin** and seconded by **Councillor Sharon Keogan**, was noted.

9.6 Submitted by Councillor Ronan Moore



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“That this Council recognises the key role of public participation in local government as outlined by the 2013 report of the Working Group on Public Participation in Local Government, and also in the Council of Europe’s ‘Code of Good Practice for Civil Participation in the Decision-Making Process’, adopted in October 2009 and to which Ireland is a subscriber; the Council therefore resolves to implement the broadcasting of public meetings of the full Council and Municipal Districts in order to meet the Code’s principles of participation, trust, accountability and transparency”.

Supporting Information subject to the motion being proposed, seconded and considered.

The Council is committed to the principles of participation, trust, accountability and transparency and in providing as much public access as possible to Council meetings.

A number of local authorities in Ireland currently broadcast their Council meetings and other public meetings over the Internet – termed webcasting. Webcasting of meetings involves the recording and streaming of video and audio content, as well as the creation of an archive of footage that can be accessed at any time, from any place, after the event.

The broadcasting of meetings has been the subject of discussions of the Protocol Committee in the past. Among the issues raised were the legal implications and the on-going costs of the streaming service, given that webcasting is a specialised activity and normally requires the services of an external provider. Some Councillors suggested that an audio recording (podcast) of Council meetings would be sufficient, whilst others expressed their concerns and reservations in respect of the overall concept.

The current Council Chamber and most of the locations for Municipal District meetings are not ideally suited, in terms of layout, to accommodate a suite of cameras and audio equipment for broadcasting purposes. However, the Council is currently at design stage for the development of a new Council Chamber in Buvinda House and the accommodation of broadcasting facilities is part of the design brief. It is, therefore, suggested that a more detailed consideration on the broadcast of Council Meetings and the practical procedures and protocols for this be considered when plans for the new Council Chamber are at a more advanced stage. The Protocol Committee and full Council will be fully involved in these future considerations.

The motion was proposed by **Councillor Ronan Moore** and seconded by **Councillor Edward Fennessy**. It was further proposed by An Cathaoirleach, and agreed by the meeting, that this motion be referred to the Protocol Committee for consideration.

9.7 Submitted by Councillor Alan Lawes

“That Meath County Council opposes the roll-out of 5G on health grounds, in light of evidence showing an increased risk of electromagnetic radiation”.



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The motion was proposed by **Councillor Alan Lawes** and seconded by **Councillor Edward Fennessy**. It was proposed by **Councillor Sarah Reilly**, and agreed by the meeting, that this motion would be referred to the Regional Health Forum for consideration.

On a proposal from **Councillor Damien O'Reilly** and seconded by **Councillor Alan Tobin**, it was agreed to extend the meeting to 6.45pm.

9.8 Submitted by Councillor Darren O'Rourke

"That this Council writes to the Minister for Justice and Equality, Charlie Flanagan TD, and to the Minister of State for Justice at the Department of Justice and Equality with special responsibility for Equality, Immigration, and Integration, David Stanton TD, calling for the immediate closure of Meath-based Direct Provision Centres and instead, offer residents suitable community-based accommodation and services for children and families."

9.9 Submitted by Councillor Ronan Moore

"That the Council writes to the Minister for Justice and Equality Charlie Flanagan T.D. and the Minister for State for Justice at the Department of Justice and Equality with special responsibility for Equality, Immigration, and Integration David Staunton T.D., calling for the immediate closure of all Meath based Direct Provision Centres and instead, offer residents suitable, community based accommodation and services for children and families."

Items 9.8 and 9.9 were considered together, as the motions were identical. The motion was proposed by **Councillor Ronan Moore** and seconded by **Councillor Darren O'Rourke**. There was a debate on the motion with contributions from **Councillors Ronan Moore; Darren O'Rourke; Sharon Tolan; Nick Killian; Stephen McKee; Damien O'Reilly; Wayne Harding; and Yemi Adenuga**. On a proposal from **Councillor Nick Killian**, it was agreed that this motion be referred to the Housing and Community Strategic Policy Committee for consideration.

9.10 Submitted by Councillor Johnny Guirke

"In regard to the proposed EU law that would ban the use of lead in shooting and fishing, making over 100,000 shotguns in Ireland obsolete, we call on the government to initiate a robust consultation process with all affected parties including game clubs, farming bodies and conservation organisations before proceeding to support any EU proposals in this regard or enacting any legislation at domestic level."

This Motion was deferred.

9.11 Submitted by Councillor Alan Tobin



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“This Council calls on Minister for Communications, Climate Action & Environment Richard Bruton to put in place a recycling rebate scheme similar to that adopted recently by the Scottish government in which a deposit return scheme of 20 pence or approx 30cent was enacted for the return to the retailer of one off use plastic bottles & containers, glass bottles & jars and aluminium & tin cans.”

The motion, proposed by **Councillor Alan Tobin** and seconded by **Councillor Niamh Souhan**, was agreed.

9.12 Submitted by Councillor Damien O’Reilly

“I call on Meath County Council to write to the Minister of Transport, Tourism and Sport to provide an urgent review of all bus fares in County Meath and to provide a logical assessment and rationale of the large difference in bus fare prices per KM in comparison to the Dublin Metropolitan Area.”

The motion was proposed by **Councillor Damien O’Reilly** and seconded by **Councillor Aisling Dempsey**. Following interventions from **Councillors Joe Fox** and **Tom Behan** it was agreed to amend the motion to include all public transport fares in County Meath. The amended motion was agreed.

9.13 Submitted by Councillor Emer Tóibín

“That Meath County Council opposes the shocking lack of adequate respite provision for children and adults with intellectual disabilities in Meath. That Meath County Council supports the provision of adequate respite resources for children and adults with intellectual disabilities in Meath and that we call on the HSE to provide the resources to allow the new Talbot House facility in Athboy to be used to offer parents and family respite.”

The motion was proposed by **Councillor Emer Toibin** and seconded by **Councillor Sarah Reilly**. Following a debate with interventions from **Councillors Emer Tóibín; Sarah Reilly; Mike Bray; and Gillian Toole**, an amended motion was agreed. The amended motion was as follows:

“That Meath County Council opposes the shocking lack of adequate respite provision for children and adults with intellectual disabilities in Meath. Meath County Council calls on Ministers Simon Harris and Finian McGrath to make an additional allocation of funding to the HSE (CHO 8) to be ringfenced for the provision of respite care for adults with special needs by the end of November 2019 (at Oatfield House, Athboy)”

10 Schedule of Chief Executive & Approved Orders (For information only)

10.1 Schedule of Chief Executive’s Orders - Transportation

10.2 Schedule of Chief Executive’s Orders – Environment

10.3 Schedule of Chief Executive’s Orders – Housing



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10.4 Schedule of Chief Executive's Orders – Community

Noted by the Elected Members.

11 Any Other Business

There was none.

Signed:

Cllr. Wayne Harding
Cathaoirleach

Date:
