

Miontuairiscí / Meeting Minutes

Ordinary Meeting

4th December 2023 @ 1.30p.m.

Buvinda House, Navan (and online via zoom)

Presiding

An Leas-Chathaoirleach, Councillor Paul McCabe

Councillors Present:

Councillors Joseph Bonner, Mike Bray, Eugene Cassidy, Francis Deane, Aisling Dempsey, Brian Fitzgerald, Padraig Fitzsimons, Joe Fox, Michael Gallagher, David Gilroy, Trevor Golden, Wayne Harding, Suzanne Jamal, Geraldine Keogan, Nick Killian, Alan Lawes, Elaine McGinty, Stephen McKee, Paddy Meade, Helen Meyer, Ronan Moore, Maria Murphy, Gerry O'Connor, Caroline O'Reilly, Amanda Smith, Emer Tóibín, Gillian Toole.

Councillors Present via Zoom:

Councillors Yemi Adenuga, Tom Behan, Sean Drew, Edward Fennessy, Noel French, Deirdre Geraghty-Smith, Sarah Reilly, Tommy Reilly, Niamh Souhan, Alan Tobin, Sharon Tolan, Conor Tormey.

Apologies:

Officials in attendance:

Chief Executive: Fiona Lawless

Directors of Service: Des Foley, Barry Lynch, Dara McGowan, Martin Murray, Fiona Fallon

A/Head of Finance: Sheila Harkin

Planning Section: Padraig Maguire, Senior Planner; Alan Russell, Senior Executive Planner

Environment Section: David Keyes, Senior Executive Engineer

Meetings Administrator: Elaine Daly

Apologies:

An Leas-Chathaoirleach, Councillor Paul McCabe welcomed the members to the meeting.

On the proposal of **Councillor Nick Killian** and seconded by **Councillor Aisling Dempsey** it was agreed to bring forward Item 5.1.1: To fill the casual vacancy (1 No.), in the Membership of Meath County Council, to replace the late Councillor Damien O'Reilly RIP (Ratoath Municipal District), in accordance with Section 19 of the Local Government Act 2001, as amended.

The Meetings Administrator outlined the provisions of Section 19 of the Local Government Act 2001, as amended. She noted that pursuant to S.19(3)(a) a nomination for co-optio to Meath County Council, dated December 1 2023, was received from Mr. Sean Dorgan, General Secretary of Fianna Fáil advising that Ms. Caroline O'Reilly had been nominated as the replacement for Councillor

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Damien O'Reilly and that written consent had been received from Ms. O'Reilly consenting to co-option to the local authority in accordance with Section 19(5) of the Act.

Ms. Caroline O'Reilly was proposed by **Councillor Aisling Dempsey** and seconded by **Councillor Wayne Harding** to fill the casual vacancy. **An Leas-Chathaoirleach** deemed the casual vacancy to be filled.

Councillor Aisling Dempsey noted that it was a proud but bitter sweet day for **Councillor Caroline O'Reilly** and she welcomed **Councillor O'Reilly** to Meath County Council. The following Councillors paid tribute to **Councillor Damien O'Reilly** and welcomed **Councillor Caroline O'Reilly** to the Council; **Councillors Wayne Harding; Brian Fitzgerald; Gerry O'Connor; Paddy Meade; Joe Fox; Nick Killian; Ronan Moore; Elaine McGinty; Maria Murphy; Padraig Fitzsimons; Alan Lawes; Edward Fennessy** and **An Leas-Chathaoirleach**. The Chief Executive welcomed **Councillor Caroline O'Reilly** to the Council and paid tribute to the commitment and dedication of **Councillor Damien O'Reilly**.

Councillor Caroline O'Reilly thanked the proposer and seconder and noted that it was a day of mixed emotions. She further noted that she was looking forward to the challenge ahead and working with the Council in her roles as a Councillor in both Meath County Council and Ratoath MD.

1 Confirmation of Minutes

1.1 Confirmation of minutes of Ordinary meeting held on 6th November 2023.

The minutes of the Ordinary meeting held on 6th November 2023 were confirmed on the proposal of **Councillor Francis Deane** and seconded by **Councillor Elaine McGinty**.

1.2 Confirmation of minutes of Preliminary Budget meeting held on 27th November 2023. (see below)

The minutes of the Preliminary Budget meeting held on 27th November 2023 were confirmed on the proposal of **Councillor Gillian Toole** and seconded by **Councillor Mike Bray**.

1.3 Confirmation of minutes of Statutory Budget meeting held on 27th November 2023.

The minutes of the Statutory Budget meeting held on 27th November 2023 were confirmed on the proposal of **Councillor Joe Fox** and seconded by **Councillor Brian Fitzgerald**.

2 Matters arising from the Minutes

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Councillor Nick Killian referred to the ongoing issue of the flight paths from Dublin Airport and he thought that the Council should make a submission to An Bord Pleanála in relation to the appeal to amend permitted night-time hours on the north runway. There were interventions of support from **Councillors Gillian Toole; Joe Bonner; Alan Tobin; Paddy Meade; Conor Tormey; Helen Meyer; Michael Gallagher** and **Elaine McGinty**. It was agreed that members would refer their submissions to Mr. McGowan, who would then prepare one submission on behalf of the Council, the final date for receipt of submissions of December 8, 2023 was noted. The members were also advised that a submission could be made to the Dublin Airport Authority in respect of noise monitoring and any submissions should be forwarded to Mr. McGowan on or before December 15, 2023.

Councillor Gillian Toole queried details of the reports undertaken in respect of traffic calming measures at schools in Rathbeggan and Ratoath.

Councillors Gillian Toole and **Nick Killian** noted that, due to industrial action by members of Fórsa Trade Union, health forum meetings have been cancelled and elected members are not in a position to make representations on behalf of their constituents.

3 Expressions of Sympathy and Congratulations

3.1 Expressions of Sympathy were extended to:

Shane Carroll, Climate Change and Environment on the death of his father, Eamonn Carroll.

Philip Connell, Housing on the death of his father, Philip Connell.

The family of the late James Mangan, former Councillor and Cathaoirleach of Meath County Council.

The family of the late Sarah Howell (née Lodge), Athboy, Co. Meath.

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

4.1 Disposal of 0.0113 Ha of land at Piercetown, Dunboyne, Co. Meath, in accordance with Section 211 of Planning & Development Act 2000 and subject to the provisions of Section 183 of the Local Government Act 2001. The lands are not affected by the provisions of the Land Development Agency Act 2021.

The disposal, in accordance with the statutory notice issued on October 24, 2023, under Section 183 of the Local Government Act 2001, was approved on the proposal of **Councillor Maria Murphy** and seconded by **Councillor Nick Killian**.

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Councillor Gillian Toole declared a potential conflict of interest due to her brother's position as secretary to the group and she subsequently left the meeting.

- 4.2 Disposal of 0.1548 Ha of land at Kilmessan Co. Meath, in accordance with Section 211 of Planning & Development Act 2000 and subject to the provisions of Section 183 of the Local Government Act 2001. The lands are not affected by the provisions of the Land Development Agency Act 2021.

The disposal, in accordance with the statutory notice issued on October 24, 2023, under Section 183 of the Local Government Act 2001, was approved on the proposal of **Councillor Gerry O'Connor** and seconded by **Councillor Brian Fitzgerald** .

Councillor Gillian Toole returned to the meeting.

- 4.3 Disposal of 2.9546 Ha of land at Slane Castle Demesne, Slane, Co. Meath, in accordance with Section 211 of Planning & Development Act 2000 and subject to the provisions of Section 183 of the Local Government Act 2001. The lands are not affected by the provisions of the Land Development Agency Act 2021.

The disposal, in accordance with the statutory notice issued on October 25, 2023, under Section 183 of the Local Government Act 2001, was approved on the proposal of **Councillor Wayne Harding** and seconded by **Councillor Paddy Meade**.

- 4.4 Disposal of 0.0064 Ha of land at Woodlands, Navan, Co. Meath, in accordance with Section 211 of Planning & Development Act 2000 and subject to the provisions of Section 183 of the Local Government Act 2001. The lands come within the provisions of the Land Development Agency Act 2021 however the LDA has indicated that it does not wish to acquire them.

The disposal, in accordance with the statutory notice issued on October 24, 2023, under Section 183 of the Local Government Act 2001, was approved on the proposal of **Councillor Pdraig Fitzsimons** and seconded by **Councillor Francis Deane**.

5 Statutory Business

5.1 Corporate Affairs and Governance

- 5.1.1 To fill the casual vacancy (1 No.), in the Membership of Meath County Council, to replace the late Councillor Damien O'Reilly RIP (Ratoath Municipal District), in accordance with Section 19 of the Local Government Act 2001, as amended.

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As noted above.

5.1.2 To appoint a Councillor to the Eastern and Midlands Regional Assembly.

As proposed by **Councillor Aisling Dempsey**, seconded by **Councillor Pádraig Fitzsimons** and agreed, **Councillor Caroline O'Reilly** was appointed to the Eastern and Midlands Regional Assembly.

5.1.3 To appoint a Councillor to the Louth Meath Education Training Board (LMETB).

As proposed by **Councillor Aisling Dempsey**, seconded by **Councillor Wayne Harding** and agreed, **Councillor Caroline O'Reilly** was appointed to the Louth Meath Education Training Board (LMETB).

5.1.4 To appoint a Councillor to the Association of Irish Local Government (AILG).

As proposed by **Councillor Aisling Dempsey**, seconded by **Councillor Mike Bray** and agreed, **Councillor Wayne Harding** was appointed to the Association of Irish Local Government (AILG).

5.1.5 To appoint a Councillor to the Housing, Community and Cultural Development SPC.

As proposed by **Councillor Aisling Dempsey**, seconded by **Councillor Wayne Harding** and agreed, **Councillor Caroline O'Reilly** was appointed to the Housing, Community and Cultural Development SPC.

5.1.6 To agree revised dates for the February Municipal District Meetings.

Municipal District	Date and Time
Ashbourne	Tuesday 6 th February 2024, 10.00a.m.
Ratoath	Wednesday 7 th February 2024, 9.30a.m.
Laytown/Bettystown	Thursday, 8 th February 2024 10.00a.m.
Kells	Monday, 12 th February 2024, 4.00p.m.
Navan	Wednesday, 14 th February 2024, 10.00a.m.
Trim	Friday, 16 th February 2024, 2.00p.m.

The revised dates for the February Municipal District Meetings were agreed on the proposal of **Councillor Brian Fitzgerald** and seconded by **Councillor Nick Killian**.

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5.1.7 To agree the Municipal District Allocation Scheme 2024.

Mr. Dara McGowan outlined the proposed changes to the Municipal District Allocation Scheme 2024. There were interventions from **Councillors Gillian Toole; Helen Meyer and David Gilroy** including the introduction of the Councillor signature to the form and acknowledgement of the Council's funding.

On the proposal of **Councillor Nick Killian** and seconded by the **Councillor Gerry O'Connor** the Municipal District Allocation Scheme 2024 was approved, with the changes as outlined above.

5.2 Planning

5.2.1 Having considered the Planning Report in relation to planning application 23/861, to resolve to grant permission for a development which will consist of:

Construction of a two and three storey 57-bedroom nursing home; Provision of private open space amenities for the proposed development; Construction of vehicular access from the link road connecting Hunters Lane with Cedar Road; Provision of internal access road, footpaths including necessary car parking facilities; Connection to the adjoining public watermains and foul sewer; Installation of a storm water network including the installation of an attenuation tank and Petrol interceptor; Drainage improvements within site to include widening of stream channel on southern boundary and drainage ditch on eastern boundary; Provision of on-site public lighting to serve the proposed development; Provision of associates signage to the facade of proposed building; Natura Impact Statement is included with this planning application and is available for inspection; all associated boundary treatments, landscaping and ancillary site development works at Hunters Lane, Dunreagh, Ashbourne, Co. Meath,

The development would contravene materially the following objectives of the Meath County Development Plan 2021-2027:

The site of the proposed development is zoned F1 - Open Space with the definitive land use zoning objective 'To provide for and improve open spaces for active and passive recreational amenities.' The proposed development is not listed as a 'permitted' or 'open for consideration' land use under the F1 zoning objective. The proposal therefore does not conform with the land use zoning of the County Development Plan and would materially contravene the said zoning objective, and associated policies.

Please Note: Section 34(6) Planning and Development Act 2000 – 2022 as amended provides that a development may materially contravene the Development Plan subject to certain procedures being complied with. A decision to grant planning permission requires the vote of not less than three quarters of the members of the Council in favour.

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Mr. Pdraig Maguire, Senior Planner, gave a broad overview of the details of the Chief Executive's Report which the Elected Members had received. He further outlined the background to the proposed material contravention including the outcome of the JR 2021/970 - Dolent Property LP and Meath County Council.

There were interventions and queries from **Councillors Joe Bonner; Paddy Meade; Ronan Moore; Alan Tobin; Michael Gallagher; Helen Meyer; Maria Murphy; Brian Fitzgerald; Nick Killian; Wayne Harding; Sharon Tolan; Eugene Cassidy; Gerry O'Connor; Conor Tormey; Joe Fox** and **An Leas-Chathaoirleach**. Queries included details on the flood mitigation measures and their impact on the area, impact on the respective judicial review case and the costs of the flood mitigation works. Responses to queries raised were provided by Mr. Des Foley, Mr. Pdraig Maguire and Mr. David Keyes.

A roll call vote on the resolution to grant permission on planning application 23/861 was called as follows:

	For	Against	Abstain	Absent
ADENUGA, Yemi			√	
BEHAN, Tom	√			
BONNER, Joseph		√		
BRAY, Mike	√			
CASSIDY, Eugene	√			
DEANE, Francis	√			
DEMPSEY, Aisling	√			
DREW, Sean				√
FENNESSY, Edward		√		
FITZGERALD, Brian	√			
FITZSIMONS, Pdraig	√			
FOX, Joe	√			
FRENCH, Noel	√			
GALLAGHER, Michael		√		
GERAGHTY-SMITH, Deirdre	√			
GILROY, David	√			
GOLDEN, Trevor	√			
HARDING, Wayne	√			
JAMAL, Suzanne	√			
KEOGAN, Geraldine	√			
KILLIAN, Nick	√			
LAWES, Alan	√			
MC CABE, Paul	√			
MC GINTY, Elaine	√			
MC KEE, Stephen	√			
MEADE, Paddy		√		
MEYER, Helen		√		
MOORE, Ronan	√			



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	For	Against	Abstain	Absent
MURPHY, Maria	√			
O'CONNOR, Gerry	√			
O'REILLY, Caroline	√			
REILLY, Sarah	√			
REILLY, Tommy				√
SMITH, Amanda	√			
SOUHAN, Niamh	√			
TOBIN, Alan		√		
TÓIBÍN, Emer			√	
TOLAN, Sharon	√			
TOOLE, Gillian			√	
TORMEY, Conor			√	

Votes For = 28 members, Against = 6 members, Abstain = 4 members, Absent = 2 members.

In accordance with this decision and the provisions of Section 34(6)(b) of the Planning and Development Act 2000 – 2022 as amended, the resolution was not passed.

5.2.2 In accordance with Section 15(2) of the Planning and Development Act 2000, as amended, to receive a presentation on the Two-Year Progress Report of the Meath County Development Plan 2021-2027 which details the progress achieved in securing the objectives of the Plan.

Mr. Alan Russell, Senior Executive Planner, provided details of the two-year progress report on the Meath County Development Plan 2021-2027. He noted that five settlements have reached their population and housing growth targets. In addition, four settlements have almost reached their population and housing growth targets. He further noted that 185,155 sqm of commercial floor space has been permitted and over 100,000 sqm of commercial floorspace has been developed.

There were interventions and queries from **Councillors Ronan Moore; Alan Tobin; Nick Killian; Gerry O'Connor; Sharon Tolan** and **Gillian Toole**. Queries included details on number of permissions granted and which have subsequently been appealed to An Bord Pleanála, projected population growths for areas within the County, traffic matters and ongoing discussions with NTA, TII and Bus Éireann. Responses to queries raised were provided by Mr. Alan Russell and Mr. Pádraig Maguire.

5.2.3 To adopt the Meath County Council Development Contribution Scheme following consideration of the Chief Executive's Report on the submissions, pursuant to Section 48 of the Planning and Development Acts 2000 – 2022.

It was noted that this matter had been discussed at the November Council meeting. On the proposal of **Councillor Helen Meyer** and seconded by **Councillor Alan Tobin** the Meath County Council Development Contribution Scheme was adopted.

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5.3 Finance

5.3.1 To note the Quarterly Financial Statement as at 30th September 2023.

Councillor Gillian Toole raised some queries in relation to specific figures within the report. Responses were provided by Ms. Sheila Harkin.

5.4 Community

5.4.1 To approve a replacement member of the Meath LCDC & LAG, Johann McKeever representing the HSE.

On the proposal of **Councillor Nick Killian** and seconded by **Councillor Gillian Toole**, Ms. Johann McKeever was approved as a member of the Meath LCDC and LAG.

6 Reports

6.1 Chief Executive's Report

There were interventions from the following Elected Members: **Councillors Nick Killian, Michael Gallagher, Alan Tobin, Gillian Toole** and **Aisling Dempsey**. Matters raised included:

Housing:	Social housing delivery pipeline, Part V, Hostel accommodation
Community:	Local Community Safety Partnerships
Transport:	Safe Routes to School, M2 Extension
Economic Development:	Shop Local Campaign, Economic Development Forum
Environment:	Climate Action

6.2 Report from the Corporate Policy Group

The Meetings Administrator reported that the CPG met on Friday, December 1 2023, and reviewed the agenda for the December Council Meeting. The members of the CPG were also updated on the revised provisions of the MD Allocation Scheme as well as the arrangements for the Local Representational Payments. It was noted that this payment will be paid pro-rata in 2024, that is before and after the local elections.

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The members were also updated on the 2nd meeting of the Economic Development Forum which took place on Thursday 23rd November. It was noted that Ms. Majella Farrell had provided the forum with an update of the activities of the Economic Development Team and that a profile of the businesses in the county as well as a profile of the skill base in the County was being prepared. In addition, 5 workstreams of the Economic Development Forum have been created and the Forum will meet every 2 months.

Finally, the reports from Reports from the Climate Action, Environment and Emergency Services SPC meeting of 3rd November, 2023 and the Housing, Community and Cultural Development SPC meeting of 21st November, 2023 were noted.

6.3 Report from the Protocol Committee

The Meetings Administrator reported that the Protocol Committee met on Friday, December 1, 2023. The Local Representation Allowance and the MD Allocation Scheme were discussed and noted. It was also noted that the naming of the new park in Clonee has been referred to the Commemoration Committee. Finally, the Conference and Training Schedules were approved.

7 Correspondence

- 7.1 Correspondence from the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage re. Notice of intention to classify the North-west Irish Sea 004236 as a Special Protection Area.

Correspondence was noted by the Elected Members.

- 7.2 Correspondence from Senator Victor Boyhan re. Commencement Matter Local Community Safety Partnerships.

Correspondence was noted by the Elected Members.

- 7.3 Correspondence from Minister of State for the Department of the Environment, Climate and Communications in response to Notice of Motion 10.2 adopted at the December 2022 meeting of the full Council.

“Meath County Council calls on the Government to amend the Electricity Regulation Act and associated legislation to allow for the consideration and possible implementation of nuclear power generation in Ireland.”

Councillors Trevor Golden and **Alan Tobin** expressed their disappointment in the response received and it was agreed that Councillor Golden would revert with a proposed response to same.

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The correspondence was noted by the Elected Members.

- 7.4 Correspondence from Minister for Communications, Climate Action and Environment in response to Notice of Motion 10.1 adopted at the May 2023 meeting of the full Council.

“That Meath County Council rejects the findings of the independent review of the North South Interconnector, which was recently published, on the basis that the review was a desktop study of previous reports and studies and also on the basis that the terms of reference for the review did not allow for a comprehensive cost benefit analysis on a site-specific route which would have taken all of the relevant issues into account.”

Correspondence was noted by the Elected Members.

8 Notice of Question

8.1 Submitted by Councillor Geraldine Keogan

“Could Meath County Council outline the number of sites in Meath with planning permissions that have not commenced and the length of time these sites have been unactivated?”

Response

The Planning Department confirms that the December meeting of the Council includes an Agenda item covering the 2 Year Review of the County Development Plan. As part of this presentation, the Members will receive updates on Planning Permissions granted, and statistics on commencements etc. Also, there are dashboards being produced, which will be available on the website, which will hold details of all Residential and Economic applications and provide details of those that have progressed etc.

Noted by the Elected Members.

8.2 Submitted by Councillor Edward Fennessy

“To ask the Executive to publish, in tabular format, the number of social housing applicants in each Municipal District, who qualify for HAP, on the 1, 2, 3 & 4 bed lists in Meath.”

Response

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The number of social housing applicants in each Municipal District, who qualify for HAP, on the 1, 2, 3 & 4 bed lists in Meath is as follows:

	one	two	three	four	
Navan	345	172	28	7	
Kells	152	67	19	9	
Laytown & Bettystown	126	85	14	1	
Trim	125	71	14	3	
Ratoath	99	56	13	4	
Ashbourne	100	52	17	3	
Total	947	503	105	27	1582

Councillor Edward Fennessy sought clarification on the figures, with response provided by Mr. Barry Lynch. The response was noted by the Elected Members.

8.3 Submitted by Councillor Paul McCabe

“Can the Executive outline by MD, since the introduction of the Vacant Property Refurbishment Grant in May 2022, the number of:

- 1. applications received*
- 2. applications approved to date*
- 3. applications successfully awarded funding*

and to outline the current waiting time for a property to be inspected by Meath County Council staff after all required documentation has been submitted and an application is deemed valid.”

Response

Municipal District	Applications received	Applications approved
Ashbourne MD	4	3
Kells MD	40	15
Laytown / Bettystown MD	10	3
Navan MD	18	6
Ratoath MD	12	1
Trim MD	25	12
Total	109	40

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Payments under the Vacant Property Refurbishment Grant can't be paid until the refurbishment works are complete and the first approvals were granted at the end of 2022. At this stage there are no payments made to applicants, however it is expected that payments will commence in the coming weeks, as a number of projects are well advanced and nearing completion. In relation to the timeframe for inspections, when an application reaches the stage where an inspection can be organised, in the vast majority of cases, these inspections are carried out within 3 weeks.

Noted by the Elected Members.

8.4 Submitted by Councillor Helen Meyer

“Could Meath County Council please provide the number of tenants in each MD on transfer lists for 1, 2, 3 and 4 bedroom properties in 2021, 2022, and 2023 in tabular form to include the average wait time for transfers and the approved reasons for transfers?”

Response

The number of transfer applicants on the transfer list in 2021 and 2022 is shown in table 1 below. This information is taken from the Net Need Analysis from the Annual Social Housing Assessment, which does not break down figures by Municipal District.

Table 1.

Year	No. on Transfer List
2021 (Nov)	211
2022 (Nov)	269

There are currently 212 applicants on the transfer list. An analysis of the current transfer list per Municipal District is as follows:

Municipal District	One	Two	three	four	total
Navan	27	27	19	18	91
Ashbourne	4	3	4	3	14
Kells	10	10	3	9	32
Laytown/Bettystown	6	4	5	5	20
Ratoath	7	10	3	9	29
Trim	5	8	2	11	26
Total	59	62	36	55	212

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The above figures include tenants of Meath County Council, Approved Housing Bodies and RAS tenants. The figures do not include those on the Housing Assistance Payment scheme who have applied to be included on the transfer list.

The average waiting time for a transfer is 3 years. For transfers to be considered for existing tenants, there must be a material change in the households housing need which can be demonstrated.

Transfers may be considered under the following circumstances in accordance with the Scheme of Letting Priorities:

- Overcrowding
- Where elderly and other small households wish to surrender family type accommodation and move to smaller accommodation.
- Medical/compassionate reasons
- Exceptional circumstances

Notwithstanding the above, tenants seeking a transfer must fulfil the following requirements to the satisfaction of the housing authority:

- Hold tenancy in their present dwelling for a period of at least two years.
- A clear rent account for at least six months.
- All service and other charges e.g. electricity, gas, water are paid up to date.
- Kept their dwelling in satisfactory condition.
- Complied with all conditions of their Letting Agreement, and
- Have no record of anti-social behaviour.

Councillor Helen Meyer sought clarification on the figures, with response provided by Mr. Barry Lynch. The response was noted by the Elected Members.

8.5 Submitted by Councillor Trevor Golden

“In the interests of representation and balance, will Meath County Council be revising the articles of association or current appointments for directors of Solstice Arts Centre to reflect the addition of the Swift Cultural Centre in the Trim Municipal District?”

Response

The Articles of Association will be reviewed following the expansion of services to include the Swift Cultural Centre.

Councillor Trevor Golden sought clarification on the timeline, with response provided by the Chief Executive.

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9 Notice of Motion

9.1 Submitted by Councillor Maria Murphy

“We call on the Council when engaging in pre-planning meetings with developers and assessing planning applications on the issue of playspace for children, to consider a range of play equipment to cater for all ages.”

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

Meath County Council acknowledges the request to consider catering for all ages when discussing planning applications with developers which include playspaces for children.

Paragraph 7.7.2 of the Meath County Development Plan 2021 – 2027 confirms the policy of the Council, stating that planning applications for residential developments of 50 units or more be accompanied by a Social Infrastructure Assessment to determine if facilities in the area are sufficient to provide for the needs of future residents of all age cohorts, and where deficiencies are identified, proposals will be required to either rectify the deficiency, or suitably restrict or phase the development in accordance with the capacity of existing or planned services.

The Development Management Team will continue to apply this policy when assessing all proposals at the pre-planning stage.

The motion was introduced by Councillor Maria Murphy. She noted that playgrounds should be equipped for all age ranges and be inclusive for all abilities. There were interventions of support from **Councillors Gerry O’Connor, Nick Killian, Alan Tobin, Aisling Dempsey and Joe Bonner.**

The motion proposed by **Councillor Maria Murphy** and seconded by **Councillor Gerry O’Connor** was agreed.

9.2 Submitted by Councillor Noel French

“That Meath County Council requests the Government to introduce legislation which will implement a speed limit of 30 kph on all urban roads including settlements, built up areas and school zones and if this is not forthcoming then Meath County Council should take the lead by introducing bye laws to implement such a speed limit.”

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

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The Department of Transport (DOT) published their most recent Speed Limit Review report in September 2023. This report contains a number of recommendations including recommendation P1 which relates to setting a default speed limit of 30km/h for built up and urban areas. The report notes that a study is required to assess the implications of this along with required changes to legislation and the DOT Guidelines for Setting and Managing Speed Limits in Ireland.

Meath County Council wrote to the Department of Transport on the 11th September 2023 requesting an estimated timeline for the possible updates to the legislation and guidelines noted above and we await a response.

With regard to Meath County Council introducing bye laws in isolation to implement a 30km/h speed limit to “*all settlements, built up areas and all school zones*” it should be noted that the Road Traffic and Roads Act 2023, which was signed into law on 23rd June 2023, states:

“Speed limit guidelines

10D. (2) Where guidelines... are, for the time being in force, a county council..., shall ensure when they are making any special speed limit bye-laws.... that such bye-laws.....are in accordance with such guidelines”

As noted within the September 2023 Department of Transport Speed Limit Review, it is expected that updates to the current in-force DOT Guidelines for Setting and Managing Speed Limits in Ireland would be required before Meath County Council could consider introducing a bye-law to implement a 30km/h speed limit to “*all settlements, built up areas and all school zones*”.

Councillor Noel French introduced the motion. He noted that a 50kph speed limit was too high for many towns and villages in the county. There were interventions from **Councillors Trevor Golden, Paddy Meade, Aisling Dempsey, Mike Bray, Joe Fox** and **Gillian Toole**. The Elected Members broadly welcomed the motion although concern was raised around a ‘broad strokes’ approach.

Councillor Aisling Dempsey proposed an amendment to the motion which was seconded by **Councillor Joe Fox** as follows:

That Meath County Council requests the Government to prioritise the introduction of legislation following the publication of the recent speed limit review report.

The motion, as amended, proposed by **Councillor Noel French** and seconded by **Councillor Trevor Golden** was agreed.

9.3 Submitted by Councillor Paul McCabe

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"That Meath County Council welcomes the recent increases for on-the-spot fines for offences under the Control of Dogs Act and that this Council would write to the recently established high-level stakeholder group to outline the need for serious reforms that would empower Dog Wardens to carry out their job more effectively to prevent further devastating and deeply disturbing dog attacks in local communities."

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

Subject to the motion being passed, this matter can be referred to the Climate Action, Environment and Emergency Services SPC to recommend key reforms to be referred to the high-level stakeholder group, which has recently been announced by Minister Humphreys.

The motion was introduced by **Councillor Paul McCabe**. He noted that any dog, large or small, may become involved in attacking sheep and he further noted a horrific sheep attack which had occurred recently in Moynalty. There were interventions of support and queries regarding the introduction of bye-laws from **Councillors Alan Tobin, Michael Gallagher, Stephen McKee, Joe Fox and David Gilroy**. Mr. Dara McGowan provided clarification in relation to queries raised.

On the proposal of **Councillor Paul McCabe** and seconded by **Councillor Alan Tobin** the motion was agreed. It was noted that the SPC would prepare the correspondence.

9.4 Submitted by Councillors Helen Meyer, Edward Fennessy and Michael Gallagher

"To ask Meath County Council to recognise the State of Palestine in accordance with the Programme for Government and to fly the Palestinian flag on council buildings as a show of support for the Palestinian people."

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

The Council is guided by the Office of An Taoiseach in relation to such matters and no guidance has been forthcoming in relation to flying the Palestinian flag at our civic buildings.

The motion was introduced by **Councillor Edward Fennessy**. He expressed his disappointment with the response above. There were interventions from **Councillors Michael Gallagher, Helen Meyer, Paddy Meade, David Gilroy, Trevor Golden, Alan Tobin and Nick Killian**. Some members supported the motion while others felt that only the Irish flag should be flown at Council buildings. There was a suggestion that a Peace flag could be flown for one week during the year in solidarity with all countries experiencing war.



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The motion, proposed by **Councillor Edward Fennessy** and seconded by **Councillor Michael Gallagher** fell by a show of hands vote with 5 members in agreement, 17 members not in agreement and 1 abstention.

On a proposal from **Councillor Michael Gallagher** and seconded by **Councillor Joe Fox** it was agreed to take a 30-minute extension to 6.30pm.

9.5 Submitted by Councillor Helen Meyer

“For Meath County Council to consider using a tried and tested online system such as homeswapper.ie that is used by other councils that allows tenants who are on the transfer list to use the online system to facilitate transfers between tenants”.

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

Homeswapper.ie was a pilot project commenced in November 2020 by Dublin City Council and Cork City Council. The Housing Department will engage with Dublin City Council and Cork City Council, and will consider the benefits of an online system.

The motion was introduced by **Councillor Helen Meyer**. She noted that the homeswapper.ie pilot project was quite successful in Dublin City Council and Cork City Council. There were interventions from **Councillors Michael Gallagher, Nick Killian, Gillian Toole and Edward Fennessy**.

Councillor Nick Killian proposed an amendment to the motion which was seconded by **Councillor Brian Fitzgerald** as follows:

“For Meath County Council to consider using a tried and tested online system such as homeswapper.ie that is used by other councils that allows tenants who are on the transfer list to use the online system to facilitate transfers between tenants. The current paper-based application process should be run in tandem with the online system”.

The motion, as amended, proposed by **Councillor Helen Meyer** and seconded by **Councillor Michael Gallagher** was agreed.

9.6 Submitted by Councillor Emer Tóibín

“That Meath County Council speed up the delivery of the Boyne Green Way that is already 15 years in the discussion phase.”

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

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The Council will continue to develop the greenway in line with best practice to address the significant technical and environmental challenges associated with the project and maximise the chances of obtaining planning approval for the project.

Councillor Emer Tóibín introduced the motion. She acknowledged the excellent presentation that had been delivered to the members of Navan MD and Laytown-Bettystown MD that morning, although she expressed her disappointment with the timeframes in getting to this stage of the project. There were interventions from **Councillors Gillian Toole** and **Paddy Meade**.

The motion proposed by **Councillor Emer Tóibín** and seconded by **Councillor Gillian Toole** was agreed.

10 General Interest Motions

10.1 Submitted by Cathaoirleach Tommy Reilly, Councillors Sean Drew, David Gilroy, Trevor Golden, Edward Fennessy and Michael Gallagher.

Meath Co. Council notes the commitment in the Government's recent budget to the introduction of pay-related job seekers benefit in December 2024. However, this council is supporting SIPTU's Construction Sector campaign on behalf of the Tara Mines workers in calling upon Government to bring forward the implementation date of these proposals and supports the ICTU's position for job seekers benefit to be increased to 70% of average earnings capped at €550 for a minimum of 9 months.

Councillor David Gilroy introduced the motion. He noted that the motion had arisen following a recent meeting organised by SIPTU with workers from Tara Mines. There were interventions from **Councillors Maria Murphy, Michael Gallagher and Trevor Golden**. **Councillor Maria Murphy** raised a point of order that not all of the members who submitted the motion were in attendance and she queried whether the matter could proceed. The Meetings Administrator advised that the matter could proceed once one of the members who submitted the motion was present at the meeting to propose same.

10.2 Submitted by Councillor Suzanne Jamal

"That Meath County Council supports an immediate ceasefire in the ongoing conflict in Gaza."

Councillor Suzanne Jamal introduced the motion. She noted that recent news reports were difficult to watch and she called for an immediate ceasefire in Gaza.

The motion proposed by **Councillor Suzanne Jamal** and seconded by **Councillor Mike Bray** was agreed.

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10.3 Submitted by Trevor Golden

“For greater transparency and to strengthen competition Meath County Council calls on the government to introduce a statutory fuel price register. The register would provide open-data access to live fuel prices and provide data necessary to better inform policy.”

Councillor Trevor Golden introduced the motion. He noted that recent research in the UK had concluded that a register would improve competition and regulation in the market.

The motion proposed by **Councillor Trevor Golden** and seconded by **Councillor David Gilroy** was agreed.

10.4 Submitted by Councillor Gillian Toole

“A letter be written to the Minister for Health, Secretary General of the Department of Health and the Chief Executive of the HSE, requesting an immediate investigation of the excess mortality rates in Ireland. Whilst this investigation is taking place there will be a pause in the administration of mRNA Covid 19 vaccinations.”

Councillor Gillian Toole introduced the motion. She noted the Ireland’s average mortality rate was significantly higher than the EU average. She further noted that as the country had an ageing population that more research was needed to keep people in their homes longer. There were interventions from **Councillors Brian Fitzgerald, Wayne Harding, Michael Gallagher, Maria Murphy, Alan Tobin, Gerry O’Connor and Emer Tóibín**. There was mixed support in the Chamber. The members generally supported the request to investigate excess mortality rates in Ireland but could not support a pause in the administration of the Covid-19 vaccination.

Following a request from **Councillor Gillian Toole**, An Leas-Chathaoirleach called for a roll-call vote as follows:

	For	Against	Abstain	Absent
ADENUGA, Yemi		√		
BEHAN, Tom				√
BONNER, Joseph				√
BRAY, Mike		√		
CASSIDY, Eugene				√
DEANE, Francis				√
DEMPSEY, Aisling		√		
DREW, Sean				√
FENNESSY, Edward		√		
FITZGERALD, Brian		√		
FITZSIMONS, Pdraig				√
FOX, Joe		√		



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	For	Against	Abstain	Absent
FRENCH, Noel				✓
GALLAGHER, Michael	✓			
GERAGHTY-SMITH, Deirdre				✓
GILROY, David				✓
GOLDEN, Trevor		✓		
HARDING, Wayne		✓		
JAMAL, Suzanne		✓		
KEOGAN, Geraldine				✓
KILLIAN, Nick		✓		
LAWES, Alan				✓
MC CABE, Paul		✓		
MC GINTY, Elaine				✓
MC KEE, Stephen		✓		
MEADE, Paddy			✓	
MEYER, Helen		✓		
MOORE, Ronan				✓
MURPHY, Maria		✓		
O'CONNOR, Gerry		✓		
O'REILLY, Caroline		✓		
REILLY, Sarah				✓
REILLY, Tommy				✓
SMITH, Amanda				✓
SOUHAN, Niamh		✓		
TOBIN, Alan		✓		
TÓIBÍN, Emer	✓			
TOLAN, Sharon				✓
TOOLE, Gillian	✓			
TORMEY, Conor				✓

Votes For = 3 members, Against = 18 members, Abstain = 1 members, Absent = 18 members.

In accordance with this decision the motion fell.

11 Schedule of Chief Executive & Approved Orders (For Information Only)

11.1 Schedule of Chief Executive's Orders – Transportation

Noted by the Elected Members.

11.2 Schedule of Chief Executive's Orders – Environment

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Noted by the Elected Members.

11.3 Schedule of Chief Executive's Orders – Housing

Noted by the Elected Members.

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

Noted by the Elected Members.

12 Any Other Business

An Leas-Chathaoirleach paid tribute to Ms. Fiona Lawless and thanked her for dedication to the Council during her term as Chief Executive.

Councillor Michael Gallagher expressed his opposition to the North South Interconnector.

Councillor Paddy Meade noted that due to fallen lines there was no broadband or telephone lines in Lobinstown which was having a significant impact on businesses and residents in the area.