

**COMHAIRLE CATHRACH AGUS CONTAE PHORT LÁIRGE
WATERFORD CITY AND COUNTY COUNCIL**

COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON 8TH JULY 2021 BY ZOOM

Present

Cllr. Joe Kelly (Mayor)	Cllr. Jason Murphy
Cllr. Donal Barry	Cllr. Pat Nugent
Cllr. Liam Brazil	Cllr. Seamus O'Donnell
Cllr. Joanne Bailey	Cllr. John O'Leary
Cllr. Joe Conway	Cllr. Lola O'Sullivan
Cllr. Tom Cronin	Cllr. Thomas Phelan
Cllr. Conor D. McGuinness	Cllr. Jody Power
Cllr. David Daniels	Cllr. Seanie Power
Cllr. Declan Doocey	Cllr. John Pratt
Cllr. Pat Fitzgerald	Cllr. Eamon Quinlan
Cllr. Susan Gallagher	Cllr. Frank Quinlan
Cllr. Damien Geoghegan	Cllr. Mary Roche
Cllr. Jim Griffin	Cllr. Seamus Ryan
Cllr. John Hearne	Cllr. Adam Wyse
Cllr. Ger Barron	Cllr. Eddie Mulligan
	Cllr. James Tobin

Apologies: Cllr. Declan Clune

Officials in Attendance

Mr. Michael Walsh, Chief Executive
 Mr. Kieran Kehoe, Director of Services, Corporate, Culture, HR & IS
 Mr. Ivan Grimes, Director of Services, Housing, Community & Emergency Services
 Mr. Fergus Galvin, Director of Services, Roads, Water & Environment
 Mr. Michael Quinn, Director of Services, Economic Development and Planning
 Mr. Bernard Pollard, Head of Finance
 Ms. Honor Dunphy, Meetings Administrator
 Mr. Dave Mitchell, Corporate
 Mr. Conan Power, Communications

Meetings Administrator carried out a roll call to confirm meeting attendance.

1. Confirmation of Minutes

Minutes of Plenary meeting held on the 10th of June 2021 proposed by Cllr Brazil, seconded by Cllr Daniels, and agreed by all.

Minutes of Plenary AGM held on the 24th of June 2021 proposed by Cllr Pratt, seconded by Cllr O'Leary, and agreed by all.

2. Matters Arising

None

3. Land Disposals

K. Kehoe, DoS, listed the proposed disposals for consideration.

The list was proposed by Cllr. Geoghegan and seconded by Cllr. Fitzgerald and agreed.

Cllr. Barry asked about the two apartments in Clarendon Court that were exchanged and the position with taking over the whole building to ensure that it would have a mixture of tenures in the future. Cllr. Griffin expressed his delight that the Viewmount property was being resolved and associated issues addressed.

I. Grimes (DoS) confirmed that they were ground floor units and were key to getting 80% of the units back into use under social housing or leased tenures. He expected that restoration work would commence in quarter four with the units being available around the middle of 2022.

4. Monthly Management Report

Cllr Gallagher raised the issue of low levels of submissions to public consultations and noted that some constituents did not see them advertised until late in the period enquiring if there was any way to remedy this. She commented that the campaign on dog fouling had been very successful and asked if a similar approach could be adopted with issues such as the obstruction of foot paths. Additionally, she asked if the Management Report was available to the public.

Cllr. Murphy stated that there was underutilisation of the Thomas Francis Meagher toll bridge and that there was considerable congestion in the city with traffic that could potentially use it enquiring if there were any steps that could be taken to promote the bridge use. Cllr. Conway expressed similar concerns.

Cllr. Daniels asked if a status update could be provided on the recently purchased properties. He also enquired if the Community Safety Partnership (CSP) resulted in any financial liability or administrative commitment for the council.

K Kehoe (DoS) clarified that the Management Report was published on the council website with the minutes and other meeting documents. There was also an intention to publish excerpts from the report on social media in the future. In terms of communications the public consultations that have occurred especially during lockdown have had significant responses and additionally key stakeholders are approached and encouraged to interact with the process. Mr Kehoe added that the executive is always open to improvement suggestions.

F Galvin (DoS) replied stating that.

- The Council is always encouraging motorists not to block footpath via actions from both traffic wardens and the Gardai.
- He is happy to approach the TII and the operator to see what can be done to encourage more use of the toll bridge.

I Grimes (DoS) responded as follows:

- Once a property is acquired by the council it goes into design in conjunction with the Department of Housing and thus would lead to a Part 8 process. He is happy to provide the members with an update on the recently purchased properties.
- He clarified that the CSP coordinator had been appointed and would take up the position shortly and that the CSP pilot costs would be borne by Government for the next two years.

Cllr Phelan asked if the 13 inspection failures for long term lets were related to any of the recent repair and lease properties. He also asked how long it took on average to process applications for housing adaptation grants. He further enquired if the council had a vacant homes officer as he noted none was listed on Vacanthomes.ie.

Cllr. Barry noted that only four schools had been included in the Safe Routes to School Programme enquiring if there were any plans to get others included. He asked what the brief of the North Quays

property adviser was, and if the signal box needed to be moved as part of the rock stabilisations work. He also stated that the 22% refusal rate for houses offered was very high in a crises situation and if it could be improved,

Cllr. Griffin suggested that the council consider a housing initiative that would co locate families who had children with similar special needs together in certain areas so that they could mutually support each other and so that the children could avoid being singled out or bullied. He said Waterford would be the first local authority to have such an initiative and was open to a workshop to discuss it. Cllr. Mulligan welcomed this proposal.

I Grimes (DoS) responded as follows:

- He does have the details for the inspections and if any were repair and lease units and will revert to Cllr. Phelan.
- The Housing grants section has had some staff changes recently but there is a full complement now, so any backlog is being resolved. There is no average processing time for applications.
- There is a Vacant Homes Officer, and the details were supplied to the vacant home's website and will contact Mayo County Council who administer this site to ask them to correct.
- Housing refusals are sometimes caused by applicants being confused by locations e.g., houses in Lismore versus houses in Lismore Park. The issue can be looked at by the SPC.
- Mr Grimes is happy for Cllr. Griffins proposals regarding families with additional needs to be dealt with at the SPC or workshop or both.

F Galvin (DoS) stated that the Safe Routes to School scheme was notified to all schools and a 30% approximate response rate was achieved. The initial four successful applicants were being treated as prototypes and there were nine further schools to follow on completion of these four.

Michael Quinn (DoS) provided the following responses on the North Quays:

- The signal box is not being moved and is being protected in the Rock Stabilisation Programme.
- The new property advisor post was in train and the focus will be on the revised specification.

Cllr. Mulligan asked about the timescales relating to the North Quays and wanted to confirm who the prime contact was in the council for any potential developers. He followed up on his enquiry for LEO measure one data requested at the previous plenary. He also enquired if there would be any presentation on the Greenway extension to the Clock Tower and how it would proceed. Additionally, Cllr. Mulligan enquired as to the alterations to Dunmore East Harbour by the Department of Agriculture and the Marine as he was concerned about the need for planning permission and consultation.

Cllr. McGuinness raised an issue with delays in planning permission being published online and cited a particular instance of a three-week delay. He asked for district level details on CBL allocations and asked if enhanced communications or leaflets could be created to explain the scheme.

Cllr. Roche asked if the GIS maps in the development plan could be produced in PDF format for the Bicycle Users Group. She asked if progress on the Carbon Neutral Programme could be included on future reports. Cllr. Roche also enquired if the NTA had given a timeframe for the strategy for Waterford. She was concerned that there was little occurring in Arts and Culture in the monthly report, and she asked why there was no debrief on the failure to win funding for the sorting office Viking visitor attraction application.

In response M Quinn (DoS) provided the following details

- The Planning department had been under pressure due to increased applications but that did not normally impact the online content. He asked if Cllr. McGuinness could provide details of the specific instance, then he could investigate.
- The timescales for appointing the North Quays property adviser would be at least four to six weeks while the requirements were being firmed up, so it was likely to be a September appointment. He confirmed that he personally would be the prime contact for prospective developers.

- The LEO measure 1 data was being prepared and would be supplied for the next plenary.
- He will speak to the Senior Planner and the Department of Agriculture and the Marine regarding Dunmore East harbour works.
- Regarding PDF formats for the GIS maps, he would find out what is possible.
- He will confirm details of the NTA strategy offline with Cllr. Roche and stated that this would be dealt with at the SPC.
- He will provide briefs for the Sorting Office funding application and the Greenway connection to the Clock Tower.

F. Galvin (DoS) stated that the details for the decarbonised zone were submitted to the Department, but no response was received as yet and will advise Cllr. Roche when this is received.

K. Kehoe (DoS) pointed out that perhaps the heading in the libraries section should also incorporate Arts and Culture as there were many events listed. He cited the example of the Vertigo Project in Dungarvan featured on RTE Nationwide among others.

I Grimes (DoS) pointed out that the CBL district level details were provided at district meetings and clarified that non CBL allocation were at a low percentage level and were mainly based on medical need.

Cllr Conway enquired if there was any indication what progress might be made on the Waterford to Tramore Greenway extension by the end of the year. He wanted to highly commend Eamonn McEneaney and his team for the excellent new Museum of Silver and Museum of Time and hoped they would be widely advertised.

Cllr. J. Power enquired if the toilets at Dunmore East Harbour could be opened or if that was an issue for Dept of Agriculture and the Marine. He also asked if the Viking attraction that was not funded by Failte Ireland could be included as part of the Urban Regeneration Fund given the great work that was done so far. In relation to the many derelict buildings that needed attention were there any plans to improve them. Cllr. J. Power also asked if the Mayor could establish the North Quays subgroup as suggested by the CEO at the previous meeting. He asked if the council have made any submission regarding the WIT/TUSE advisory panel. He further enquired if there was any progress with the sculptures that were planned particularly the Brendan Boyer one.

Cllr. Fitzgerald asked about increasing the pace of building council owned housing stock outside of the city as it seemed to be falling behind. He also enquired when the list for the insulation scheme for council owned housing stock might be published and when the work was being scheduled.

M. Quinn (DoS) provided the following responses:

- The feasibility study for the Tramore Greenway extension should be advertised in the coming weeks and then there will be a need to start working with the appointed consultants.
- He acknowledged the compliments for Eamonn McEneaney and his team with regard to the new Museums.
- The Viking attraction planned for the sorting office was not in the current URDF programme but would be reviewed.
- Engagement has occurred with the owners of derelict buildings, but progress is slow with work by the enforcement team ongoing.
- No formal submission was made to the TUSE consultation.

I. Grimes (DoS) stated the following:

- He was looking at the sites Cllr. Fitzgerald was enquiring about and waiting for a report back on progress.
- There will be district level report on the insulation programme, but 67 houses have been approved for the first year of the schemes. It is likely that there will be significant ramping up in subsequent years.

F. Galvin (DoS) agreed to talk to the Dunmore East Harbour master regarding opening the public toilet in the harbour.

K. Kehoe (DoS) stated that the sculpture and the walk of fame were under consideration by the SPC.

Cllr. O'Leary enquired that if strategic planning applications went to An Bord Pleanála and then to judicial review could they then be referred back to the local authority. He also asked if people on 10-year tenancies were eligible to apply under the CBL scheme.

Cllr. Ryan asked about the number of dog fouling fines issued this year. He also enquired if the IDA would be invited to present to the council given the low level of job announcements in Waterford. He further enquired if the link between the Michael St. development and the North Quays could be broken now.

Cllr. Hearne asked if there was any fund that could be used to improve roads that had serious traffic accidents on them. He also wanted to know if the capital building programme for houses would be sufficient to fulfil demand. He further enquired if there was any sort of information campaign that could be run in light of the recent deaths from drug misuse.

M. Quinn (DoS) provided the following responses.

- He was unaware of any changes with regard to judicial reviews and planning but would follow it up.
- He had been in contact with the IDA, and they are happy to present to the members in September and all that was needed was a formal invitation to be issued.
- The Michael St. and North Quays have now been viewed as separate development offerings.

F. Galvin (DoS) will

- Provide details for dog fouling fines separately.
- Confirmed there is an emergency roads scheme that can be assessed for dangerous roads and was being used for the Airport Road at present. The council accessed this fund six to eight times annually.

I. Grimes (DoS) gave the following responses:

- Long term lease tenants are not eligible to apply for CBL normally unless there are exceptional circumstances such as overcrowding.
- He is satisfied that the current housing capital programme satisfy demand and stated that a new affordable housing scheme would also be launched soon.
- An Garda Síochána plus the other government agencies and the Council were working together on the drugs issues and significant efforts were being made throughout the county by community Gardaí.

The Mayor, Cllr. Kelly, stated that he had spoken to Paschal Donoghue TD Minister for Finance when he opened the Silver Museum. An invitation for a multi-agency presentation to the members was accepted by the Minister for September, this included the IDA.

Cllr. Pratt commented on the publication of the Walk Waterford from Sea to Mountains booklet containing 40 walks and asked how this could be used to promote the county. He further stated that the Explore Waterford website needs to be expanded. Regarding HAP tenants not being considered for social housing he asked if a motion need to be passed and a letter sent to the minister to get this changed. He further enquired if there was any update on the extension to the runway at Waterford Airport.

Cllr. E. Quinlan referred to a motion passed at the May plenary referencing the need to have parking permits for annual and semi-annual periods and similar made available investigated and feasibility considered. He was given to believe that the SPC had decided to drop the proposal. He questioned if this was within their powers.

Cllr. Bailey asked if there was any online or social media campaign being done to promote the Walk Waterford booklet and walks included.

Replying M Quinn (DoS):

- Confirmed that the promotion of Walk Waterford would be primarily online and through social media. He also clarified that the Explore Waterford content would be expanded to include the whole county.
- He confirmed that they were working with Visit Waterford on promoting the county and it was being invested in. He would provide an update to the members.
- He stated that he did not have any update on the airport runway extension.

I. Grimes (DoS) explained that long tenants is HAP were governed by the national scheme which does not allow applications to other schemes for the first two years.

F. Galvin (DoS) replied regarding the parking permits and confirmed that the SPC decision can be overruled by the plenary members and that he would formalise the reasoning of the decision made at the SPC for the next plenary meeting.

Cllr. O'Donnell asked about the process for arranging pre planning meeting as he said people were having difficulty getting these meetings set up.

Cllr. F. Quinlan raised the issue of disabled parking bays as many needed to be cleaned and relined. He also asked about the showers outside the public toilets as they were not working. He enquired if there was any progress with providing extra portaloos on the Greenway. Cllr Quinlan also asked why the council did not have an Instagram account which could be used to give visual feedback on issues such as littering. Cllr. Cronin spoke in support of Cllr. Quinlan and the SPC failure to report and provide a feasibility for annual and six-month parking permits.

M Quinn (DoS) replied stating:

- There were no specific issues with preplanning appointments, and they were being held in a reasonable time. Cllr. O'Donnell was welcome to provide details of specific instances to Mr. Quinn.
- He also stated that there was no specific budget available to provide extra portaloos on the Greenway.

F Galvin (DoS) stated that:

- The cleaning and lining of disabled parking bays was ongoing, and they were doing their best with the allocated resources.
- He would contact the caretaker of the Tramore Public Toilets re the non-functioning shower.
- Will report on the SPC findings regarding six and twelve-month parking permits.

K. Kehoe (DoS) clarified that the council did have Instagram accounts for some areas of operation that were used and that reviews of platforms including Instagram and Tik Toc were being looked at by the Communications team.

5. Section 85 agreement re Mallow to Dungarvan Greenway Feasibility Project

M. Quinn (DoS) introduced and explained the context which would allow Cork County Council to take the lead (2/3s of the route is in Cork) on this project. A joint working group with Cork would be in operation. He confirmed it would take into account dwellings and it was likely it could be routed around them. It was likely to intersect with St Declan's way. There was no proposal for Dungarvan and Youghal to be linked by a greenway currently.

Proposed by Cllr. J. Power, seconded by Cllr. Pratt and agreed. It was also welcomed by Cllr. Tobin who wanted it expedited quickly to give certainty to home and landowners and Cllr. McGuinness.

6. Waterford City & County Council Festival Funding Policy

M. Quinn (DoS) introduced the proposed policy, its purpose and criteria and stating its focus was on pillar festivals, new festivals and appropriate KPI evaluation of events. He also stated that it had been discussed at both the Economic and the Housing and Cultural SPCs. The policy was proposed by Cllr. O' Sullivan and seconded by Cllr. Barron.

Cllrs. Quinlan, Geoghegan, Phelan, Ryan, Mulligan, Murphy, Griffin, J. Power, Pratt and Tobin spoke on the subject with many raising concerns and suggestion of delaying a decision and having a separate workshop to discuss it were put forward.

Cllr. Mulligan proposed that a full workshop review should occur prior to any ratification, and this was seconded by Cllr. Griffin. At this point Cllrs. O' Sullivan and Barron agreed to withdraw their initial proposal and seconding. Cllr. Mulligan proposal that a workshop was needed was then accepted, members to be advised of date.

7. Strategic Policy Committee Membership

Proposed by Cllr. Daniels, seconded by Cllr. McGuinness that Cllr. Phelan join the Economic Development and Enterprise SPC. Agreed by all.

The members were informed that Cllr. Wyse resigned his position as chair of the Housing, Community, Culture, Fire, Sport & Recreation SPC, the Mayor called for nominations for a replacement chair from within the current membership of the SPC.

Cllr. Ryan proposed by Cllr. Pratt and seconded by Cllr J Power
 Cllr. E. Quinlan proposed by Cllr. Murphy and seconded by Cllr J O'Leary.
 Cllr. McGuinness proposed by Cllr. Griffin and seconded by Cllr. Hearne.
 A roll call vote was called for.

Name:	Cllr. Ryan	Cllr. E. Quinlan	Cllr. McGuinness
Ger Barron (Lab)	x		
Donal Barry (Ind)	x		
Liam Brazil (FG)		x	
Joanne Bailey (SF)			x
Joe Conway (Ind)		x	
Tom Cronin (FF)		x	
Conor McGuinness (SF)			x
Davy Daniels (Ind)	x		
Declan Doocey (FG)		x	
Pat Fitzgerald (SF)			x
Susan Gallagher (GP)	x		
Damien Geoghegan (FG)		x	
Jim Griffin (SF)			x
John Hearne (SF)			x
Joe Kelly (Ind)		x	

Eddie Mulligan (FF)		x	
Jason Murphy (FF)		x	
Pat Nugent (FG)		x	
Seamus O'Donnell (Ind)		x	
John O'Leary (FF)		x	
Lola O'Sullivan (FG)		x	
Thomas Phelan (Lab)	x		
Jody Power (GP)	x		
Seanie Power (FG)		x	
John Pratt (Lab)	x		
Eamon Quinlan (FF)		x	
Frank Quinlan (FG)		x	
Seamus Ryan (Lab)	x		
Mary Roche (Ind)	x		
James Tobin (FF)		x	
Adam Gary Wyse (FF)		x	
Total	9	17	5

As Cllr. E. Quinlan received the majority of the votes he was deemed elected.

Mayor, Cllr. Kelly proposed to suspend standing orders so that the meeting could continue until 4pm. The proposal was seconded by Cllr Wyse and agreed.

8. Local Property Tax

M. Walsh (CEO) introduced the report on the LPT including his recommendation and reasoning for a rate to be fixed at the base rate plus 15% which was a 5% increase on the previous year.

Cllrs. Daniels, Fitzgerald, McGuinness, Barry and Hearne spoke against the CEOs proposal. An amendment was tabled by Cllr, Fitzgerald to reduce the LPT by 10% which was seconded by Cllr, McGuinness. Cllr Brazil counter proposed keeping the LPT at the same level as the previous year (10% above the base) and this was seconded by Cllr Murphy. This counterproposal was supported by Cllr. O' Leary, Quinlan, Geoghegan and Conway.

Cllr Phelan asked for clarification of the actual financial impact of imposing the base rate or a base rate plus 10%. B Pollard, Head of Finance, estimated that it would be in the region of €985k for the year.

A roll call vote was called by the Mayor on the second amendment (maintaining the rate at previous year's level). Cllrs. Pratt and Bailey expressed their displeasure at there not being given time for further debate as did Cllr. Daniels. The vote proceeded with the following result.

Plenary 08/07/21 vote on LPT – second amendment proposing to maintain the LPT at the current rate.

Name:	For	Against
Ger Barron (Lab)	Yes	
Donal Barry (Ind)		Yes
Liam Brazil (FG)	Yes	
Joeanne Bailey (SF)		Yes
Joe Conway (Ind)	Yes	
Tom Cronin (FF)	Yes	
Conor D. McGuinness (SF)		Yes
Davy Daniels (Ind)		Yes
Declan Doocey (FG)	Yes	
Pat Fitzgerald (SF)		Yes
Susan Gallagher (GP)	Yes	
Damien Geoghegan (FG)	Yes	
Jim Griffin (SF)		Yes
John Hearne (SF)		Yes
Joe Kelly (Ind)	Yes	
Eddie Mulligan (FF)		Yes
Jason Murphy (FF)	Yes	
Pat Nugent (FG)	Yes	
Seamus O'Donnell (Ind)	Yes	
John O'Leary (FF)	Yes	
Lola O'Sullivan (FG)	Yes	
Thomas Phelan (Lab)	Yes	
Jody Power (GP)	Yes	
Seanie Power (FG)	Yes	
John Pratt (Lab)	Yes	
Eamon Quinlan (FF)	Yes	
Frank Quinlan (FG)	Yes	
Seamus Ryan (Lab)		Yes
Mary Roche (Ind)	Yes	
James Tobin (FF)	Yes	
Adam Gary Wyse		Yes
Total	21	10

The LPT was thus set for the coming year at the base rate plus 10% which is the same rate as the current year.

9. Correspondence

Deferred to next meeting.

10. Motions

Deferred to next meeting.

11. AOB

None

Signed: _____
Mayor

Dated: _____