

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

COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON 10TH DECEMBER, 2020 BY ZOOM

Present

Cllr. Ger Barron	Cllr. Pat Nugent
Cllr. Donal Barry	Cllr. Seamus O'Donnell
Cllr. Liam Brazil	Cllr. John O'Leary
Cllr. Breda Brennan	Cllr. Lola O'Sullivan
Cllr. Declan Clune	Cllr. Thomas Phelan
Cllr. Joe Conway	Cllr. Jody Power
Cllr. Tom Cronin	Cllr. Seanie Power
Cllr. Conor D. McGuinness	Cllr. John Pratt
Cllr. David Daniels	Cllr. Eamon Quinlan
Cllr. Declan Doocey	Cllr. Frank Quinlan
Cllr. Pat Fitzgerald	Cllr. Mary Roche
Cllr. Damien Geoghegan	Cllr. Seamus Ryan
Cllr. Jim Griffin	Cllr. Adam Wyse
Cllr. John Hearne	Cllr. Eddie Mulligan
Cllr. Joe Kelly	

Apologies: Cllr. Susan Gallagher, Cllr. Jason Murphy, Cllr. James Tobin

Officials in Attendance

Mr. M. Walsh, Chief Executive
 Mr. K. Kehoe, Director of Services, Corporate, Culture, HR & IS
 Mr. I. Grimes, Director of Services, Housing, Community & Emergency Services
 Mr. F. Galvin, Director of Services, Roads, Water & Environment
 Mr. M. Quinn, Director of Services, Economic Development and Planning
 Mr. B. Pollard, Head of Finance
 Ms. H. Dunphy, Meetings Administrator
 Mr. D. Mitchell, Corporate
 Ms. A. O'Shea, Corporate

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

1. Confirmation of Minutes

Minutes of meeting held on the 12th November 2020 proposed by Cllr. Geoghegan seconded by Cllr. Brazil and agreed by all.

Minutes of re-convened meeting held on the 24th November 2020 proposed by Cllr. Geoghegan seconded by Cllr. Brazil and agreed by all.

Minutes of Budget meeting held on the 27th November 2020 proposed by Cllr. Geoghegan seconded by Cllr. Brazil and agreed by all.

2. Matters Arising

Cllr. Roche requested that her motion regarding the broadcasting of meetings, which went to the procedures committee, is brought back to the next meeting for a decision. This was agreed by the Mayor.

3. Planning

a). Planning lists as circulated were noted.

4. Land Disposals

K. Kehoe, DoS outlined details of the land disposals as presented.

Cllr. Quinlan thanked the DoS for additional information on each disposal and asked are safeguards in place for the disposal of lands at North Quays enquiring if there is a clause in the contract that the developer is obliged to fully develop the site or can they sell on to a 3rd party.

Cllr. Phelan asked if the disposal of lands in Shandon Road would require planning permission to develop and asked if there would be a clause in the contract if the development did not proceed would lands revert to Council.

Cllr. Clune asked if a property purchased by CPO was ever sold for less than the purchase price.

Cllr. Conway said he was concerned about the disposal of the North Quays lands and was asking if the contract would not include the sale of lands. He stated he would not be supporting this land disposal.

Cllr. Ryan asked if properties purchased by the council could be put into council stock, asked for this to be discussed at the Housing SPC. He enquired about the valuation of lands and where the figure of €9M came from.

Cllr. Kelly welcomed the development of the North Quays site but had concerns about the valuation of the lands stating this is public lands.

Cllr. Mulligan raised reservations to method of land disposal and not having sight of the contract. He asked for assurances that if the development did not go ahead that lands come back into Council ownership.

Cllr. Barry asked why the property in Lismore Park and William Street did not come back into housing stock and enquired if the houses could be sold to young couples and not property developers. He stated he has every confidence in the executive and legal team and did not want to see the North Quays development delayed.

Cllr. J. Power looked for an update on the CPO in John's Hill and asked for document showing the valuation of Michael Street and North Quays lands.

Cllr. Barron stated that the disposal of North Quays lands is essential to progress the development.

Cllr. McGuinness stated concerns were being raised and looked for a standalone meeting or workshop for such an important land disposal.

Cllr. Cronin said the council should hold on to houses and not sell them on.

M. Walsh, CE said that this is the formalisation of the contract for the north Quays and needs to conclude by next week. The contract is very comprehensive and all protections are in place, the contract cannot be viewed, as it is an executive function. There has been a phenomenal effort to close the sale by Friday 18th December and not to decide to do so would jeopardise the project. He requested Council to proceed and honour agreement entered into 2-3 years and he is satisfied valuation of €9m.

K. Kehoe, DoS said that the developer would need to seek planning permission on the Shandon Road site, the cost of repair to derelict properties is too costly, all properties are sold above the valuation cost and he will come back to Cllr. Power regarding John's Hill CPO.

I. Grimes, DoS stated the Housing SPC agreed to look at the Vacant Homes Plan 2017 and will report back to Plenary with update.

Cllr. Fitzgerald noted that should be a further meeting called to discuss disposal on lands in North Quays.

Cllr. Mulligan asked for proof of funds from developer.

Cllr. Daniels noted concerns regarding development in Michael Street asking will this go ahead in tandem with the North Quays, as it is vital for City centre.

Cllr. O'Sullivan stated we need to send out a positive message and the disposal has not been rushed. She is satisfied with the Chief Executive's assurances and will propose the disposal of lands.

Cllr. Brennan said she would like more detail and is supporting Cllr. McGuinness's proposal to hold a workshop to discuss further but she is not opposing the disposal.

Cllr. J. Power seconded Cllr. O'Sullivan's proposal saying that this is a gateway project that needs to be progressed.

Cllrs. Phelan, O'Leary, Kelly, Brazil, Pratt, Nugent, S. Power and Doocey all indicated their support and happy to proceed with disposal.

Cllr. Quinlan stated a workshop would delay development and is happy with assurances given by the Chief Executive and stated we need to drive on with the development of the North Quays.

Cllr. Ryan stated that this is a major development and we have a responsibility to the public to get value for Waterford.

Cllr. D. McGuinness said a workshop would give more opportunity for discussion but he will support the land disposal.

Mayor said we have to trust the Chief and executive that the contracts are robust and Government have injected capital in the project.

Land disposal proposed by Cllr. O'Sullivan, seconded by Cllr. J. Power and agreed by all with the exception of Cllr. Conway who wanted it noted that he was not supporting the disposal.

Proposed by Cllr. Geoghegan and seconded by Cllr. Brazil to amend Standing orders and take item Nos. 6, 7 & 8 before item No. 5.

6. Arts & Festivals Grants 2021

K. Kehoe, DoS outlined details of the Grants as presented stating that two workshops had taken place to discuss allocation of monies.

Cllr. D. McGuinness, said he was happy with the support for the Irish Language and would propose adoption.

Cllr. Roche declared her association with one of the projects so would not be voting, thanking the council for supporting the Arts in Waterford.

Cllr. Pratt said he would second the proposal stating the money is important to each group.

Cllr. Barron wanted clarification that the county would be included in the Waterford Walls for 2021.

Cllr. Mulligan supports the Grants but had reservations for the reduction of €35K for the Harvest Festival as it was one of the four Pillar festivals. He asked that a strategy is developed next year to decide the Pillar festivals.

Cllr. Phelan thanked officials for all their work and stated we need to identify the Pillar festivals. He welcomed maintaining the budget for TradFest.

Cllr. J. Power said it was important to keep supporting the cultural activities.

Cllr. Kelly welcomed the support, which amounted to nearly €1.3m but had concerns with the reduction of €35k from Harvest festival.

Cllr. Barry acknowledged all the hard work of the volunteers.

Cllr. S. Power welcomed the grants especially the Comeragh Wilds and Waterford Walls which will be good for rural areas.

Cllr. O'Leary supported Cllr. Power's comments but stated we need to review the spend on festivals to spread the money countywide.

Cllr. Daniels asked could there be a midyear review if money hasn't been spent due to cancellation of festivals.

Cllr. Hearne is delighted the Waterford Walls have been extended and asked for the suburbs not to be forgotten.

Cllr. Ryan said Festivals are very important to lift the spirits and is happy with the extra funding for the Waterford Walls. He is looking for a review of Pillar festivals in 2021.

Cllr. O’Sullivan said it’s very positive and looked for a review in May and August 2021 to see if any funds would be available.

Cllr. Cronin is happy with the extra funding for the Tradfest stating it attracts visitors from around the country.

Cllr. Brennan thanked Kieran Kehoe and his team for their hard work and said it is not just economic but lifts the spirits of the people. She wished all the festivals best wishes for 2021.

Arts and Festivals grants proposed by Cllr. D McGuinness, seconded by Cllr. Pratt and agreed by all.

7. Approval for contributions to tourism related associated companies

M. Quinn, DoS outlined details of the contribution of €250k to tourism related companies who suffered a significant setback and will struggle into next year and recommended approval by council.

Approval was proposed by Cllr. Barron, seconded by Cllr. Daniels and approved by all.

8. Review of Casual Trading Byelaws

M. Quinn, DoS stated a draft will go out for public submissions and will come back to Council in February.

Cllr. Mulligan stated the Cultural Quarter will be making a submission to have casual trading spaces within the Cultural Quarter.

Cllr. McGuinness said there are more casual trading spaces needed across the county and noted Helvick and An Rinn and will be making a submission.

Agreed by all.

5. Monthly Management Report

Cllr. Conway anxious about coastal erosion and asked has there been any planning application to develop area between the beach and Pier in Tramore.

Cllr. Barry referred to the three deaths in McGuire House and asked are all appropriate measures in place, acknowledging all the hard work of the staff there.

Cllr. Daniels welcomed announcement by IDA regarding issuing of tenders to build advanced factories, he asked how we could accelerate investment in Waterford stating that we have all the amenities, he asked for workshop on the University and looked for update on the Airport.

Cllr. D. McGuinness brought up the continuing issue of homeless and stated that the Homeless Prevention Bill 2020 was coming before the Dáil.

Cllr. Brennan asked for update on the plans for the RSC and asked were funds in place.

Cllr. Hearne enquired about a change in our tenancy book to deal with offenders and asked if it would be coming to the Council for approval.

Cllr. Power asked if a feasibility study could be undertaken on the Blueway from Waterford to Passage East, he is concerned about the state of repair of the Quays from Waterford to Passage and the disappearance of the lookout at the Fiord requesting its reinstatement.

Cllr. Roche asked if the Council were making a submission on the National Development Plan and if so could it be made available to the members, looked for update on the Retail Strategy and asked if the infrastructure plans for the North Quays could be made available to the members.

Cllr. Ryan asked when the footpath programme would come to Council, he stated that 43 children will be homeless in Waterford this Christmas and this needs to be reduced and asked for support for Buskaid which raises money in conjunction with Tinteán for homelessness. He also asked what progress has been made on the extension of bus routes in the city.

Cllr. Phelan said there were issues with the Christmas lights in Dungarvan and asked what contract performance enforcements were in place also he asked was there a planning strategy for the North Quays development to ensure optimum use. He welcomed the greenway feasibility study and asked if the

Covid19 Recovery Plan could be presented in a separate document giving more detail. He commended the council on the ‘picker pals’ initiative with the tidy towns.

Cllr. Griffin asked that we re-visit the removal of rubbish bins for scenic areas and congratulated the Community Call groups for all their hard work stating that they may need to come back to Council for extra funding in the New Year.

Cllr. Barron asked if the DoS of Housing could write to the Department to ask for review to take place on the income thresholds for Housing List applicants.

Cllr. Mulligan asked if the Executive could consider employing a City Centre Marketing Manager in light of the North Quays development stating the city centre needs to be looked after.

M. Walsh, CE said there is significant opportunity for Waterford and we need to build on the good news. He said he is working on a Waterford 2040 Vision Plan, which he will bring to the Council early in the New Year. He is aware of the challenges in the City centre but the private sector need to engage and this is the opportune time with the recovery and stimulus package. There has to be a balance and Waterford Council invests more than any other Council in Ireland. Currently waiting on planning for the airport, hope to commence construction next year.

F. Galvin, DoS said he has appointed consultants to do survey on the Pier at Cheekpoint for grant application to Central Government. Footpaths will be discussed as part of the Annual Roads Programme, which will go to the District meetings in February 2021. The NTA are the licencing authority and make decision on new bus routes he said they have launched a new plan to review routes called ‘Bus Connects’ which will go out to public consultation. Litterbins are removed from beaches for the winter.

I. Grimes, DoS said the deaths in the men’s hostel was tragic and stated that the health & safety in all homeless facilities is kept under constant review and stated that our hub in Parnell Street has secured 300 new tenancies. The Anti-Social Behaviour Policy will come to Council in the New Year and he will write to the Minister for Housing to seek an update on the income limits for social housing applicants stating that at present the limits is up to €35K-€36K net.

M. Quinn, DoS stated that the Development Plan determines development in areas, he is committed to progressing the Blueway in 2021. He stated the Retail Strategy supports preparation of the Development Plan but said issues raised will be discussed by the Executive and the SPC. He will make the documents/plans for the North Quays Transport Hub available and will check if submission has been made on the National Development Plan. He stated there are no issues with the contract for the Christmas lights in the City but stated there are infrastructural problems in Dungarvan and are being dealt with as they arise. Regarding the Market and Operations Manager for the City he said that they are working on a Waterford 2040 plan investing in the City and will deliver with dedicated resources

9. Correspondence

Noted

10. Motions

Deferred to next meeting

11. AOB

The Mayor wished the Waterford hurling team well in the All Ireland final on Sunday and hoped they would return home victorious. He sent best wishes to the Waterford team, County Board and Management Team and hoped that the 61-year gap would be bridged.

Cllr. Cronin proposed that €15,000 is made available to the Waterford team and the Mayor seconded the proposal. All Councillors were in support and wished the team well.

Signed: _____
Mayor

Dated: _____