

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

COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON 10TH MARCH 2022 BY TEAMS

Present

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

Apologies: Cllr. Seamus O’Donnell and Cllr. Jody Power

Officials in Attendance

Mr. M. Walsh, Chief Executive
 Mr. K. Kehoe, Director of Services, Corporate Services, Culture & Planning
 Mr. I. Grimes, Director of Services, Housing, Community & Emergency Services
 Mr. B. Duggan, Acting Director of Services, Economic Development
 Mr. G. Hynes, Senior Engineer, Roads Dept
 Mr. B. Pollard, Head of Finance
 Ms. H. Dunphy, Meetings Administrator
 Mr. D. Mitchell, Senior Staff Officer, Corporate
 Mr. C. Power, Communications
 Mr. J. Hawkins Information Systems

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

The Mayor opened the meeting by proposing a vote of sympathy to Mr. Fergus Galvin, Director of Services, Roads, Water & Environment on the recent death of his mother Mrs Alice Galvin. This was seconded by Cllr. S. Power and unanimously supported.

1. Confirmation of Minutes

Minutes of Plenary meeting held on the 10th of February 2022 proposed by Cllr Daniels, seconded by Cllr Pratt, and agreed by all.

Minutes of Special Plenary meeting held on the 11th of February 2022 proposed by Cllr Phelan, seconded by Cllr McGuinness, and agreed by all.

Cllr. Mulligan asked for it to be noted that he was unable to attend the 11th February meeting due to a failed Antigen test.

2. Matters Arising

The Mayor proposed a resolution supporting the Ukraine and its people following the invasion by the Russian Federation, stating that “On behalf of the people of Waterford to express our community’s shock and revulsion at the unjust unprovoked and unwarranted invasion of the Ukraine “, seconded by Cllr McGuinness. Cllrs McGuinness, Tobin, Phelan, Conway, Kiely, and O’Sullivan spoke on behalf of their parties and the independent group in support and thanked the Mayor for bring forward the resolution. The resolution was passed unanimously by the members, and it was agreed to write to the Ukrainian Ambassador to Ireland to inform them

The Mayor informed the members that the First Citizens Forum of the Southeast requested that all councils in the Southeast write to the Tánaiste and Minister for Enterprise, Trade and Employment to request that the vacant IDA post of Southeast Regional Director be filled as a matter of urgency. This was proposed by the Mayor, seconded by Cllr. Griffin and agreed by all.

Cllr. McGuinness spoke to express his appreciation of staff and the Mayor for their input into the event to commemorate the 100th anniversary of the handover of Dungarvan Castle to the Provisional Government by the RIC held on 5th March 2022.

Following up on last month’s enquiry Cllr Mulligan asked about the adding of specific dates on planning appeals letters and information sent to people who make submissions. K. Kehoe, DoS stated that all dates were listed in the accompanying documentation provided but that he would endeavour to get the letter changed if that were possible.

A further request was made by Cllr. Conway for a briefing on the North Quays. Mr. Walsh, CE, agreed to have a workshop scheduled.

3. Land Disposals

K Kehoe (DOS) listed the proposed disposals for consideration.

- D751 and D776 relating to 57 and 56 Marymount Ferrybank
Proposed by Cllr. Griffin, seconded by Cllr. Fitzgerald and agreed by all.
- D727 relating to 2 car parking spaces at Harbour Bay Dungarvan
Proposed by Cllr. Cronin, seconded by Cllr. Nugent and agreed by all
- D750 relating to Ballygarra, Gleann, Carrick on Suir.
Proposed by Cllr. S. Power, seconded by Cllr. O’Leary and agreed by all

Cllr. Geoghegan asked if there might be further car parking spaces available for disposal by the council at Harbour Bay in Dungarvan. K. Kehoe, DoS, agreed to provide the information.

4. Monthly Management Report

Cllr. Murphy asked how accommodation for Ukrainian refugees would be handled by the Council and if there would be a centre with people with language and health management skills to support them. He also asked if there would be a helpline for people with enquiries on the new affordable housing programme.

Cllr. Barry asked about the future Tourism Strategy and if the Muster Vales would have a greater emphasis.

Cllr. Daniels asked if there were capital funding budgets available for more coastal erosion work. He also asked what the delivery programme was for Slainte Healthy Communities. He further enquired if there was any clarification on funding for TUSE following the appointment of a Chairman of the Board of Governors and the recent visit by the Minister for Further and Higher Education.

I Grimes, DoS, stated that the Red Cross were handling refugee accommodation offers and the Department for Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth was co-ordinating the government response. He also stated that the Affordable Housing legislation and regulations needed to be published before assistance could be given to applicants and when this happened, he expected there might be an information line.

B. Duggan, A/DoS clarified that the workshop on 8th February with Failte Ireland was the start of the consultation phase on the Waterford destination experience development plan. He also stated that they were working with the neighbouring councils on the Muster Vales promotion.

G. Hynes, SE, outlined that there were 3 funding mechanisms being used for Coastal Erosion with three schemes available – Piers and Harbour scheme (11 applications submitted), OPW Minor Works Programme and Climate Adaptation Fund which we were continuing to make applications to.

M. Walsh, CE, stated that for the Healthy Communities fund applications for around 5 or 6 projects were submitted for some more deprived areas and he would circulate details of the geographical spread. He also explained he was not party to the Minister for Further and Higher Education visit or the TUSE plans so he would not be able to comment. Regarding the support offered to Ukrainian refugees he expected that the council would have an input down the line, but IPAS and the Red Cross were currently responsible.

The Mayor also confirmed he was not party to the visit of the Minister for Further and Higher Education and TUSE.

Cllr. McGuinness enquired if an early start could be made to the traffic management plans for the tourist season so that safe access to parking could be provided. He also wanted to know if there would be an impact on the Roads Programme and other operations due to fuel price inflation and if the budget needed to be revisited. Additionally, he wanted to extend his thanks to Sinéad Breathnach for her work with the Homeless and wished her the best in her new role.

Cllr. Mulligan extended his thanks for the signage that had been erected for the “Best Place to Live”. He asked that the Planning Section of the report had details of refusals and approvals in the month could be restored to it. He enquired if the public buildings would be lit up green or in the Ukrainian colours for St. Patricks Day. He asked about Waterford twinning with Mariupol in the Ukraine as a port city. He requested update on the Period Poverty motion as previously passed.

Cllr. Hearne asked what the position would be with council tenants if they were to accommodate Ukrainian refugees.

G. Hynes, SE, stated that there was provision for fuel price increases in the budget (14% to 15% confirmed by B. Pollard) but that supplies of parts and materials might be a greater challenge. He confirmed that the roads programme would proceed as planned for now and extra funding would be sought from the Department. He appealed to the members to inform him if they know of any available fields that might be used for parking during the tourist season.

K. Kehoe, DoS, agreed to look at the content of the planning report and add back in the refusals data and pointed out that the refusal data was not always a good indicator given they varied in volume from week to week. He outlined that the council has applied for funding for period poverty, similar to other local authorities, he is hopeful this will be successful with the intention of rolling out supply through libraries. Regarding the lighting of public buildings, he confirmed that City Hall was being currently lit up in the Ukrainian colours and he was happy to take directions from the members for lighting up buildings on St Patricks Day. Twinning proposals needs to be decided upon.

I Grimes, DoS, stated that he needed to review the impact of taking in refugees. He understood that the plans for lighting for St Patricks day was green but that he would check if having the Ukrainian colours would be possible.

Cllr. S. Power enquired if there were arrangements in place for the provision of infill sites given there were possibly 4,000 house to be built and asked if areas subject to flooding be considered.

Cllr. Griffin asked that if there was a community call for the refugees similar to that that was in place for Covid and if consideration could be given to the expense costs incurred by groups and if they might be funded by central government or the council. Regarding the new Affordable Housing Scheme and the recent call for expression of interest he asked if there was a team in place to handle applications. He further pointed out that more provision for funding to deal with flooding given that more frequent deluges were occurring. Cllr. Bailey asked if a wheelchair accessibility audit had ever been done in Waterford as she said the new bins that had been installed were difficult for wheelchair bound people to use.

K. Kehoe, DoS, confirmed that infill sites were subject to planning consent and waste licenses in all locations and stated that it might be an opportunity for any landowners that might be interested.

I Grimes, DoS, stated that the new Affordable Housing Scheme was only at the expression of interest stage and there were no application forms available for submission yet.

G. Hynes, SE, confirmed that funds were available for flooding adaptation and there were many areas that needed improvement.

M. Walsh, CE, stated that the scope for any community call for refugees was not known yet. There would be many issues around child protection, garda vetting and regulations that would need to be resolved first and expected that a clearer strategy would be in place shortly. The increased flow of people would necessitate more council involvement and he expected a community call then. He said it was not feasible to carrying out a countywide wheelchair access audit. They had been done in certain areas and the council continued to work with local disability groups and representatives.

Cllr. Bailey asked if issues with accessibility could be included on CRM portal used by members to allow recording for investigation.

Cllr. Kiely asked if members of the Ukrainian community could be consulted with regards to arrangements for safeguarding and child protection. She enquired if there was any progress on EV charger rollout. She also wanted to know if the Anti-Social Behaviour workshop could also address violence against women.

Cllr. Phelan asked if the council would have any role in the governing body of TUSE. He wanted to know why there were less HAP tenancies this year as opposed to last. He also wanted an explanation of the -22 figure in the management report. He further asked if the replacement of council vehicles with EVs could be accelerated due to the fuel crisis.

Cllr. Conway noted that the planning section was short in the management report and there was nothing on dereliction in it. He wanted to know if there could be monthly reporting on dereliction and vacancy.

M. Walsh, CE stated that we have no budget for EV chargers and were dependant on grant aid and is working with other providers to make the service available. Introducing EVs to the Council fleet was underway but some of the bigger vehicle could not be replaced with EVs now and there would be a gradual transition. Regarding vacancy and dereliction, he said the council had the best record in the county and had achieved more than others. Legislation was needed to force property owners to do more but they were currently protected by their property rights. He pointed out that there were cases of some properties costing more to put back in to use than their economic value. He confirmed the Council were not party to the formulation of the final board for TUSE.

I Grimes, DoS confirmed he will include women's safety on the Anti-Social Behaviour Workshop agenda. He would check out the negative figure in the HAP figures and said that availability of units was the reason there were less HAP tenancies compared to last year,

K. Kehoe, DoS agreed to look at the inclusion in the management report of derelict sites data but suggested that a quarterly update might be a better solution as notice period are 3 months, as it takes a long time to progress any case.

Cllr. Pratt noted that Waterford was the first local authority in Ireland to be advertising the new Affordable Housing Scheme but noted that the expressions of interest were only available in the city at present and hoped it could extend to the county. He enquired if there was any way to get RAS tenants considered for

social housing as a priority and asked that the members to be positive and promote the Greenway extension to Mallow.

Cllr. Fitzgerald asked how decisions were made on spending coastal erosion funds as some residents who were in need were unsuccessful on numerous occasions. He also enquired how decisions would be made if it were necessary to curtail the roads programme due to cost inflation.

Cllr. Nugent asked if it would be possible to get SEAI to present to the members on how the retrofitting scheme funding would operate.

I Grimes, DoS, confirmed that Waterford was the first local authority to advertise the Affordable Housing Scheme, but the department asked that it be made available in the city only at first. He would actively discuss extending this to the county with the department. He confirmed that RAS tenants were not eligible for the social housing waiting list but the council was obliged to rehouse them if their tenancy ended. He agreed that a workshop with SEAI on retrofitting was a good idea.

G. Hynes, SE, stated that there was no plan to curtail the roads programme at present and the council's intention was to deliver as planned. Should cutbacks be necessary they will be applied equally across districts. The OPW allocation of funding for coastal erosion work was based on cost benefit analysis and he agreed that there were small projects that might get excluded each time and highlighted to the OPW.

5. Audit Committee Annual Report 2021 – presented by Padraic Doherty

The report was introduced by Padraic Doherty who explained their work and how the committee had met on five occasions during the year before meeting with the Local Government Auditor in December. He confirmed that the committee had completed the 2021 programme of work and asked if consideration could be given to allocating more resources in the future. He thanked the members of the committee, the Executive and staff for their work over the year.

Cllrs. Geoghegan, Mulligan, Kiely, Phelan, Conway and Mayor expressed their appreciation of the work of the Audit Committee and particularly its volunteer members for giving up their valuable time.

Cllr. Mulligan asked if there were any decision on minuting the meeting with the Local Government Auditor and if the LVP Compliance Review document could be circulated. Mr Doherty agreed to send on report. He said the meeting with the Local Government Auditor was not minuted but that the Audit Report was a product of the meeting.

Cllr. Griffin asked if there could be rotation of the Councillors who sat on the committee which Cllr. Kiely would also welcome. Mr Grimes explained that the Councillor committee members were nominated at the AGM following the election for the five-year period.

Cllr. Phelan enquired how the Council stacked up in terms of resources allocated in comparison with other authorities. Mr Doherty explained that he believed some had more and some had less, he would make enquires and let the councillor know.

Cllr. Conway enquired about Risk Management; Mr. Grimes explained that the management team had oversight of risk which was shared among the appropriate directorates.

6. Annual Service Plan 2022

The plan was introduced by K Kehoe, DoS.

Cllr. Barry spoke to support the plan. Cllr. Phelan stated that he would prefer a tabular Excel layout. He also asked if there were details of achievement against the previous plan. He further asked if an objective could be added for 2022 to examine the delegation of functions to district level.

Cllr. Conway stated that pursuing prosecution in planning enforcement cases was frustrating.

Cllr. O'Leary asked if anything could be added for Irish Water to improve issues with getting connections.

K. Kehoe, DoS, stated that the layout reflected its position as a readable Corporate Document. Excel tables were more applicable to the planning level below this which was Team Plans and was part of their presentation. He was happy to add examining delegation to district level as an objective for Corporate if

that is what the members wanted. He stated that Planning Enforcement was front and centre within the 2022 plan. He would feed back the communication issue to Irish Water.

The plan was proposed by Cllr. Barry, seconded by Cllr. Phelan and accepted by all.

7. Nomination to: Regional Health Forum South & Transportation, Infrastructure & Fire SPC

Cllr. Daniels resigned from the Regional Health Forum and the mayor thanked him for his contribution over the years. Mayor invited nominations for his replacement.

Cllr. Conway proposed Cllr. Clune, seconded by Cllr .Tobin.

Cllr. Phelan proposed Cllr. Pratt, seconded by Cllr Ryan. A roll call vote was called with the following votes cast.

Name:	D. Clune	J. Pratt	Absent	Abstain
Joanne Bailey (SF)		✓		
Ger Barron (Lab)			✓	
Donal Barry (Ind)		✓		
Liam Brazil (FG)	✓			
Declan Clune (Ind)	✓			
Joe Conway (Ind)	✓			
Tom Cronin (FF)	✓			
Conor D. McGuinness (SF)		✓		
Davy Daniels (Ind)		✓		
Declan Doocey (FG)	✓			
Pat Fitzgerald (SF)			✓	
Damien Geoghegan (FG)	✓			
Jim Griffin (SF)		✓		
John Hearne (SF)		✓		
Joe Kelly (Ind)	✓			
Cristiona Kiely (GP)		✓		
Eddie Mulligan (FF)	✓			
Jason Murphy (FF)	✓			
Pat Nugent (FG)	✓			
Seamus O'Donnell (Ind)			✓	

John O’Leary (FF)	✓			
Lola O’Sullivan (FG)	✓			
Thomas Phelan (Lab)		✓		
Jody Power (GP)			✓	
Seanie Power (FG)	✓			
John Pratt (Lab)		✓		
Eamon Quinlan (FF)			✓	
Frank Quinlan (FG)	✓			
Seamus Ryan (Lab)		✓		
Mary Roche (Ind)			✓	
James Tobin (FF)	✓			
Adam Gary Wyse (FF)	✓			
Total	16	10	6	0

Cllr. Clune was duly elected having received the majority of the votes.

Membership of the Transportation, Infrastructure & Fire SPC was proposed for Cllr Cronin by Cllr Tobin and seconded by Cllr Phelan.

8. Plenary Standing Orders

This was introduced by the Mayor who described the work that had gone on over the past number of months including workshops to produce the proposed version.

Cllr. O Sullivan asked about the need to have the meeting start time of 5pm amended as part of the updated standing orders, there were discussions involving Cllrs. Geoghegan, S. Power, Phelan, Hearne, and Tobin with a suggestion of a 2pm start time being put in place. Cllr. Mulligan proposed adopting 2pm as an amended start time which was seconded by Cllr. F. Quinlan and agreed by all.

The full Plenary Standing Orders document with the amended start time was proposed by Cllr. Geoghegan and seconded by Cllr. Tobin and agreed by all.

9. Correspondence

This was proposed by Cllr. O’ Sullivan and seconded by Cllr. O’ Leary.

Cllr. Barry wanted to express his support for the motions sent by Sligo and Tipperary Co Councils
Cllr. Geoghegan asked to be removed from proposed attendance at the training event on 24th March.

10. Notice of Motions

While there were none this month Cllr. McGuinness expressed his thanks to CPG for approving Safe Talk suicide prevention training for members without the need to pass a motion.

11. A.O.B.

Cllr. Murphy asked when physical meetings would take place again given offices were open.

Cllr. McGuinness wanted highlight that Seachtain na Gaeilge was in progress, and he expressed his thanks to those members that had spoken in Irish during the meeting.

Cllr. Barry enquired if anything was known on funding for Celtic Roots post Brexit.

K. Kehoe, DoS stated that the CPG considered the location of meetings and reminded people that Covid was still a factor that could impact business continuity for the council. Meetings for April will be considered by the CPG. He committed to contacting Celtic Roots.

The Mayor expressed his gratitude to all the councillors and executive for their recent efforts with the Ukraine and the support given at the recent rally.

Signed: _____
Mayor

Dated: _____