

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

**COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON 19<sup>th</sup> SEPTEMBER 2023 IN COUNCIL CHAMBER,  
DUNGARVAN, CO. WATERFORD.**

**Present**

|                          |                        |
|--------------------------|------------------------|
| Cllr. Joe Conway (Mayor) | Cllr. Cristiona Kiely  |
| Cllr. Ger Barron         | Cllr. Conor McGuinness |
| Cllr. Liam Brazil        | Cllr. Jason Murphy     |
| Cllr. Joeanne Bailey     | Cllr. Pat Nugent       |
| Cllr. Declan Clune       | Cllr. John Pratt       |
| Cllr. John O’Leary       | Cllr. Seanie Power     |
| Cllr. Tom Cronin         | Cllr. Thomas Phelan    |
| Cllr. Mairead Tobin      | Cllr. Jody Power       |
| Cllr. Pat Fitzgerald     | Cllr. Eamon Quinlan    |
| Cllr. Damien Geoghegan   | Cllr. Frank Quinlan    |
| Cllr. Jim Griffin        | Cllr. Mary Roche       |
| Cllr. John Hearne        | Cllr. Donal Barry      |
| Cllr. Stephanie Keating  | Cllr. David Daniels    |
| Cllr. Seamus O’Donnell   |                        |

Apologies: Cllr. Declan Doocey, Cllr. Joe Kelly, Cllr. Lola O’Sullivan, Cllr. Seamus Ryan, Cllr. Adam Wyse

**Officials in Attendance**

Mr. M. Walsh, Chief Executive  
 Mr. I. Grimes, Director of Services, Housing  
 Mr. M. Quinn, Director of Services, Economic Development  
 Mr. G. Hynes, SE, Roads  
 Mr. B. Pollard, Head of Finance  
 Mr. K. Kehoe, Director of Services, Corporate Services, IS, HR, Culture and Planning  
 Ms. H. Dunphy, Meeting Administrator  
 Ms. A. Flynn, Corporate

Votes of sympathy were expressed to Jane Cantwell, City Librarian on the death of her father and to the family of the late Peter Queally.

Cllr. S. Power proposed a minute’s silence for all those who lost their lives on our roads over the Summer and in particular the four young people who died in a crash in Clonmel and asked that a letter of sympathy issue to the Mayor of Clonmel.

**1. Confirmation of Minutes**

Plenary Meeting held on 25<sup>th</sup> July 2023 Proposed by Cllr. Brazil and seconded by Cllr. Nugent and agreed by all.

## **2. Matters Arising**

Cllr. Barry requested copy of report on the Stadbally Walk to be issued to him.

## **3. Land Disposals**

K. Kehoe, DoS outlined details of the land disposals for approval.  
Proposed by Cllr. Murphy seconded by Cllr. Brazil and agreed by all.

## **4. Monthly Management Report**

Cllr. Phelan asked that a summary of planning enforcement and details of the properties being acquired by Compulsory Purchase Order be included in the Monthly Management Report. He requested statistics in relation to vacant council houses and asked for a housing one stop shop to be held to inform the public of the wide range of supports now available. He enquired about the Walkability Audit and asked if there has been any increase in environmental enforcement and requested statistics in relation to same to be included in the Monthly Management Report and also requested an update on use of CCTV.

Cllr. Clune asked about the 17 refusals of new tenancies and asked when the 642 units under the Housing Capital Scheme will be available for allocation.

Cllr. Barry asked about waste in the River Suir and how it is being disposed of. He asked about the Council's breach of its Waste Licence. He also asked for an update on the cost of fire services provided by Waterford Fire Service to Kilkenny.

K. Kehoe, DoS in relation to planning enforcement suggested a quarterly report be provided and said details in relation to Compulsory Purchase Orders can also be provided.

I. Grimes, DoS noted in relation to vacant properties that the target is to have no more than 1½% of stock vacant at any one time. He said a one stop shop could be looked at but in the short-term information around the various schemes is available online. There has been a significant reduction in refusals since the CBL Scheme was introduced but there are some issues for people around location etc. In relation to Housing Capital Schemes, he said there are annual targets set out in the Housing Delivery Action Plan but often delivery depends on the nature of the contract. He noted that submissions from both Waterford and Kilkenny have been made to an independent mediator in relation to the fire services with his recommendations expected early October.

G. Hynes, SE said the Code of Practise for CCTV is with the Local Government Management Association, the Department of Justice and the Department of the Environment. Statistics for environmental enforcement can be included in the monthly report, the requested information in relation to the River Suir is not on hand.

M. Walsh, CE said all the conditions of the waste licence will be fully met in the future.

Cllr. Fitzgerald asked about water testing for people with their own wells which had been provided by Waterford City & County Council and asked if the service which appears to have been discontinued is to recommence.

Cllr. McGuinness requested a workshop for the members with officials of the Housing Department and officials from the Approved Housing Bodies and other interested parties. He asked if the cost of site works being included in the overall cost of affordable housing be looked at. He also asked that the Council write to the Minister and the LGMA in relation to CCTV and progressing it.

Cllr. Hearne asked if community groups could be facilitated in order for them to carry out wildflower planting.

G. Hynes, SE said the provision of water testing services will be reviewed and CCTV is being prioritised. Will work with community groups in relation to the planting of wildflowers.

I. Grimes, DoS outlined that will look at facilitating engagement with the Approved Housing Bodies. The council is committed to advancing social and affordable housing and said site costs, acquisition costs etc. are all part of the construction cost.

Cllr. J. Power asked what measures Waterford City & County Council have taken to reduce the carbon emissions of their heavy-duty machinery. He also asked if there are definite plans for the planting of 100,000 trees over the next number of years.

Cllr. Daniels asked for further details in relation to the information provided by the IDA in the management report and for clarification around some of the figures provided.

Cllr. Bailey noted that between 2019 to 2023 there was €1.578m raised in respect of the vacant site levy with €100,000 received to date leaving a sum of €1.478 outstanding and asked that a report outlining the value of the vacant sites, the number of and value of those sites where payments have been received and the number of and value of those sites where payments are outstanding be made available to members at the next Plenary Meeting. She also asked how long it takes for properties on CBL to be allocated.

G. Hynes, SE stated that the Council is moving away from the use of fossil fuel. There is a target to plant 100,000 trees and are examining our land bank to see what is available and will revert back with more information.

M. Quinn, DoS said the further information requested by Cllr. Daniels is not available as a breakdown was not provided by the IDA. He said the comparison shown was between 2022 and 2013.

B. Pollard, HoF noted that the vacant site levy is a charge on the property which has to be discharged before the property is sold and this is the means used to collect outstanding debt. There are 14 sites registered down from 18 with €100,000 collected to date.

I. Grimes, DoS outlined that the NOAC report shows the allocation time as 31 weeks in 2021. There should be significant improvement in the 2022 figures when published. He outlined that there are a number of checks required in the background including garda checks prior to allocation.

Cllr. Griffin asked the Executive if an event could be organised for January 2024 which members could attend to discuss ongoing major projects and other issues prior to the end of the current council.

Cllr. Nugent asked about solar panels for the Machinery Yard and for other Council buildings. He asked about the Residential Zoned Land Tax which will fall due on 1 February 2024.

Cllr. Murphy asked for information on reverse vending machines for Waterford. He enquired about the delay in payments to contractors carrying out housing adaptations for approved applicants. He requested that a letter issue to Iarnrod Eireann in relation to the 8:15am train from Heuston Station which terminates in Carlow as it cannot be accommodated at Plunkett Station.

K. Kehoe, DoS said the terms of the RZLT are national and applied in accordance with the scheme.

G. Hynes, SE will revert with information in relation to reverse vending machines.

I. Grimes, DoS noted that timely payments to contractors have been raised with staff adding that the grants section is extremely busy.

M. Quinn, DoS noted that works nearing completion that will all use of second track and additional service for Waterford.

Cllr. Kiely thanked the lifeguards for their service over the summer and asked for an update on water safety signage being provided in different languages. She asked about the provision of solar panel roofs for the Councils' car parks and for an update on the water quality workshop previously requested. She asked about housing for people with specific physical or intellectual needs.

Cllr. E. Quinlan asked how much has been spent on the North Quays to date. He asked if provision would be made in the 2024 budget for additional staff and also enquired about the provision of creches in housing estates.

I. Grimes, DoS noted in relation to water safety signage that Water Safety Ireland had been consulted and the preference is for image-based signage. In relation to housing for people with disabilities he said the Housing Delivery Action Plan sets out our targets for the next four years and in that document, we are committed to the delivery of 10% of total delivery for people with disabilities.

G. Hynes, SE will revert in relation to solar panel roofs and will look at providing a workshop on water quality.

B. Pollard, HoF noted the spend to date on the North Quays as €67m, €29m has been spent in 2023 with an expected €130m to €150m by the end of 2024.

K. Kehoe, DoS noted that developers are advising that small scale creches are not viable with no providers expressing interest. The area needs to be looked at nationally and locally it may need to be addressed from a policy point of view, creches are not something the Council would be building.

#### **5. Renewal of Bank Overdraft Facility of €18m for period to 31<sup>st</sup> December 2024 – For Approval**

In seeking approval for Renewal of Bank Overdraft Facility of €18m to 31/12/2024 B. Power, HoF said the overdraft facility has not been used but said it was prudent to renew and have the overdraft facility in place to end of 2024, with an interest rate of 6%.

Resolution to approve the bank overdraft facility of €18m was proposed by Cllr. Phelan, seconded by Cllr. Barron and agreed by all.

#### **6. Launch of Cost Rental Scheme in Waterford – For Noting**

I. Grimes, DoS outlined details of the proposed Cost Rental Scheme, giving details of the development and the tenancy criteria. He said where the number of qualifying applicants for an available cost rental tenancy exceeds the number of cost rental dwellings available for rental at the relevant time, Waterford City and County Council shall, through means of an independently verifiable lottery, select from the total number of applicants a number of applicants equal to the number of tenancies available.

Cllr. McGuinness, Cllr. Pratt, Cllr. Hearne, Cllr. Griffin, Cllr. E. Quinlan, Cllr. Bailey and Cllr. Phelan all spoke in support of the Scheme.

#### **7. Correspondence**

Proposed by Cllr. E. Quinlan and seconded by Cllr. Nugent and agreed by all.

#### **8. Notice of Motions**

- 1. Motion in the name of Cllr. Declan Clune, Cllr. Lola O' Sullivan, Cllr. Liam Brazil, Cllr. Mairead Tobin, Cllr. Jason Murphy, Cllr. Stephanie Keating, Cllr. Seanie Power, Cllr. Tom Cronin, Cllr. John O' Leary, Cllr. Pat Nugent, Cllr. Eamon Quinlan, Cllr. Joe Conway, Cllr. Damien Geoghegan, Cllr. Frank Quinlan, Cllr. Adam Wyse, Cllr. Joe Kelly, Cllr. Declan Doocey, Cllr. David Daniels**

*“That Waterford City & County Council support the reintroduction of the 9% Vat rate for food related businesses, and we are calling on the Minister for Finance to extend the 9% vat rate to the end of 2024”.*

**Reg. No. PS/2023/235** (dated 11<sup>th</sup> August 2023)

In proposing the motion Cllr. Clune said the food related businesses in Waterford are an integral part of our tourism and hospitality sectors. Our food related businesses, many of which are small or micro businesses, face a number of challenges including labour shortages and other business costs and asked that the members support the motion.

Cllr. Geoghegan seconded the motion saying in the current economic climate the 9% Vat rate should have been retained and with Waterford promoting itself as a food destination the reintroduction of the 9% Vat Rate is particularly important for our food related businesses.

Proposed by Cllr. Clune and seconded by Cllr. Geoghegan and agreed by all.

## **2. Motion in the name of Cllr. Declan Clune**

*“That the Elected members of Waterford City & County Council recognise the negative impact that the climate crisis is having on our communities. As leaders in our communities, we recognise our part in limiting the effects of the climate crisis including reducing the use of single use plastics. Therefore, the Elected Members of Waterford City and Council agree to discontinue the use of any types of plastic posters in future local government elections in favour of eco-friendly alternatives that support a circular economy and reduce the negative impact on our environment.”*

**Reg. No. PS/2023/236** (dated 1<sup>st</sup> September 2023)

Cllr. Clune proposed the motion by saying election posters are non-biodegradable and as such are a source of pollution. The motion asks the members to discontinue the use of any types of plastic posters in favour of eco-friendly alternatives including social media, newspapers and local radio which will benefit both the environment and our communities.

Cllr. J. Power seconded the motion saying we all recognise the negative impacts of climate change, and we should lead by example.

Cllr. Phelan, Cllr. Pratt, Cllr. Barry, Cllr. Kiely, Cllr. Hearne, Cllr. Fitzgerald, Cllr. O’Leary, Cllr. E. Quinlan, Cllr. McGuinness, Cllr. Murphy, Cllr. Geoghegan and Cllr. Bailey all contributed to a discussion on the motion.

It was agreed by a show of hands to refer the motion to the Environment, Biodiversity & Climate Change Strategic Policy Committee and Corporate Policy Group for consideration and to review best practice in other local authorities.

## **3. Motion in the name of Cllr. Conor D. McGuinness, Cllr. Jim Griffin, Cllr. Joanne Bailey, Cllr. John Hearne, Cllr. Pat Fitzgerald, Cllr. Thomas Phelan, Cllr. Gerard Barron, Cllr. Seamus Ryan, Cllr. John Pratt**

*“That Waterford City and County Council:*

- *Stands in solidarity with FÓRSA members in Waterford City and County Council and other local authorities across the state as they commence industrial action to address issues relating to job evaluation and pay.*
- *supports their call for a formal job evaluation process to ensure workers jobs are properly graded and enumerated.*
- *calls on Minister for Housing Darragh O’Brien, the LGMA and the executive of Waterford City and County Council to return to negotiations with FÓRSA and other public sector unions and to agree a*

*mechanism for progressing the job evaluation process”*. **Reg. No. PS/2023/237** (dated 11<sup>th</sup> September 2023)

In proposing the motion Cllr. McGuinness said that FÓRSA is one of the largest unions representing local government workers and they have commenced industrial action to address issues relating to job evaluation and pay. This motion supports their call for a formal job evaluation process to ensure workers jobs are properly graded and enumerated and calls on the Minister, the LGMA and the Executive to return to negotiations with FÓRSA and other public sector unions.

Cllr. Phelan seconded the motion saying members work closely with staff in all Council Departments and are dependent on them in assisting constituents.

Proposed by Cllr. McGuinness and seconded by Cllr. Phelan and agreed by all.

## **9. AOB**

Cllr. Geoghegan asked that the CRM reporting system be refined to indicate whether the person to whom a representation is referred to is available to deal with it.

Cllr. Griffin clarified his early request for a meeting between members and the Executive to discuss ongoing major projects and other issues prior to the end of the current council.

K. Kehoe, DoS agreed to have early in Q1 2024.

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_  
Mayor of Waterford City & County Council

Dated: \_\_\_\_\_



Comhairle Cathrach & Contae Phort Láirge  
Waterford City & County Council

**Resolution of the Elected Members  
Waterford City and County,  
Plenary Council Meeting  
19<sup>th</sup> September 2023  
Ref: 2023/18**

Waterford City & County Council (the “**Council**”)

**IT WAS RESOLVED:**

That the Elected Members of the Council do hereby approve the terms and conditions applicable to overdraft facility in the amount of €18,000,000.00 made available by Allied Irish Banks, p.l.c. (the “**Bank**”) to the Council under the Offer Letter dated 28<sup>th</sup> July 2023.

**IT WAS FURTHER RESOLVED:**

That the Mr. Michael Walsh, Chief Executive of the Council and Mr. Bernard Pollard, being the Head of Finance of the Council, are hereby authorised to sign the Offer Letter jointly on behalf of the Council and such other authorities, documents and instructions that the Bank may require to be signed by the Council in connection with the Facilities.

Dated this ..... day of ..... 2023

Proposed by Cllr. Phelan and seconded by Cllr. Barron.

Certified a true extract from the Minutes of the Council

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Cllr. Joe Conway  
Mayor of Waterford City & County

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Honor Dunphy  
Meetings Administrator