

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

**RECONVENED COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON 25<sup>th</sup> JULY 2023 BY MS TEAMS**

**Present**

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

**Officials in Attendance**

Mr. M. Walsh, Chief Executive  
 Mr. I. Grimes, Director of Services, Housing  
 Mr. M. Quinn, Director of Services, Economic Development  
 Mr. F. Galvin, Director of Services, Roads, Water and Environment  
 Mr. B. Pollard, Head of Finance  
 Mr. L. McGree, Senior Planner, Planning  
 Ms. H. Dunphy, Meeting Administrator  
 Ms. A. Flynn, Corporate

**1. Confirmation of Minutes**

Plenary Meeting held on 8<sup>th</sup> June 2023 Proposed by Cllr. Geoghegan and seconded by Cllr. Keating and agreed by all.

Plenary AGM held on 29<sup>th</sup> June 2023 Proposed Cllr. O’Sullivan by and seconded by Cllr. Fitzgerald and agreed by all.

**2. Matters Arising**

None

### **3. Land Disposals**

L. McGree, SP outlined details of the land disposals for approval.

Cllr. Kelly queried the disposal of the 16.6 acres at Woodstown for €10,000 while 0.54 acres at Ballybeg was being disposed of for €20,000 and expressed concern in relation to the proximity of the land to Woodstown Viking Site.

Cllr. Murphy asked what development was proposed for this site.

Cllr. Geoghegan asked for clarification around legal costs.

L. McGree, SP explained that the 16.6 acres at Woodstown were owned by Sean Johnston under a 999-year lease and we are disposing of the fee simple title to him as there are burdens in the lease restricting development. There were currently no proposals to develop the land and its proximity to the Woodstown Viking Site would be a consideration in accessing any planning application. In relation to the 0.54 acres at Ballybeg Drive he said here we are disposing of land in our ownership. He said legal costs vary and he did not have a detailed breakdown. There are various circumstances where costs would be borne by both sides which include the transfer of title from leasehold to freehold or the disposal of land for development.

Cllr. Kelly reiterated the low valuation of the land at Woodstown which equated to €602 an acre with Cllr. J. Power and Cllr. S. Power in agreement.

Cllr. J. Power asked the rental value of the ducting to Virgin Media if it were leased to Virgin Media and other utility companies and Cllr. Ryan asked if the ducting would be available to other utility suppliers.

L. McGree, SP said the lands at Woodstown are owned and in the possession of Sean Johnson. We are disposing of the freehold title to him for €10,000 as determined by Avison Young. In relation to the disposal of ducting to Virgin Media the duct is already constructed, and Virgin Media will be constructing chambers and they have exclusive use. Use by other utility suppliers would be an arrangement between Virgin Media and the Supplier. Information in relation to income generated from the rental of ducting elsewhere will be circulated to Members.

Proposed by Cllr. Fitzgerald and seconded by Cllr. Clune and agreed by members with Cllr. Kelly and Cllr. Griffin abstaining.

### **4. Monthly Management Report**

Cllr. E. Quinlan asked if there was a means of reaching out to social media influencers regarding the many tourist attractions in Waterford to ensure what they post on social media showcases all that Waterford has to offer. He asked that those who had previously applied for a fixed track hoist be notified that this is now available under the Housing Adaptation Grant for People with a Disability. He asked that applications for extensions to local authority houses be detailed in the Monthly Management Report.

Cllr. McGuinness asked that the Executive and the Mayor write to the Local Government Management Association requesting that they engage with the trade union, Unite, to prevent escalation of the Water Services Unite Members Industrial Action and to address the issues affecting these water services workers. He asked about his previous requests for a meeting with the Minister for Transport to discuss the N25.

Cllr. Ryan requested an update on the sustainable transport bridge. He requested bunting in City and throughout the County in support of the Waterford Camogie Team and suggested a big screen to show the Camogie All Ireland Final. He asked that there be engagement with communities in relation to the Climate Action Plan.

M. Quinn, DoS said that he would refer the issue in relation to social media posts by influencers to the Local Enterprise Office. In relation to the bridge he said the construction barges are in place to begin piling works for the bridge's four pier foundations, works due to start in July. Further detail would be provided in the next newsletter. Provision of bunting and a big screen for the Camogie All Ireland Final were being looked at.

I. Grimes, DoS said writing to those who had previously applied for a fixed track hoist would be looked at. He noted that there have been no extensions to local authority houses in some time saying where there is overcrowding in existing social houses tenants are generally accommodated by a transfer.

F. Galvin, DoS will issue a follow up letter to the Minister.

Due to ongoing union discussions, there was no response to Cllr. McGuinness's request.

Cllr. Barry asked that should the Celtic Routes Project end could a specific tourism promotion programme be put in place to encourage Welsh people to visit Waterford City & County. He asked that any increase in revenue following the completion of the current rent view be ringfenced for housing adaptations. He asked if there is a programme of works in place to replace windows and doors in local authority houses and requested an update on the Copper Coast Trail and the Knockaderry Reservoir Feasibility Study.

Cllr. Murphy asked why properties were advertised on CBL several weeks in advance of allocation. He queried the delay in processing payments for contractors carrying out works on private dwellings where housing adaptation grants had been approved. He asked if full funding is available to the Council to purchase the properties under the Tenant in situ Scheme.

Cllr. J. Power asked if the scrap trawler opposite Reginald's Tower could be removed and asked that a survey of the Viking Ship near the location of the sustainable transport bridge be carried out.

M. Quinn, DoS noted that there are ongoing discussions in relation to sustaining the Celtic Routes Project. He noted that the Copper Coast Trail and the Knockaderry Reservoir Feasibility Study are district issues. In outlined that archaeological surveys are carried out in all areas where work is being undertaken for the sustainable transport bridge.

I. Grimes, DoS said that the use of any increased revenue as a result of the Rent Review was a budgetary matter. Currently there is no Central Government Scheme for the replacement of windows and doors and said properties are advertised on CBL as early as possible to allow for the required checks prior to an allocation. He will discuss payments to contractors both Finance and the Housing Adaptation Grants Team. He said the Tenant in situ Scheme is fully funded.

Cllr. O'Leary enquired about group water schemes, how many there were and if there were any to be taken in charge.

Cllr. Bailey said she was awaiting a report regarding the vacant site levy and asked for confirmation that Waterford City & County Council had not collected the vacant site levy since 2018 leaving a sum of over €2m uncollected. She asked when the Council will commence collection of the vacant site levy and requested a list of sites and the value of those sites.

Cllr. Kelly asked about the designation of areas as nesting sites for Barn Owls to further increase their population in Waterford. He enquired if the various Government schemes and initiatives in relation to housing had resulted in reducing the numbers looking for social housing. He asked what

the policy was in relation to applications for extensions to local authority houses and enquired if there would be increases in rents that were not related to increases in household income as a result of the Rent Review.

F. Galvin, DoS said he did not have the exact number of private group schemes and said applications to be taken in charge should be directed to Uisce Éireann.

L. McGree, SP said in relation to vacant sites that a full and comprehensive report would be presented to the members at the next Plenary Meeting.

B. Pollard, HoF said there has been some collection of levies charged on vacant sites and he would revert with the figure.

I. Grimes, DoS said there has been an increase in Housing Applications between June 2022 and June 2023 due in part to the increase in income limits and said the key for the Housing Department is to maintain a high level of allocations. There is no policy that prevents extensions to local authority houses, applications are looked at but for a number of reasons a transfer to another local authority house is often the most practical solution. He said the Rent Scheme allowed for the phasing of increases over a number of years so the rent review may result in an increase in rent even though there has been no increase in household income.

L. McGree, SP will talk to the Heritage Officer in relation to nesting sites for Barn Owls.

Cllr. Hearne commented that Larchville/Lisduggan has again been selected as one of the best communities in the Country and commended council staff for their involvement and asked if there could be similar involvement in other estates by the community section.

Cllr. Daniels said the IDA recently announced its 2023 mid-year results and asked if any of the investments came to Waterford. He requested a breakdown by sector of the number of jobs created in Waterford by the IDA and asked if a meeting with Michael Lohan CEO IDA Ireland was possible to address concerns. He also requested an update on the Airport.

Cllr. Roche asked for clarity in relation to the numbers of housing applications assessed and the number of allocations in 2023. She said she supported Cllr. McGuinness in relation to the N25 and asked about the N24 and the removal of the toll on the N25. She asked that the minutes of Council Meetings pre-merger be made available online.

M. Quinn, DoS said he would ask the IDA for the information requested.

F. Galvin, DoS said in relation to the removal of the toll on the N25 that a huge amount of work has already been done on it and he hopes to move it forward in the coming weeks.

I. Grimes, DoS said that going forward each council estate will have dedicated Estate Management Officers. He clarified the figures in the Monthly Management Report commenting that there were 487 allocations in 2022 and the figure of 151 represented allocations in 2023 to date.

M. Walsh, CE in relation to the Airport said that the documents for submission to the Government are prepared and confirmation from private sector investment that the additional monies are forthcoming is awaited.

H. Dunphy, MA said that making the minutes of the Council Meetings pre-merger available on the website would be looked at.

Cllr. Keating asked how many Ukrainian refugees and International Protection applicants have been accommodated to date and if there is adequate accommodation available. She asked what the process is for matching people with pledged and other accommodation. She queried the 29% budget spend to date under the Road Transportation & Safety Programme.

Cllr. Kiely asked about security at our libraries in light of recent incidents elsewhere by far-right groups. She also mentioned Rás na mBan which comes to Waterford on Saturday 9th September 2023 and asked if there are any plans for large screens to show the Camogie All Ireland Final.

Cllr. Fitzgerald said that many playgrounds throughout the county required upgrading and asked about funding available to do this work and whether there should be a dedicated unit in the council to look after playgrounds.

I. Grimes, DoS said that approximately 2,400 Ukrainian refugees have been registered in Waterford to date and have been accommodated temporarily or in longer term pledged accommodation or accommodation sourced by Waterford Council. He said the 'offer a home' pledge call for vacant properties is still open and said he would circulate the contact details of the team involved.

L. McGree, SP said security at libraries would be reviewed on an ongoing basis.

F. Galvin, DoS said the Income & Expenditure Summary is to 31 May 2023 and said the full amount of the allocation for 2023 will be spent in the current year. In relation to playgrounds he said there is specific revenue funding for playgrounds which are inspected weekly with repairs generally contracted out because of the specialist nature of some of the equipment. There is also funding in the Capital Plan for the upgrade and replacement of existing playground equipment over the next three years.

Cllr. Pratt requested details on the lead pipe replacement scheme and who was administering the scheme. He asked if areas could be identified where lead pipes were used in properties.

F. Galvin, DoS said the lead piping replacement grant is administered by local authorities and an information leaflet and claim form are available to download on our website. He said the general advice would be if you live in an older house, you should check if you have lead piping and suggested an advertising campaign to make people aware that lead is a health risk and the most effective way to reduce exposure to lead in drinking water is to replace lead piping.

## **5. Approval for borrowing of €5m for Cost Rental Housing**

Approval for borrowing of €5m for Cost Rental Housing was proposed by Cllr. Geoghegan and seconded by Cllr. Murphy and agreed by all.

## **6. Climate Action Plan - Update**

Grainne Kennedy, SEE presented the Climate Action Plan Pre-consultation Report which set out the 23 submissions received during the consultation period which ran from 8<sup>th</sup> May to 26<sup>th</sup> June. Submissions were made by individuals, groups such as the Older Persons Council and by organisations such as SETU. The Draft Climate Action Plan will be available for the public to view and contribute to in late September/early October with the Final Climate Action Plan being presented to the Members in December 2023 or January 2024.

## **7. Filling of WWETB Vacancy**

WWETB Vacancy to be filled as a result of the resignation of Cllr. Cristiona Kiely. In order to maintain the gender balance quota, the resignation of Cllr. Kiely needs to be filled by a female councillor.

Cllr. McGuinness proposed Cllr. Joanne Bailey, seconded by Cllr. Ryan and agreed by all.

## 8. Correspondence

Proposed by Cllr. Ryan and seconded by Cllr. Wyse and agreed by all.

## 9. Notice of Motions

### 1. Motion in the name of Cllr. Thomas Phelan, Cllr. Seamus Ryan, Cllr. John Pratt, Cllr. Ger Barron

*“Waterford City & County Council recognise and appreciate the positive benefits that have been brought about through Active Travel Funding and would welcome more. However, we also acknowledge that limitations on the Active Travel scheme mean that it is increasingly focussed on larger urban areas and cannot be used for the badly needed maintenance and repair of deteriorating footpaths. In the interests of pedestrians, particularly people with disabilities, we therefore hereby resolve to write to Minister Eamon Ryan to formally notify him that we upon the Department of Transport to provide ringfenced funding (separate from roads funds and also distinct from Active Travel funding) to Local Authorities to assist significantly and substantially with the costs of maintaining and repairing existing footpaths and to assist significantly and substantially with the costs of providing new footpaths that are not eligible for Active Travel funding. And we further call upon Minister Ryan and the Department of Transport to ensure that Local Authorities would have discretion and autonomy to use such dedicated footpaths funding without having to receive approval from the Department, the NTA, or any other agency, on a per project basis; and to ensure that there would be no other bureaucratic obstacles to the expeditious spending of such urgently needed footpath funding.”*

**Reg. No. PJ/2023/234** (dated, 28<sup>th</sup> June 2023)

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

Proposing the motion Cllr. Phelan said it was imperative to have dedicated footpaths funding over which the local authority would have discretion and autonomy to use without having to seek further approval.

Cllr. Ryan seconded the motion saying the motion calls on the Minister to provide ringfenced funding for footpaths separate from roads funds and also distinct from Active Travel funding and called on the Members to support the motion.

Cllr. O’Leary, Cllr. Kelly, Cllr. Kiely, Cllr. McGuinness, Cllr. Pratt, Cllr. Bailey, Cllr. J. Power, Cllr. Hearne, Cllr. Geoghegan and Cllr. F. Quinlan all spoke in support of the motion with Cllr. Kelly suggesting the motion be circulated to all local authorities.

## 10. AOB

To facilitate councillors’ attendance at the AILG conference on the 14<sup>th</sup> September it was proposed that the September Plenary Council Meeting is scheduled on Tuesday 19<sup>th</sup> September 2023. Proposed by Cllr. F. Quinlan and seconded by Cllr. Pratt and agreed by all.

Mayor, Cllr. Joe Conway extended congratulations to all concerned on the opening of the New Ross to Glenmore Greenway. He congratulated the Senior Camogie Team on being 2023 All-Ireland Finalists and wished them the very best on 6<sup>th</sup> August 2023.

Cllr. Pratt asked that a letter be send to the Joint Policing Committee in relation to losing the Garda Sergeant in Tallow.

Cllr. F. Quinlan asked that buildings be lit up and flags be flown in advance of the All-Ireland Senior Camogie Match on Sunday the 6<sup>th</sup> August.

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

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