

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

**COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON 12<sup>th</sup> OCTOBER 2023 IN COUNCIL CHAMBER, CITY  
HALL WATERFORD.**

**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. Lola O’Sullivan	Cllr. Seanie Power
Cllr. Tom Cronin	Cllr. Thomas Phelan
Cllr. Adam Wyse	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. Declan Doocey	Cllr. Joe Kelly
Cllr. Seamus Ryan	

Apologies: Cllr. Seamus O’Donnell, Cllr. John O’Leary, Cllr. Mairead Tobin

**Officials in Attendance**

Mr. M. Walsh, Chief Executive  
 Mr. I. Grimes, Director of Services, Housing, Community & Emergency Services  
 Mr. M. Quinn, Director of Services, Economic Development  
 Mr. F. Galvin, Director of Services, Roads, Water & Environment  
 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

**1. Confirmation of Minutes**

Plenary Meeting held on 19<sup>th</sup> September 2023 proposed by Cllr. Wyse, seconded by Cllr. Roche and agreed by all.

**2. Matters Arising**

Cllr. McGuinness requested update on hosting workshop with the Approved Housing Bodies and correspondence to the Minister and the LGMA in relation to CCTV and if response has been received.

Cllr. Fitzgerald requested update on staff recruitment to recommence water testing of private water supplies.

K. Kehoe, DoS said recruitment process is still ongoing.

I. Grimes, DoS said the workshop with the Housing Approved Bodies has not yet been organised.

F. Galvin, DoS outlined that draft Codes of Practice for use of CCTV are currently being developed and are due to be presented to the Minister and the houses of the Oireachtas by year end. In relation to testing of private water supplies households need to arrange private testing of water as the Council does not have the capacity to do so.

### **3. Land Disposals**

K. Kehoe, DoS outlined details of the land disposals for approval.

Cllr. Clune asked the members to be mindful in relation to land disposals which could be the subject of debate in the future.

Cllr. McGuinness said he agreed with Cllr. Clune and asked if the press and the public have prior access to the land disposal documents.

Cllr. Murphy asked for clarification that the Councillors would have no knowledge of any future development of the land being disposed of.

Cllr. Fitzgerald asked about disposal of land at Grange Heights.

K. Kehoe, DoS said in relation to land disposals that the press become aware of them when the Agenda is published which is 5 days ahead of the meeting. He noted that council disposing of the Fee Simple interest in the lands at Grange Heights which are held under long leases.

Proposed by Cllr. J. Power, seconded by Cllr. P. Nugent and agreed by all.

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

Cllr. Kelly noted the increase in housing applications for 2023 and commented on the housing loan applications. He asked what can be done to reverse or deal with these upward trends.

Cllr. Hearne asked for an update on Woodstown Viking Site.

Cllr. O'Sullivan mentioned the Halloween event in Ballybricken and asked that people be encouraged to attend and enjoy Halloween safely. She asked how many single men and people over sixty are on the housing list. In relation to the Electoral Register she asked what was being done to encourage people to register and to encourage those already on the Register to update their details.

I. Grimes, DoS said the increase in income limits for social housing has resulted in an increase in applications and also includes tenants-in-situ applications. He said this year we have delivered in excess of 450 social, affordable & cost rental houses across Waterford city and county and would hope to exceed the target of just under 1300 houses in our Housing Delivery Action Plan 2022 to 2026. He said the provision of information relating to single men and people over sixty on the Housing List will be looked at.

K. Kehoe, DoS will revert with information in relation to the Woodstown Viking Site.

H. Dunphy, Meeting Administrator outlined that currently running a local campaign from mid-October to mid-November with a leaflet drop to all households across city & county, running local radio adverts and advertising on social media. She noted that information sessions will be held in four shopping centres and said the purpose is to encourage people to register and those already on the Register to update their details to improve the accuracy of the Register.

Cllr. Nugent welcomed the suspending of the Residential Zoned Land Tax for one year. He also asked about two particular housing voids and when they would be brought back into use.

Cllr. Murphy asked about the Choice Based Letting Scheme and asked if the 30% refusal rate was because housing applicants were under the impression that a housing allocation was based on the number of times they bid on CBL and was not based on their time on the housing waiting list. He also asked that more detail be provided in relation to Capital Projects.

K. Kehoe, DoS said the Residential Zoned Land Tax was deferred for one year in Budget 2024, the reason being the delay by An Bord Pleanála in processing appeals.

I. Grimes, DoS will follow up directly with Cllr. Nugent in relation to the voids saying that there can be delays in houses being handed back to the Council and outlined that the housing allocation process has nothing to do with bidding or otherwise on CBL. The detail in relation to Capital Projects is provided at district level.

Cllr. Barry asked if talks were taking place with the IDA about new jobs for Waterford. He enquired about the South East Regional Enterprise Plan and the Tourism Strategy and he congratulated the Dungarvan Tourism Office who won the title of 'Best Local Tourism Office' at the Travel2Ireland Awards 2023. He asked that where a local authority tenant rents out a room under the Rent-a-Room Scheme if this income would be included for the purposes of rent assessment.

Cllr. Ryan asked for an update on the Council's application for mobile library services funding and asked about the provision of a housing one stop shop to inform the public of the various housing supports now available. He noted that housing applicants should be able to view a property allocated to them.

Cllr. J. Power asked, with reference to the planting of 100,000 trees, for a map of public lands in Waterford and asked if traffic wardens could issue on the spot fines for littering and dog fouling.

I. Grimes, DoS will follow up on the Rent-a-Room scheme, the provision of a one stop shop would be kept under consideration adding that there is a national online communication being launched by the LGMA and that there is also a substantial amount of information on the Council's own website. Currently staff resources not available to facilitate viewing of properties allocated.

K. Kehoe, DoS will follow up on the application for mobile library services funding. In relation to a map of public lands he said it would be best to first identify the best locations for the tree planting.

M. Quinn, DoS said currently Fáilte Ireland are amending the Tourism Plan as a result of engagement with the Council and the other stakeholders and the Plan will be brought to the Members for adoption towards the end of the year. There is engagement with the IDA periodically and they are constantly working to attract investment and there has been success in growing existing businesses. In relation to the South East Regional Enterprise Plan he said he expects a new plan will be progressing in the near future.

F. Galvin, DoS outlined that it was better to keep the responsibilities and duties of the traffic wardens and environment enforcement officers separate as there are different skill sets attached to both.

Cllr. Geoghegan welcomed the clarification in relation to the CBL scheme and agreed with Cllr. Murphy that housing applicants were under the impression that a housing allocation was based on their interaction with the CBL Scheme. He asked in relation to the deferral of the Residential Zoned Land Tax when decisions will issue from An Bord Pleanála and if those decisions could be compiled for Members as the Members will have to decide in relation to any rezoning of lands.

Cllr. Doocey asked if there was any re-course for private landowners in relation to difficulties with HAP tenants. He welcomed the deferral of the RZLT as many of the sites were not serviced. He asked about derelict houses and their impact on neighbouring houses and said the move away from solid fuel was a concern for tenants as alternative heating systems were expensive.

Cllr. Daniels asked that further information be sought from the IDA in relation to job creation, noting the opportunities that will be available on the North Quays. He asked about the tree cutting programme and about getting sweepers in to housing estates to clear leaves.

K. Kehoe, DoS in relation to RZLT said a report will be available in December, some decisions are still awaited from An Bord Pleanála, but he said he does not expect there to be any radical variations of plans. Lands identified for the RZLT were serviced sites or those sites that could be serviced.

I. Grimes said the Residential Tenancies Board (RTB) provide a dispute resolution service for landlords and tenants however he said non-payment of rent by HAP tenants can be addressed by the Council. In relation to derelict houses he said the Vacant Homes Refurbishment Grant is being implemented and said the Housing Department are working closely with the Planning Department to identify vacant and derelict properties to try bringing them back into use. Issues in relation to the environment and waste should be brought to the Council's attention. In relation to the Housing Efficiency Retrofitting Programme he said the tenants in the properties selected for retrofitting are made aware of the benefits of the new system including the significant savings.

M. Quinn, DoS said the IDA are aware of the development on the North Quays saying they require absolute certainty in relation to a property prior to looking for potential investors for that property.

F. Galvin, DoS said the annual tree maintenance programme has begun as has the sweeping of leaves in estates.

Cllr. F. Quinlan said he wished to add his voice to those who had already spoken in relation to housing applicants being led to believe that the allocations process was linked to bidding on CBL.

Cllr. Roche asked when the planning application in respect of the North Quays would come before the Council and asked for update on the current situation in relation to a business case for the Airport. In relation to litter enforcement she asked why there was such a huge difference between complaints received and notices actually issued.

Cllr. E. Quinlan said he concurred with the other Councillors in relation to the issue with. He enquired if it was intended to have access onto the river from the North Quays and if so, was an application for the licence to be made to the Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine. He asked about the provision of park and ride car parks on the outskirts of Ferrybank to facilitate people working and shopping on the North Quays. He asked about the reporting by tenants of anti-social behaviour and how this could be improved.

M. Walsh, CE outlined that the planning application for the North Quays is being prepared and is expected to be submitted in November, the business case for the Airport is ready to go to Government with formal confirmation in terms of the investment awaited.

F. Galvin, DoS said in relation to litter enforcement that all complaints are investigated. In relation to park and ride he said there is a proposal in the Waterford Metropolitan Area Transport Strategy to have a park and ride located in South Kilkenny that would service the City Centre and the North Quays.

I. Grimes, DoS will discuss options in relation to anti-social behaviour offline with Cllr. E. Quinlan.

M. Walsh, CE said in relation to access to the waterfront on the North Quay that the intention was the continued use for bigger vessels, primarily cruise vessels.

Cllr. Bailey asked if there is a designated engineer to service the air to water systems and when they were last serviced. She also asked who is responsible for breakdown during out of hours and enquired as to the cost of maintaining same since their introduction. She requested a detailed report be provided at the end of the year in relation to Derelict Sites.

Cllr. Kiely asked when the business case for the Airport will go to Government and asked if it could be presented to the Members and requested a presentation by the Board of the Airport in relation to

the business case. She asked if a park and ride car park could be provided to facilitate those attending Winterval. She said she would like to add her voice to the concerns already expressed in relation to CBL and asked if virtual viewing of properties allocated might be an option. She enquired when the Biodiversity Officer would be in place and what their role would be.

Cllr. McGuinness said Budget 2024 did little to address the housing crisis with no increase in capital spending and no increase in targets. He said the workshop with Irish Water was useful and said he hoped there would be further opportunities to engage with them. It was disappointing to note that the wastewater treatment plant for Bunmahon is still several years away. He seconded Cllr. Daniels suggestion that we request the IDA to come and present to the members. He congratulated all involved in the Waterford Decade of Centenaries.

K. Kehoe, DoS noted that workshop on derelict sites can be organised towards the end of the year. The Biodiversity Officer will work closely with the Heritage Officer and other professionals within the local authority saying the role is funded through the Heritage Council.

M. Quinn, DoS said park and ride facilities are being looked at. In relation to the IDA, he will issue an invitation to them to present to the Members.

I. Grimes, DoS said where tenants have issues in relation to their heating system they should contact Customer Services and have the issue logged for Housing Maintenance. The virtual viewing of properties can be looked at.

M. Walsh, CE said the business case will be made available once submitted.

Cllr. Fitzgerald supported Cllr. Murphy in relation to bidding on CBL. He said it is rare to see a property along the coastline on CBL and said apart from Part V development there has been little or no social housing being provided anywhere along the coastline and said people from these areas, in the absence of social housing, have little or no hope of continuing to live there.

Cllr. Wyse said he is confident the housing situation is going to improve and he thanked the Housing Department for implementing the various schemes. In relation to assessable income for rent purposes he said where a person is paying maintenance, the amount of maintenance is included in total income assessed and for the person in receipt of a maintenance payment this income is also included for rent purposes and asked if the maintenance payment was treated as disregarded income for the purposes of rent calculation for both parties how this would affect the Council's income from rent.

Cllr. Phelan also wished to add his voice to that of Cllr. Murphy in relation to the issue with CBL, he asked if the showing of houses can not happen in person or virtually that photographs of both inside and outside of the property be provided.

Cllr. Pratt asked about the existence of mould in some council properties and in particular in a property that has just recently been allocated.

I. Grimes, DoS said that the Housing Delivery Action Plan indicates the distribution of social housing based on the housing list with several of the coastal towns included. The availability of serviced land is an issue in certain locations, but it is something that is being looked at. He said disregarding income for the purposes of rent calculation for both parties in relation to maintenance payments could be looked at but said income that is assessable and non-assessable in our Rent Scheme is set out in Department Regulations. In relation to the issue of mould he said it is the responsibility of the tenant unless there is an underlying problem which would be looked at.

K. Kehoe, DoS said since the Development Plan was adopted last year that 1400 residential units have been granted in Waterford city and county, 200 are individual units and 150 of them are one off rural houses.

## **5. Southeast Regional Homeless Action Plan 2023 – 2026 – For Approval**

I. Grimes, DoS said for the purpose of the Plan, the South East Region consists of Waterford City & County Council, Wexford County Council, Kilkenny County Council, Carlow County Council and Tipperary County Council with Waterford City & County Council the lead local authority. Its focus is on the reduction of homelessness, support for rough sleepers, provision of emergency accommodation, support the health needs of people who are homeless, prevent family, child and youth homelessness and strengthen and improve interagency collaboration.

Cllrs. Hearne, Phelan, Keating, E. Quinlan, McGuinness, Phelan, Roche, Barry, J. Power, Kiely, Murphy, Fitzgerald and Kelly welcomed the report and noted the following in relation to the Plan – expansion of the definition of a homeless person, need to reference the scarcity of affordable rental accommodation among the contributing factors, need to have alternatives to hostels for the 65+ age cohort, the need for WCCC as lead authority to have a co-ordination role, need for a clear protocol for people leaving abusive situations, need to address lack of daytime facilities for people, need for safe storage facilities for people between accommodation, need to follow up on those that have availed of homeless services, need for extra resources to implement plan, challenges for single men who find themselves homeless and challenges to tenants who find themselves homeless due to landlords selling the property. It was requested that a copy of the protocols in relation to housing people being released from prison be circulated.

I. Grimes, DoS noted comments as outlined.

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

## **6. Climate Action Plan**

F. Galvin, DoS said that the Climate Action Plan will be before the Members for adoption early next year. The Plan has a number of main targets and ambitions and looks at the Council itself and our operations and how we plan to reduce our own carbon emissions and improve our energy efficiency over the next number of years to the statutory European & National targets. It also looks at how we adapt our operations to deal with the anticipated change in climate and looks at how we engage with and facilitate the wider community including the business sector on how they can tackle climate change.

Cllr. O’Sullivan, Cllr. Hearne, Cllr. Phelan, Cllr. Barron, Cllr. Kelly, Cllr. Nugent, Cllr. J. Power and Cllr. Kiely all spoke to support the plan. F. Galvin, DoS noted that upcoming workshops will provide opportunities to discuss further.

## **7. Correspondence**

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

Cllr. Ryan asked that the Members support the motion received from Cork City Council.

## **8. Notice of Questions – Not for Discussion**

Noted

**9. AOB**

Cllr. Geoghegan asked that we light up our public buildings on October 15<sup>th</sup> for Baby Loss Awareness.

Cllr. Hearne mentioned event in the Tower Hotel on October 12th to which he said all were welcome.

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

Dated: