

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

**COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON 8<sup>th</sup> FEBRUARY 2024 IN COUNCIL CHAMBER,  
CITY HALL, WATERFORD.**

**Present**

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

Apologies: Cllr. David Daniels, Cllr. Mary Roche, Cllr. Seamus Ryan.

**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 & Environment  
 Mr. B. Pollard, Head of Finance  
 Mr. L. McGree, Senior Planner, Planning  
 Ms. H. Dunphy, Meeting Administrator  
 Ms. A. Flynn, Corporate

Deputy Mayor Cllr. Declan Doocey commenced the chairing of the meeting

**1. Confirmation of Minutes**

Minutes of Plenary Meeting held on 11<sup>th</sup> January 2024 proposed by Cllr. Brazil, seconded by Cllr. Phelan and agreed by all.

## **2. Matters Arising**

Cllr. McGuinness asked if any further correspondence was received from the Minister for Transport regarding the N25.

Cllr. Kiely asked about the recording of Council Meetings and if the income from the recovery of rent arrears is ringfenced could it be used to fund the humidifier pilot scheme.

Cllr. Phelan asked when meetings could resume in the Council Chamber in Dungarvan.

Cllr. Wyse spoke to acknowledge the benefits of recording of Council meetings.

Ms. H. Dunphy, Meeting Administrator said there was no further correspondence from the Minister of Transport. The Council Chamber in Dungarvan is undergoing works which should be completed by next month's Plenary Meeting and said in relation to the recordings of Council Meetings she would look at what other Local Authorities are doing.

I. Grimes, DoS said the provision of humidifiers to tenants to tackle mould was under consideration.

Cllr. Kelly asked if a letter of clarification had issued to ratepayers with B. Pollard, HoF confirming it had.

Cllr. Murphy spoke to support the provision of humidifiers.

## **3. Land Disposals**

L. McGree, SP, outlined details of the disposal of premises at 2 Bernard Place for approval. Proposed by Cllr. Phelan and seconded by Cllr. J. Power and agreed by all.

M. Quinn, DoS outlined details of the disposal of 0.93 acres at Kilmacthomas Mill for approval.

Cllr. Kelly queried the sale price.

M. Quinn, DoS said the site was independently valued and was satisfied with the sale price.

Proposed by Cllr. Barron and seconded by Cllr. S. Power and agreed by all.

## **4. Monthly Management Report**

Cllr. Barry asked about the outsourcing of private rental accommodation inspections, estate management and enquired if the end of year SICAP review with the Community Development Committee had taken place and if this report could be published.

Cllr. Hearne enquired about the affordable housing scheme and whose responsibility it is to remedy any defects and asked if the Council's funding to The Kingfisher Club could be looked at to ensure rates continue to be affordable for old age pensioners.

Cllr. McGuinness noted the funding allocation of €500,000 from the National Transport Authority and asked how the money will be spent and requested a workshop to discuss. He asked for an update on the provision of affordable serviced sites and enquired about the impact of the €2m cut to funding under the Leader Programme. He asked how many companies the Council has an interest in and how these companies are operated.

I. Grimes, DoS said he would revert with the cost of the contract in relation to private rental accommodation inspections saying it was the subject of open competition and is cost effective. The Estate Management Team are responsible for all aspects of estate management including

anti-social behaviour. The SICAP report has yet to be approved and will look at making it available. He said new affordable houses would most likely be still under warranty and the developer should be contacted to address. Based on discussions with the Department and on previous experience he is confident that the €2m cut to funding under the Leader Programme will be made up by the end of the Programme.

M. Quinn, DoS said there are four companies we have control of including Waterford Treasures, Splashworld & Mount Congreve and work with other entities in various ways.

F. Galvin, DoS said in relation to the allocation of €500,000 for bus stop improvements that the NRA have asked that a draft programme be drawn up for their approval. The draft programme will be brought to the members at district level.

L. McGree, SP said the process of identifying land in public ownership where services are available or can be easily provided has begun. In conjunction with the Housing Department the sites will be offered for sale to applicants to build houses for their own use. The provision of sites where services are not readily available will be a longer process.

Cllr. Phelan welcomed the €500,000 funding allocation for bus stop improvements noting the requirement also for adequate bus shelters to further encourage people to use public transport. He asked for clarification that social housing is not allocated to refugees.

Cllr. Kiely raised the issue of Casinos and the lack of regulation and enforcement around their operation referencing the issues around gambling addiction. She noted the presence of a cash machine without planning permission outside a casino in Tramore and a screen advertising casino games in breach of advertising standards and also without planning permission and asked that the Council ensure that casinos and amusement arcades have planning permission appropriate to their current operations.

Cllr. O'Leary raised what he felt was an inconsistency between a person building their own home which must be within 10km of where they currently live and the allocation of social housing where this is not a consideration and if it were it would result in a fairer spread of where social housing is built and asked that this be brought to the Housing SPC for discussion.

I. Grimes, DoS confirmed that there has been no allocation of social houses to Ukrainian refugees and said the issue raised by Cllr. O'Leary will be brought to the next meeting of the Housing SPC.

L. McGree, SP will follow up on ATM in Tramore and revert. The register of gaming licenses is the responsibility of the Revenue Commissioners. The Planning Department will follow up on any premises not operating within current planning permission.

Cllr. Kelly asked if the Council could write to the Manager of Waterford Regional Hospital about the possibility of providing a multi-storey carpark to address the parking situation at the hospital. He also asked about Housing Adaptation Grants and grants for those who are not Priority 1 cases.

Cllr. J. Power enquired if Waterford still held the title of best place to live in Ireland. He asked about the post of Outdoor Recreation Officer, the Outdoor Recreation Plan and the resources that will be available. He asked if there were any initiatives to try to increase the number of schools participating in the Composting for Schools Programme.

Cllr. Nugent asked if the Council had received a letter from the Cork Coroner following an inquest into a tragic drowning in Whiting Bay, Ardmore in April 2023 addressing the need for signage in relation to dangerous currents and riptides.

M. Walsh, CE said we did receive correspondence from the Coroner which has been forwarded to our Water Safety Officer.

I. Grimes, DoS said in relation to Adaptation Grants that a framework has been put in place in the last 12 months which he hopes will be more cost effective resulting in Priority 2 cases being reached. He said allocating funds from our own resources could be looked at.

F. Galvin, DoS said he would ask our Environmental Awareness Officer to try and prioritise the Composting for Schools Programme.

M. Quinn, DoS said Waterford is still the best place to live, the award being for 5 years. The Outdoor Recreation Officer will be employed by Waterford Sports Partnership and will work in collaboration with the Council.

Deputy Major noted correspondence request regarding the provision of a multi storey car park at UHW that a letter would issue through the Mayor's Office.

Cllr. Fitzgerald asked what percentage of our older housing stock met environmental housing standards and also the time frame for the retrofitting of our public lights. He asked going forward that Community Grants be advertised in newspapers circulating in the east and west of the County.

Cllr. Pratt proposed that we write to Minister Eamonn Ryan asking him to reverse the decision whereby just €365,000 of €25.2m funding in respect of Active Travel was allocated to rural projects, seconded by Cllr. McGuinness. As Chair of Local Link he welcomed the €500,000 allocation for bus stop improvements.

Cllr. O'Donnell mentioned statements by the Members to the media.

A five-minute recess was proposed by Cllr. Geoghegan, seconded by Cllr. Keating and agreed by all.

Mayor Cllr. Conway took over the chairing of the meeting after the recess.

I. Grimes, DoS said environmental standards compliance is not recorded but the Management Report does show data in relation to planned and reactive inspections of our housing stock. The issue of the advertising of Community Grants in one newspaper only will be addressed. The Community Department have contact details for every group who would previously have received grants and these groups are notified when new schemes are advertised. The Public Participation Network (PPN) would also notify the various groups registered with them.

M. Walsh, CE said the public lighting retrofit scheme should commence towards the middle of this year.

F. Galvin, DoS said a letter to the Minister in relation to Active Travel would issue.

Cllr. Murphy spoke about anti-social behaviour and the issues that people have which often lead to anti-social behaviour such as mental health problems and asked what level of communication the Council's Estate Management Team has with the various agencies whose responsibility it is to support those with mental health illness etc. and are those agencies providing the required support to these people.

Cllr. E. Quinlan asked if the council could seek funding to build extensions to houses to tackle overcrowding and if the Local Enterprise Office would consider employing a person from the Ukrainian Community. He asked for better communication from the Council in relation to how the Council works with BAM in relation to decision making as regards works being carried out on the North Quays noting that residents in Ferrybank are concerned about the level of control the construction company appears to have in the area in relation to closing of roads etc.

Cllr. O'Sullivan supported Cllr. Murphy in relation to anti-social behaviour and the mental health issues or otherwise often behind it and the lack of support for these people. She

asked that the Council consider having Eircodes spray painted onto public buildings to facilitate emergency calls.

I. Grimes, DoS said in relation to anti-social behaviour there are many cases which are the result of mental health or addiction problems and it can be challenging to get these people to engage with services. Our relationship with the other agencies such as the Garda, HSE and Tulsa is strong and we work with them on a day-to-day basis on some very difficult and complex cases. He said he would look for funding for extensions from the Department and said the provision of English language classes is part of the Ukrainian Community Response.

M. Quinn, DoS said that there is no Ukrainian speaker in the Local Enterprise Office but could avail of the services of one in the Ukrainian Community if necessary. BAM have been commissioned to construct all the access infrastructure, a contract has been signed and work approved so all the activity on the North Quays is at the Council's direction.

M. Walsh, CE said the Council would consider Cllr. O'Sullivan's suggestion of having Eircodes spray painted onto public buildings noting that putting signage on heritage buildings might be difficult.

Cllr. Keating enquired if the Urban Facade Improvement Scheme could be extended to include areas other than Waterford City, Dungarvan and Tramore. She requested an update on the speed limit review and referring to an older person who had been informed that details in relation to an abandoned car had to come via email she said we need to be mindful of ensuring access to services for older people who may not have access to email.

Cllr. S. Power supported Cllr. Pratt's call for a letter to issue to Minister Ryan as regards Waterford's Active Travel allocation of €25.2m expressing his disappointment at the lack of funds for rural areas.

Cllr. Bailey asked how many extensions to property have been carried out and enquired about those people for who extensions were refused, how long must they wait on the transfer list for an allocation to a bigger property and asked that this be brought to the Housing SPC for discussion. In relation to the requirement for quotes to accompany a Housing Adaptation Grant Application she asked if the name and contact details of Companies who could carry out the work be made available on our website for the convenience of applicants who are generally older people.

M. Quinn, DoS noted the Urban Facade Improvement Scheme was open to all urban centres and will have this clarified.

F. Galvin, DoS noted the Department has requested that the speed limit review be stalled pending new guidelines and the process will resume following further direction from the Department. Outlined that information regarding abandoned cars is accepted over the phone as well as by email.

I. Grimes, DoS said the length of time a person is on the Housing Transfer List varies depending on location noting that overcrowding is one of the priority areas taking in to account when making allocations. Quotes are required in relation to an Housing Adaptation Grant Application but given the difficulty people are experiencing in getting them he will have it reviewed.

Cllr. Clune asked for clarification in relation to the cutting of Active Travel Projects in rural areas noting that he has been informed by the NTA that there has been no change in policy in terms of active travel funding for urban and rural areas.

Cllr. Griffin enquired if the further properties to be advertised on Choice Based Letting at Gorse Hill, Ballygunner are also specially adapted and if so could egress from the estate be looked at

for people with mobility issues. He asked if the letter to UHW could include a request that the Mortuary and Mortuary Chapel be put in use.

I. Grimes, DoS confirmed five properties in the estate will be specially adapted and will discuss infrastructure with F. Galvin, DoS, Roads, Water & Environment.

F. Galvin, DoS said in the early years of the Active Travel Programme in Waterford most of the investment went into rural areas whereas now the Council has been asked to prioritise the larger scale projects in Waterford City, Dungarvan and Tramore which the NTA would consider to be more impactful in providing alternative sustainable transport methods for people.

#### **5. Climate Action Plan – for approval**

Climate Action Plan proposed by Cllr. Hearne and seconded by Cllr. Phelan and agreed by all.

#### **6. Draft Housing Allocation Scheme for Social Housing Supports – for approval**

I. Grimes, DoS said the Draft Housing Allocation Scheme had two changes, the application of a Gaeltacht Residential Qualification to the order of priority and the Financial Contribution Scheme/Private Rightsizing

Cllrs. Phelan, Bailey, F. Quinlan, McGuinness, Barry and Keating raised queries in relation to some sections of the draft scheme.

Cllr. Clune proposed a workshop to allow for further discussion.

I. Grimes, DoS agreed to the holding of a workshop and bringing the Draft Housing Allocation Scheme back to the Members for approval at the next Plenary Meeting.

#### **7. Draft Anti-Social Behaviour Policy 2024 – for approval**

I. Grimes, DoS said the Draft Anti-Social Behaviour Policy 2024 sets out our principal objectives and the legislation available to deal with Anti-Social Behaviour. Action taken by the Council in relation to anti-social behaviour include arranging for mediation between neighbours, arranging for individuals to attend anger management classes and the issue of Tenancy Warnings.

Cllrs. Wyse, Phelan, O’Sullivan, McGuinness, Kelly, Murphy and J. Power welcomed the Policy and noted the following:- training for Staff and Councillors around mental health issues, meetings with An Garda Siochana and other Agencies to share information, timeframe for the anti-social behaviour process, the criminality of some anti-social behaviour, Excluding Orders, engagement with Approved Housing Bodies, the perceived non-effectiveness of the policy, how social tenants benefit from having such a policy and the measures to “design -out” Anti-Social Behaviour.

I. Grimes, DoS responded to comments as outlined.

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

## **8. Annual Service Plan 2024 – for approval**

In introducing the Annual Service Plan 2024 M. Walsh, CE said it is a statement of the objectives of each section across the organisation and recommended the document for adoption.

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

## **9. Correspondence**

Proposed by Cllr. Pratt and seconded by Cllr. Kelly and agreed by all.

## **10. Notice of Motions**

### **Motion in the name of Cllr. Pat Nugent**

*“That Waterford City & County Council considers deploying the necessary resources to make a robust application to the Large-Scale Sports Infrastructure Fund for a community swimming pool & gym in Dungarvan when the application window opens.*

*Waterford City & County Council further resolves to consider meeting the match funding element under the terms of the application process by including the project, which is a strategic objective of the Waterford City & County Development Plan, in its capital plan 2022-2028.”*

**Reg. No. PJ/2024/239** (dated 23<sup>rd</sup> January 2024)

In proposing the motion Cllr. Nugent said the project would provide community recreational facilities, support tourism, support local businesses and promote lifelong learning and implored the Members to see the value of the investment for the future.

Cllr. Phelan seconded the motion noting that it is an objective of the City & County Development Plan and the Large-Scale Sports Infrastructure Fund now presents an opportunity to achieve this objective.

Cllrs. McGuinness, Cronin, Pratt, Doocey, Brazil and Hearne spoke in support of the motion.

Cllr. Geoghegan said the feasibility study into the provision of a swimming pool in Dungarvan should be made public and noted a discussion around the cost is required.

Cllr. O'Donnell said he could not support the motion expressing concerns in relation to the amount of money that would be required.

M. Walsh, CE said he could not support an application to the Large-Scale Sports Infrastructure Fund with no provision made for it in the Capital Programme and questioned the project's financial viability. However he said the Capital Programme and expenditure therein is a matter for the Members. He said he can review the Capital Programme to include this project which would mean taking out proposals already there to the value of €8M or €10M if that is what the Members wish but in the absence of this he said there will be no application to the Large-Scale Sports Infrastructure Fund.

The Members voted in favour of adopting the motion by a majority show of hands.

**11. AOB**

Cllr. J. Power asked where there are a number of reports on the Agenda if these documents could be distributed earlier.

Ms. H. Dunphy, Meeting Administrator said notification of meeting and agenda are set down in the Plenary Standing Orders.

This concluded the business of the meeting.

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

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