

COMHAIRLE CATHRACH AGUS CONTAE PHORT LÁIRGE

WATERFORD CITY AND COUNTY COUNCIL

**COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON 11<sup>th</sup> JULY 2024  
IN THE COUNCIL CHAMBER, CITY HALL, THE MALL, WATERFORD**

**PRESENT**

Cllr. Jason Murphy (Mayor)	Cllr. Joe Kelly
Cllr. Declan Barry	Cllr. Donnchadh Mulcahy
Cllr. Donal Barry	Cllr. Joeanne Bailey
Cllr. Liam Brazil	Cllr. Pat Nugent
Cllr. Catherine Burke	Cllr. Niamh O'Donovan
Cllr. Declan Clune	Cllr. Adam Wyse
Cllr. Joe Conway	Cllr. Lola O'Sullivan
Cllr. John Hearne	Cllr. Joe O'Riordan
Cllr. Conor D. McGuinness	Cllr. Thomas Phelan
Cllr. David Daniels	Cllr. Seanie Power
Cllr. Jim D'Arcy	Cllr. John Pratt
Cllr. Pat Fitzgerald	Cllr. Eamon Quinlan
Cllr. Damien Geoghegan	Cllr. Frank Quinlan
Cllr. Jim Griffin	Cllr. Mary Roche
Cllr. Blaise Hannigan	Cllr. Seamus Ryan

Apologies: Cllr. Tom Cronin, Cllr. John O'Leary.

**OFFICIALS IN ATTENDANCE**

Mr. I. Grimes, Interim Chief Executive  
Mr. G. Hynes, A/Director of Services, Roads, Water & Environment  
Mr. M. O'Toole, Head of Information Systems  
Mr. B. Pollard, Head of Finance  
Ms. C. Hartley, A/ Director of Service, Housing  
Mr. M. Quinn, Director of Service, Economic Development  
Ms. H. Dunphy, Meetings Administrator  
Ms. A. Flynn, Senior Staff Officer, Corporate

**1. Confirmation of Minutes**

Minutes of Plenary Meeting held on 11th April 2024 proposed by Cllr. E. Quinlan, seconded by Cllr. Pratt and agreed by all.

Minutes of Plenary Special Meeting held on 23rd April 2024 proposed by Cllr. Wyse, seconded by Cllr. Brazil and agreed by all.

Minutes of Plenary Special Meeting held on 7th May 2024 proposed by Cllr. F. Quinlan, seconded by Cllr. Conway and agreed by all.

Minutes of Plenary AGM held on 21st June 2024 proposed by Cllr. Bailey, seconded by Cllr. Wyse and agreed by all.

Minutes of Plenary Special Meeting held on 1st July 2024 proposed by Cllr. O'Donovan, seconded by Cllr. Declan Barry and agreed by all.

## **2. Matters Arising**

Cllr. Ryan asked for an update on the Palestinian Ambassador's address to the Council.  
Cllr. McGuinness enquired about a workshop or otherwise in relation to urgent capital works required at the majority of fire stations.

H. Dunphy, MA said arrangements will be made in relation to an address by the Palestinian Ambassador to the Members.

I. Grimes, Interim CE said workshops at district level will be provided in relation to fire stations.

Cllr. Pratt asked if there was an update in relation to the Court Proceedings as regards the Development Plan.

I. Grimes, Interim CE said that there are indications that there is a serious risk of a judgement against the Council and discussions have commenced with the other party.

Cllr. E Quinlan asked if any settlement reached would need the approval of the Council.

I. Grimes, Interim CE said this may be the case.

Cllr. Phelan said there appears to have been contradictory legal advice given.

I. Grimes, Interim CE said he would circulate the legal advice.

## **3. Land Disposals**

Mark. O'Toole, Head of IS outlined details of the land disposals for approval.

Ref. No. 1526 Transfer in fee simple 71 Grange Heights to Liam Whelan for a sum of €5.00.  
Proposed by Cllr. Kelly, seconded by Cllr. D'Arcy and agreed by all.

Ref. No. 1527 Disposal of 3 car parking spaces at Harbour Bay, The Burgery, Dungarvan to Harbour Bay Owner Management Company Ltd for €9,000.  
Proposed by Cllr. Geoghegan, seconded by Cllr. Nugent and agreed by all.

Ref. No. 1528 Disposal of 3 acres at Duckspool, Dungarvan to Department of Education for €350,000.  
Proposed by Cllr. Phelan, seconded by Cllr. McGuinness and agreed by all.

Ref. No. 1529 Disposal of 600msq plot at Ballybeg to Stone Arches Ltd for €23,300.  
Proposed by Cllr. Power, seconded by Cllr. Geoghegan and agreed by all.

## **4. Monthly Management Report**

Cllr. Wyse asked about the high refusal rate of properties advertised on the choice Based Letting system.

Cllr. Clune asked for a review of how the Monthly Management Report to Council is managed at meetings and asked that this be included as an agenda item at the upcoming planning day and also if the Corporate Policy Group could be involved.

Cllr. Phelan asked for an update on walkability audits provided for in the Waterford Age Friendly Strategy.

C. Hartley, A/ DoS said the 485 refusals of total properties advertised on CBL includes refusals at the beginning of the CBL scheme when the refusal rate was higher. The reasons for refusals can be looked at by the new Housing Strategic Policy Committee.

I. Grimes, Interim CE said the Monthly Management Report can be given some consideration at the upcoming planning day.

C. Hartley, A/ DoS said there is no specific funding to undertake walkability audits and would need to be considered by the Executive.

Cllr. Burke asked if a list of vacant properties by district could be provided and the timeline for bringing vacant properties back into use. She asked for information on the process and what factors might influence the timeline and asked for a workshop with the Housing Officer. She congratulated the organisers of the Comeraghs Wild Festival and commended the work of Waterford City & Council Library Service.

Cllr. Donal Barry asked the Executive to contact the Department of Transport for an update on the reinstatement of the Waterford to Rosslare rail service. He requested an update on the Waterford Tourism Designation Plan asking the Executive to ensure that it is completed this year. He asked how many vacant houses there are in the council's own housing stock, the length of time of turnaround and would employing people directly result in more efficient turnaround.

Cllr. McGuinness commended the work of the Civil Defence Staff for their involvement in various events over the last number of months. He noted the difficulty for people getting contractors in relation to adaptations to bathrooms and said it would be beneficial if the Council had an inhouse team to do this work. He raised the issue of the N25 noting that he and the Members have asked on a number of occasions for the Minister to come and meet the Council or receive a delegation from the Council to discuss the N25 to no avail. He called on the Mayor to contact the Government on this issue.

C. Hartley, A/ DoS said our vacancy rate is 1.7% of our stock with a turnaround time of 22 weeks. She said an inhouse team to deal with bathroom adaptations and so on is not something that would be considered.

M. Quinn, DoS said the Council would write to Irish Rail in relation to the Waterford to Rosslare service for an update but have no direct role. He said that the Tourism Designation Plan has not been officially issued by Fáilte Ireland but the Council are already implementing the plan.

G. Hynes, A/DoS said he would issue a letter to the Minister in relation to the N25 which The Mayor said he too would support.

C. Hartley, A/ DoS agreed to Cllr. Burke's request to hold a workshop.

Cllr. Ryan asked for details in relation to residential units in the North Quays Development and what will be done to soften the landscape. He asked that the 285 derelict sites be brought back into residential use. He requested an audit of footpaths within Housing Estates and asked for an update on the new approved mobile library.

Cllr. Pratt asked that all housing applicants be contacted again in relation to the CBL Scheme to ensure all applicants are aware that they can express an interest in a CBL property. He asked for improved disability toilets at the RSC.

Cllr. Bailey referring to increased incidents of dogs being off the leash in public parks and on beaches asked that a previous motion in relation to the provision of an off-leash dog park be

looked at again noting that other counties have off leash dog parks which has led to a reduction of incidents of dogs being off the leash in public parks and beaches. She asked if the Housing Allocation Scheme adopted by the Council in March had been revisited in relation to the bedroom allocation for families with children of same gender. She noted the long wait time for grants for older people and people with disabilities and noted a discrepancy between the waiting time of council tenants and private home owners. She asked for a breakdown of the wait time for council tenants and private home owners.

C. Hartley, A/ DoS said those on the Housing List who had not engaged with the CBL Scheme had been contacted and would be contacted again. She said a workshop on the Housing Allocation Scheme will be organised in the coming weeks. There is a difference in the wait times between adaptation grants for private property and grants for council housing and this has been flagged at national level. A report on wait times can be provided.

G. Hynes, A/DoS said in relation to footpaths that there is an allocation for each district which will be reviewed prior to adopting a new Capital Plan. The signage in People's Park can be reviewed and the report and its' recommendations on an off-leash dog park can be revisited.

M. Quinn, DoS said he will circulate a summary of the planning application in relation to the residential units for the North Quays. There is, he said a comprehensive landscaping plan for the area.

I. Grimes, Interim CE said he would revert with update on mobile library. There is a funding application with the Department in relation to the upgrading of toilet facilities at the RSC.

In relation to derelict properties he said Waterford is one of the more proactive local authorities in the country in dealing with dereliction and have a team targeting private properties. He outlined that the Compulsory Purchase Order process is time consuming and costly and suggested a workshop for September.

M. Quinn, DoS said there are 106 one bed units, 208 two bed units and 36 three bed units proposed for the North Quays.

Cllr. Kelly asked for clarification that a housing applicant making few or no bids on CBL are not at a disadvantage to those housing applicants who regularly express an interest in a CBL property and asked if funding is available to upgrade the public toilets on beaches.

Cllr. Hearne commended the work of the council's community section and asked if the representative from the American Embassy due to meet with members in the coming weeks would meet with groups from various communities in relation to the situation in Gaza.

Cllr. Griffin asked if there could be additional staff resources made available for those days where there is an influx of people into our beauty spots. He asked if the location and allocation of houses under the cost rental and affordable schemes could be looked at to facilitate as far as possible people already living in the location to avoid change of schools etc.

C. Hartley, A/ DoS clarified that there is no disadvantage in relation to the amount of bids made on CBL. Cost rental housing provides affordable rented accommodation to people who are above the threshold for social housing. You are eligible to apply if your household net income is below €59,000 per annum. Applicants are entered into a lottery and selected at random. The affordable housing scheme makes homes available at a reduced price for first-time buyers whose mortgage and deposit will not cover the price of the home and who are seeking to purchase a newly built home. In the case of oversubscription an application will be assessed based on the Council's Scheme of Priority for Affordable Dwelling Purchase Arrangements.

G. Hynes, A/DoS said that considerable resources are put into the maintenance of public toilets with significant additional resources at our main beaches during the summer months to manage the public toilets and manage refuse.

I. Grimes, Interim CE said we are facilitating the visit by the American Embassy and as such cannot impose on it.

Cllr. Conway raised the issue of enforcement of our Beach Byelaws in regard to dogs. He said there should be zero tolerance towards dog owners who breach these bylaws.

Cllr. Roche asked for an update on the Airport, that Harcourt Developments be asked to facilitate a visit by the councillors to the North Quays or make a presentation to them and as requested previously information in relation to LEO supports.

Cllr. E. Quinlan asked that the council revert to notifying community groups, residents associations, sports clubs and so on in relation to community grants to ensure that groups do not miss out as happened this year with some groups not meeting closing dates for applications etc. He asked if the Serviced Sites Scheme could be looked at to include a buy back option which would see people who sell the Council land for serviced sites being given the option to buy back one of the serviced sites for members of their own family.

C. Hartley, A/ DoS said the notification of community grants could be looked at.

M. Quinn, DoS said he would request Harcourt Developments to make a presentation to the members and said he would follow up in relation to more detailed reports from LEO.

I. Grimes, Interim CE said there was no update on the Airport. He said Cllr. E. Quinlan's suggestion of a buy back clause in relation to serviced sites had potential and would be looked at.

G. Hynes, A/DoS said he would follow up with the Gardai in relation to enforcement of the Beach Byelaws and also have the Dog Wardens patrol the beaches on key days to ensure compliance.

Cllr. Daniels asked that additional funding for footpaths be provided out of the Revenue surplus, asked about increasing the budget for community grants and thanked the various council teams for all the events held throughout the year.

Cllr. Power said the CBL Scheme should be reviewed so that only those housing applicants living in a particular area can express an interest in a CBL property in that area.

Cllr. Fitzgerald asked if funding to maintain walkways, rights of way, short cuts and so on in towns and villages across the county could be provided in the budget going forward.

C. Hartley, A/ DoS said the Housing Allocation Scheme is written into the CBL Scheme so that a housing applicant expressing an interest in a property in a location which is one of their preferred areas has priority over a housing applicant bidding for that property and the location of the property is not one of their preferred areas. Increasing the budget for community grants is something the members can look at when the budget comes before them for consideration.

G. Hynes, A/DoS said funding to maintain walkways, rights of way, short cuts and so on could be considered at budget time.

B. Power, HoF said there is a surplus to the end of May of €270,000 and although it is still early in the year nonetheless there is scope to review our budget for next year during the budget process.

Cllr. F. Quinlan queried the vacancy rate of 1.7% of housing stock with a turnaround time of 22 weeks.

Cllr. O’Riordan asked about the monitoring of AirBnBs and whether there had been any prosecutions for noncompliance and supported Cllr. Power’s comments in relation to ringfencing properties on CBL.

Cllr. Nugent asked about the changes in policy around house purchasing.

Cllr. Mulcahy asked for a workshop with Uisce Éireann. He asked if a plan could be developed for water-based tourism.

I. Grimes, Interim CE said the vacancy rate and turnaround time are independently verified. There are properties acquired under various government funding schemes which would take longer to bring back into use and these are not included in those figures. The council has been informed of changes to the tenant in situ scheme with funding to be significantly reduced.

M. Quinn, DoS said that monitoring of AirBnBs is a planning enforcement issue, and he has sought an update from the planning department. In reply to Cllr. Mulcahy he said a feasibility study has been done on the Blackwater and the estuary is being looked at to see what the opportunities are there and how to avail of them. Blueway’s are very much part of the Tourism Development Strategy for the next five years.

G. Hynes, A/DoS informed Cllr. Mulcahy that it is a policy of Uisce Éireann not to hold workshops.

## **5. SPC Scheme 2024-2029**

H. Dunphy, MA introduced the Draft Strategic Policy Committee Scheme 2024 – 2029 informing the members of the need for public consultation. The Council will also seek nominations from sectoral representatives under the pillars of farming, business and trade unions. Nominations for the social inclusion, community and voluntary sector and environment will be sought from the PPN and for the development and construction sector from the Construction Industry Federation. She sought the approval of the members to commence the public consultation process.

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

Cllr. Ryan proposed an amendment to the scheme proposing that the Planning & Culture SPC include a representative from the Arts Sector.

Cllr. McGuinness said it appears that there is no longer a farming representative on the Economic Development and Enterprise SPC. He noted that although it is important to have two business representatives representing City and County he said it should not be at the expense of the farming representative and asked that a farming representative be included even if this means increasing the sectoral representative members and also asked that a representative from the Irish Language Community be included on the Planning & Culture SPC.

Cllr. Geoghegan also noted that Culture is now included with Planning with no representative from the Arts Sector. He said Planning would be the focus of that SPC and asked if it is possible to have more than five SPCs suggesting a separate SPC for Culture, Sport & Recreation.

Cllr. Kelly asked if people with disabilities were represented on each of the Committees.

Cllr. Phelan agreed with the previous speakers in relation to a representative from the Arts Sector on the Planning & Culture SPC and a farming representative on the Economic Development and Enterprise SPC and said people with disabilities should be represented on the Transport & Infrastructure SPC and echoed Cllr. Geoghegan’s question as to whether there was scope for more than five committees.

Cllr. Hearne noted a previous decision of the Council that each SPC would have a representative for people with disabilities.

I. Grimes, Interim CE said that the document as presented is a first draft. For the purposes of the public consultation process the titles of each committee were kept closely aligned with the functions of the five directorates. He said the members' comments will be taken on board in finalising the document and will be brought before the members in September for approval.

Cllrs. Ryan, Wyse, McGuinness, Geoghegan, Fitzgerald, O'Sullivan, Conway & Phelan contributed to a further discussion mainly in relation to the sectoral representatives on each committee.

I. Grimes, Interim CE, I. Grimes and H. Dunphy, MA responded to the questions raised.

## **6. Correspondence**

Proposed by Cllr. Geoghegan, seconded by Cllr. E. Quinlan and agreed by all.

## **7. Notice of Motions**

None.

## **8. AOB**

The Mayor informed the members of the upcoming National Day of Commemoration which takes place on Sunday 14th July at the John Condon Memorial in Cathedral Square.

The Members congratulated Fergus Galvin, former Director of Services, Roads, Water & Environment on his retirement, thanked him for his huge contribution and wished him well for the future.

Cllr. Burke congratulated the Council on its' twinning with Ramallah and asked for an update on the signage indicating the twinning.

Cllr. E. Quinlan asked if the Mayor would consider inviting staff members who retired during the Covid years to the Mayor's Parlour.

Cllr. Griffin asked the Mayor to write to the Chairperson of the Board of the Airport and to the Minister.

This concluded the business of the meeting.

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

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