

**MINUTES OF THE MARCH MEETING OF LAOIS COUNTY COUNCIL HELD IN
ARAS AN CHONTAE, PORTLAOISE, ON THE 27TH OF MARCH 2017**

PRESENT: Councillor Tom Mulhall In the Chair

 Councillors William Aird Paddy Bracken
 Ben Brennan John Joe Fennelly
 Catherine Fitzgerald James Kelly
 David Goodwin Jerry Lodge
 Seamus McDonald Paschal McEvoy
 John Moran Brendan Phelan
 Mary Sweeney Noel Tuohy

APOLOGIES: Councillors Padraig Fleming Caroline Dwane Stanley
 Aidan Mullins John King

IN ATTENDANCE:

Messers John Mulholland, Chief Executive, Kieran Kehoe, Director of Services, Gerry Murphy, Head of Finance, Donal Brennan, Director of Services, Ms. Irene Delaney, Administrative Officer & Ms. Michelle McCormack, Executive Secretary.

39. VOTES OF SYMPATHY

On the proposition of the Cathaoirleach, Councillor Tom Mulhall, the Members unanimously agreed to extend a vote of sympathy to the following families on the recent death of their loved ones:-

The Murphy family on the recent death of Mr. Dan Murphy, Dublin/Newmarket, brother of Ms. Catherine M Murphy, Sport & Leisure Department, Laois County Council.

The O' Neill family on the recent death of Mr. Charlie O' Neill, Old Knockmay Road, Portlaoise, father of Ms. Janet Farrell, Human Resources Department, Laois County Council.

**40. CONFIRMATION OF THE MINUTES OF THE FEBRUARY MEETING OF
LAOIS COUNTY COUNCIL HELD ON THE 27TH OF FEBRUARY 2017**

On the proposition of Councillor Willie Aird seconded by Councillor James Kelly, the Minutes of the February meeting held on the 27th of February 2017 were confirmed as circulated.

41. REPORT ON CPG MEETING HELD ON THE 20TH OF FEBRUARY 2017

On the proposition of Councillor John Joe Fennelly seconded by Councillor Catherine Fitzgerald, the report on the CPG meeting held on the 20th of February 2017 was confirmed as circulated

42. REPORTS ON MUNICIPAL DISTRICT MEETINGS HELD IN FEBRUARY 2017

On the proposition of Councillor Noel Tuohy seconded by Councillor James Kelly, the reports on the Municipal District Meetings held in February 2017 were confirmed as circulated.

43. REPORTS ON STRATEGIC POLICY COMMITTEE MEETINGS HELD IN MARCH 2017

On the proposition of Councillor John Joe Fennelly seconded by Councillor Catherine Fitzgerald, the reports on the Municipal District Meetings held in February 2017 were confirmed as circulated.

44. HOUSING AT COUNTY HALL

At the outset of the meeting the Members expressed concern regarding the delay in processing housing applications and the anti-social behaviour at Áras an Chontae including the security of staff and the increase in abuse to staff members. Mr. John Mulholland, Chief Executive indicated that the situation is being monitored and confirmed that legal advice had been sought in relation to the possibility of barring, exclusion and court orders. Mr. Gerry Murphy, Head of Finance indicated that two additional staff members had been approved for the HAP Section as well as replacement staff for those on sick leave in the housing maintenance section. Mr. Murphy indicated that the backlog of housing applications would be dealt with within a very short period after the new staff members took up their new positions. The Council has processed 25 HAP applications to date. Mr. Gerry Murphy further advised that he would be consulting with the Chair of the SPC, Mr. Paschal McEvoy after today's meeting regarding a date for an SPC meeting. In relation to the new area being designated for Housing at Block 2, Áras an Chontae, Mr. Donal Brennan, Director of Services indicated that the Consultants will be instructed to proceed to produce tender documents as soon as possible.

45. DISPOSAL OF LAND UNDER SECTION 183 OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT, 2001

- (i) **Disposal of 0.0338 hectares of land at Patrick Street, Mountrath, Co. Laois.**

On the proposition of Councillor James Kelly seconded by Councillor John Joe Fennelly, the Members unanimously agreed to the disposal of 0.0338 hectares of land at Patrick Street, Mountrath, Co. Laois in the townland of Dysartbeigh for a consideration of €100.00.

46. TAKING IN CHARGE OF CASTLEGATE, PORTARLINGTON

On the proposition of Councillor Tom Mulhall seconded by Councillor Ben Brennan, the Members unanimously agreed to the taking in charge of Castlegate, Portarlington.

47. TAKING IN CHARGE OF OSSORY COURT, RATHDOWNEY

On the proposition of Councillor James Kelly seconded by Councillor Brendan Phelan, the Members unanimously agreed to the taking in charge of Ossory Court, Rathdowney.

48. PURCHASE OF LANDS AT TOGHER, PORTLAOISE & LOAN SANCTION

(a) APPROVAL IN RESPECT OF THE RAISING OF A LOAN IN THE AMOUNT OF €2.0 MILLION TOWARDS PURCHASE, PLANNING AND SERVICES DEVELOPMENT OF A 76 ACRE (APPROX) SITE AT JUNCTION 17, TOGHER, PORTLAOISE

The Members were circulated with a report on lands at Togher and Mr. John Mulholland, Chief Executive briefed the Members on same. On the proposition of Councillor William Aird seconded by Councillor Catherine Fitzgerald, the Members unanimously approved the raising of a loan in the amount of €2.0 million towards the purchase, planning and services development of a 76 acre (approx) site at Junction 17, Togher, Portlaoise. It was agreed that the Members would be kept apprised of developments. The Members also requested that a tour of the site be organised for them.

(b) THAT LAOIS COUNTY COUNCIL SEEK FORMAL SANCTION FROM THE MINISTER FOR HOUSING, PLANNING, COMMUNITY AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT IN RESPECT OF LOAN AT (A) ABOVE

On the proposition of Councillor William Aird seconded by Councillor John Joe Fennelly, the Members unanimously agreed to seeking formal sanction from the Minister for Housing, Planning, Community & Local Government in respect of a loan in the amount of €2.0 million towards the purchase, planning and services development of a 76 acre (approx) site at Junction 17, Togher, Portlaoise.

49. LAOIS COMHAIRLE NA nÓg

Mr. Cian McGearailt, Ms. Niamh Bakker, Mr. Mark McCormack and Ms. Aoife Hanniffy were in attendance representing Laois Comhairle Na nÓg and made a very comprehensive presentation to the Elected Members on the work which is currently being carried out by the Comhairle. They briefed the Members on the various projects completed and also on a number of forthcoming projects. The Chief Executive, Mr. John Mulholland and the Members of Laois County Council complimented the Comhairle on an excellent presentation and for their representation of the young people of Laois.

50. LAOIS COUNTY COUNCIL – MONTHLY MANAGEMENT REPORT FOR MARCH 2017 (IN ACCORDANCE WITH CIRCULAR LETTER LG 18/2014)

Mr. John Mulholland, Chief Executive briefed the meeting on this matter and the report for March was circulated. The report for March 2017 was unanimously agreed and noted. A number of queries were raised on the report and the Directors of Services responded to the various queries raised.

51. WASTE ENFORCEMENT UPDATE – PRESENTATION BY MICHAEL RAINEY, SENIOR EXECUTIVE OFFICER

Mr. Michael Rainey delivered a very comprehensive presentation on Waste Enforcement in the County. Mr. Rainey briefed the Members on the role of the Council and the various challenges facing the Council in relation to the area of Waste Management. Community support was acknowledged and also the work of the Litter Wardens and the Environment Section. The Members were briefed on the 2017 Waste Enforcement Action Plan including the branding of vehicles, distinct uniforms, visible surveillance of black spots and foot patrols and also on the Media Campaign . It was also noted that CCTV cameras would be trebled and that legal action would be increased. Mr. Rainey responded to the various queries raised by the members. The Members complimented Mr. Rainey and indeed all the staff in the Environment Section for the excellent job in the area of waste enforcement.

51. SCHEDULE OF MUNICIPAL DISTRICT WORKS 2017/ROADWORKS SCHEME

On the proposition of Councillor James Kelly seconded by Councillor Brendan Phelan, the Members unanimously agreed to the schedule of Municipal District Works 2017/Roadworks Scheme as presented.

52. HERITAGE UPDATE – PRESENTATION BY MS. CATHERINE CASEY, HERITAGE OFFICER

Ms. Catherine Casey, Heritage Officer gave a very comprehensive presentation in relation to the area of heritage including the highlights and projects in this area. The various upcoming events were highlighted including details of the Conservation Projects, Connecting Communities, the Old St. Peter's Graveyard Project, Adopt a Monument Scheme, the Fort Protector Conservation Plan, Ballyroan Schoolhouse & Kilabban Church Conservation. The Elected Members complimented Ms. Catherine Casey for the excellent work being carried out in the area of Heritage.

53. APPROVAL OF ARTS ACTS GRANTS

On the proposition of Councillor William Aird seconded by Councillor Paddy Bracken, the Members unanimously approved the Arts Acts Grants for 2017 in the sum of €5,000 as circulated.

54. DRAFT TRAINING & DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME 2017

On the proposition of Councillor Jerry Lodge seconded by Councillor John Joe Fennelly, the Members unanimously approved the draft Training & Development Programme for 2017

55. RATIFICATION OF CONFERENCES/ATTENDANCE AT TRAINING

On the proposition of Councillor Paddy Bracken seconded by Councillor Paschal McEvoy, the Members unanimously agreed to the ratification of conferences/attendance at training as circulated.

56. CORRESPONDENCE

The following items of correspondence were circulated to the Members which had been received since the last meeting:-

- (i) Correspondence received from the National Transport Authority dated the 15th of March 2017 in response to Notice of Motion No: 09/2017. The Members expressed dissatisfaction with the response and requested that the matter be discussed at the next SPC meeting.
- (ii) Correspondence received from the Department of Transport, Tourism & Sport in response to Notice of Motion No: 03/2017
- (iii) Correspondence received from the Office of the Tanaiste and Minister for Justice & Equality in response to Notice of Motion No: 08/2017.

This concluded the business of the meeting

SIGNED: _____
CATHAOIRLEACH

CERTIFIED: _____
DIRECTOR OF SERVICES
CORPORATE AFFAIRS