



COMHAIRLE CONTAE CHORCAÍ

Minutes of Proceedings at Meeting of Cork County Council held in the Council Chamber, County Hall, Cork on 13th March, 2017.

ILATHAIR

Comhairleoir Ó Conbhuí, Leas-Mhéara Chontae

Comhairleoiri Mac Seafraida, Daltúin, Ní Fhúarthain, D. Ó Donnabháin, Ní Dheasmhumhnaigh, Ó Cainte, S. Ó Coileán, M. Ó Murchú, Ó hEarchaí, R. Mhic Cárthaigh, Ó Colmáin, Lombard, Ní Cochláin, S. Ó Donnabháin, G. Ní Mhuimhneacháin, Críod, Ó Gráda, Ó Luasaigh, Ó Riain, P. Ó Suilleabháin, C. MacCárthaigh, Ó Ceocháin, Sheppard, De Barra, Ó Cadhla, N. Ó Coileán, Uí Thuama, Ó hEigearthaigh, S. NicCárthaigh, Léanacháin-Foghlú, N. MacCárthaigh, Ní Bhrian, Ó Floinn, Ó Dúghaill, Mhic Dháibhí, J. Uí Mhurchú, G. Ó Murchú, B. Ó Muimhneacháin, Uí Mhaoláin, T. Ó Coileán, D. Ó Coileán, J. O'Sullivan, P.G. Ó Murchú, Uí hEigearthaigh, Ó hAodha, Ó hUrthuile.

PRESENT

Councillor K. Conway, D/County Mayor presided.

Councillors Jeffers, D'Alton, Forde, Ó Donnabháin, Desmond, Canty, J. Collins, M. Murphy, Harris, R. McCarthy, Coleman, Lombard, Coughlan, J. O'Donovan, G. Moynihan, Creed, O'Grady, Lucey, Ryan, P. O'Sullivan, K. McCarthy, Keohane, Sheppard, Barry, Ó Cadhla, N. Collins, Twomey, Ml. Hegarty, S. McCarthy, Linehan-Foley, N. McCarthy, O'Brien, O'Flynn, Doyle, Dawson, J. Murphy, G. Murphy, B. Moynihan, Mullane, T. Collins, D. Collins, J. Ó Suilleabháin, P.G. Murphy, Hegarty, Hayes, Hurley.

D/Chief Executive, S/Senior Executive Officer. Michael Lynch Senior Planner.

CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES

1/3-1

Proposed by Councillor D. Hurley

Seconded by Councillor D. Canty

RESOLVED:

“That the minutes of meeting of the Council held on 27th February, 2017, be confirmed and signed by the Mayor.”

VOTES OF SYMPATHY

2/3-1

TO: Clodagh Henehan, Divisional Manager, Western Division, on the death of her mother, Ann.

STATUTORY BUSINESS

Section 183 of the Local Government Act, 2001:

Members noted the following disposal.

DISPOSAL OF DISUESED SPRING & RESERVOIR AT GLENAROUSK CASTLELYONS, CO. CORK.

3(a)/3-1

In accordance with the provisions of Section 183 of the Local Government Act 2001, the disposal of property as shown hereunder shall be carried out in accordance with the terms specified in the notice issued to members dated 28th February, 2017

Location: Disposal of disused spring and reservoir at Glenarousk, Castlelyons, Co. Cork.

Area: Plan no. 20, Folio no. 159391F.

From Whom Acquired: Historic CCC Reservoir.

To Whom It Is Proposed To Dispose: Mr. Paul Cashman, Glenarousk, Castlelyons.

Consideration: €1.00

FILLING OF CASUAL VACANCY IN THE MEMBERSHIP OF COUNCIL.

4/3-1

Councillor Michael Hegarty proposed, seconded by Councillor Mary Hegarty, the following proposal:

“That John O’Sullivan be hereby co-opted to Cork County Council to replace former Councillor Noel O’Donovan, who resigned from Council on 9th January, 2017.”

Cllr. Michael Hegarty told Members Cllr. O’Sullivan is well rooted in his beloved West Cork and has a great love for Local Authorities and Local Authority governance.

Members welcomed Cllr. John O’Sullivan back to the Chamber saying Cllr. O’Sullivan is a voice for rural Ireland and he is well known for his work. Members were sad when John didn’t make it back the last time, Cllr. O’Sullivan has a lot of integrity and is capable of tremendous hard work, he is self-effacing and committed. The Deputy Mayor and the Deputy Chief Executive also welcomed Councillor John O’Sullivan to the Council and wished him well for the future.

Councillor O’Sullivan thanked the Deputy Mayor, Deputy Chief Executive and Members for their kind words; he paid tribute to former Cllr. Noel O’Donovan saying he was an exemplary young person. Cllr. O’Sullivan said he is passionate about Rural Ireland and will do his utmost to achieve what he can for West Cork and make things better for the people we serve. He also looks forward to working with the Executive and Members.

REPORTS & RECOMMENDATIONS OF COMMITTEES

Ballincollig / Carrigaline Municipal District:

MANAGER’S REPORT UNDER SECTION 179, PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT ACT, 2000:

5/3-1

Proposed by Councillor D. Forde

Seconded by Councillor D. Canty

RESOLVED:

“Noting that in accordance with Article 179 of the Local Government (Planning and Development) Act, 2000, notice of the proposed development was published, that 2 no. submissions were received in respect of the proposal, approval pursuant to Article 179 of the said Act is given for the following:-

Donnybrook Hill Pedestrian Enhancement Scheme

REPORTS & RECOMMENDATIONS OF OFFICERS

JOINT COUNTY COUNCIL & CITY COUNCIL SUBMISSION TO NATIONAL PLANNING FRAMEWORK.

6/3-1

Mr. Robert McLoughlin, GVA Consultants, presented the Executive Summary of Cork 2050 to Members. Mr. McLoughlin said the company, GVA consultants, assisting the Cork 2050 Joint Submission by Cork County Council and Cork City Council to the National Planning Framework was assisted by Jack Sheehan on environmental issues and MHL transport. Mr. McLoughlin said we look at Cork as being a complimentary place to Dublin with strong international connections. It is all about Cork driving a region. The regional approach is very important to what we are doing and regional approach needs recognition in policy. Smaller towns are a resource and a high capacity public transport is essential in the city and its suburbs to allow for population growth as 60% of the rise will occur in the metropolitan area.

The Deputy CE told Members we have been working very hard on this since last October and have had significant consultation with all stakeholders. It is presented as a “one Cork” image and we are pleased to present it to the Department in this way. We all need to get behind this and project a positive image.

During a detailed discussion Members made the following points:-

- Members thanked Robert McLoughlin from GVA Consultants for the presentation.
- It is one of the most important documents we will discuss; we know where we are and where we want to get to.

- Connectivity and location are the two most important things and it is good the City and County came together to promote this.
- Tourism and agriculture are very important strengths and we have an educated young population.
- We have to zone land for more houses.
- This is part of overall negotiations with Cork City Council, they have worked well with us and we have dealt with an awful lot of things over the past months.
- We have to inform national level that Cork is ready for the expansions that we are proposing. We're in a good position. We have to keep the people with us. People are assets.
- It is a very high level strategic document. Would have doubts about the implementation. Was disappointed that a private company carried this forward. When we talk about jobs are we talking about Foreign Direct Investments? Would have concerns about lack of housing, broadband also a serious issue.
- It is a very ambitious programme, Border of Cork goes 18 miles north of Mallow town, and their needs will have to be met also. Rural railway stations are being devalued. Broadband and mobile phone coverage is critical.
- Very positive but heavily weighted towards the city. We are very dependent on infrastructure coming up to standard if we're to attract industry into our region. Ringaskiddy Port and Airport very important but no mention of Castletownbere which is the biggest fishing port in Ireland. Infrastructure to West Cork is in poor condition at present. Would like to see more focus in indigenous industry, there is huge potential in this county. Tourism will follow.
- Primary function of this plan is to convince the powers that be that Cork is the obvious alternative to Dublin and to convince them that Dublin is unsustainable. If we don't create an alternative we will suffer nationally.
- Understands we can't be very specific about minor details, but if we don't get the M20 running you might as well cut off half of West Limerick, all NW Cork and all Kerry down as far as Clonakilty, all areas west of those will be isolated. We also need proper access onto motorways from all those locations.
- West Cork is very much neglected and it has huge potential, fish processing, agriculture processing, our grass is one of our most valuable assets in County Cork. Would like more energy in this document.
- There is no mention of Duhallow. People in rural Ireland are not being treated well, a recent report presented here said Cork was the best place to produce milk, yet big farmers are being refused planning permission for a modest dwelling beside the farmhouse. Schools are crying out for children. Maintaining the fabric of rural Ireland is supposed to be so important but every effort to do so is being refused. We have to get a reality check with regard to our planning; otherwise we will close rural Ireland down.
- Disappointed to see the upgrade to the N25 was not mentioned, however glad to see the Northern Relief Road was mentioned.
- Upgrading the road network needs to be focused on.
- This does not compare to CASP. We don't want to be an overflow to Dublin. Rural Towns are our strengths. We need something that is different about Cork, something that makes us unique and attracts people to Cork.
- Castletownbere port is very strategic, there are 40 articulated lorries leaving the Celtic Sea Factory every week and Castletownbere is after signing a 4 month contract with Providence Oil for oil and gas exploration. There are huge opportunities in the report that we may be missing out on.

The Deputy CE told Members this is an executive summary, so points in relation to Charleville and other items are there but just not in the Executive Summary. Metropolitan and rural Cork are mutually beneficial. It is not one versus the other and not about us versus Dublin. We have ambitions internationally for Cork. There are challenges with certain constraints. The government's capital programme will be targeted in the light of what comes out of this.

Mr. Michael Lynch Senior Planner told Members we are responding to the national planning framework. We set about doing this on a whole county basis. It will also include a strategy for growth in rural areas. We require a consultant to come in to deal with this especially. We will be putting forward a model for rural development. There are capacity issues with transport. We used the NTA's model and have tested the growth scenarios with that model. The document is about a strategy for the whole of Cork. Castletownbere, agriculture, SME's they will all be discussed. It is a strategic document and we are trying to show collaborative leadership. We hope to be successful in our submission. We are linking in with other state agencies on infrastructure growth and are trying to engage and collaborate with other state agencies.

Members commented further as follows:-

- Irish farmers cannot compete with foreign corporate producers who are producing to much lower standards, would hope future development that is planned will take consideration of these issues.
- Has fear that Cork will go ahead without us. We have to be more imaginative in encouraging businesses to come to our towns, perhaps lower rates. The map in the summary shows us in a zone that leaves us out and it is frightening.
- SME's will have a major role to play in the success of this country going forward especially after Brexit.
- It is a good document; it creates a national energy zone concept. We have an area like that identified in the CDP for Whitegate.
- Much talk of Castletownbere, it is also important to point out the fishing industry in Ballycotton. Good to see additional college places being mentioned.
- We need to market Cork but keep our identity and retain second city status.
- In Cobh we have the cruise line capital of Ireland, we have a train service but have a terrible road structure.
- We have to make strong Metropolitan based submission in this context. Crafts and trades need to be supported.
- Without strategic planning the country is going nowhere. There are lots of problems with lack of funding. Every pull on the limited funding we get has to show it will deliver value.
- We are the largest county; we have a rich tapestry, coastline, wind energy, growing the Metropolitan area.
- Rural Ireland mustn't be forgotten, we need to be taking the concerns of our rural councillors on board. Money has to be set aside to make sure people have a belief in this plan.
- There isn't great emphasis on our rivers, we need to look more closely at that and make sure they are up to standard.

The Deputy Mayor told Members this is a joint submission. Compliments the members on the points raised. Major problems exist in rural Ireland. Planning is a huge problem and it starts here.

Mr. Robert McLoughlin thanked Members for their contributions and told Members it was well articulated that this is us taking what is Cork and what it will be in the future. It is setting out the road map. It is not designed to be a silver bullet. There are approaches that we know at a national level they will look at them and see that this is the correct way for the whole of the county to move forward. Castletownbere and fishing is indeed mentioned. We have to keep mentioning that Cork is Ireland's second city. It would not be appropriate nationally for other places to leapfrog Cork in any way. I will take the comments back and integrate them into the document. Connectivity is hugely important. There is a national level of investment needed, for example broadband. We have looked at the rural areas as a resource, not a support. Agriculture, Food and drink is very important, also how well they will look in the future and that's part of what we mean by adaptation. The N25 and M20 are mentioned and are important, accessibility to Port and Airport is hugely important as is Energy zone. Implementation – we need to achieve full recognition at a national level that Cork is the driver of the region, complimentary to Dublin and the only one on par with Dublin and Belfast. We also need

investment as a priority. If we get these messages across and get them into the National Planning Framework, future generations will then be able to implement it.

CORRESPONDENCE FROM GOVERNMENT DEPARTMENTS

SALE OF LETHAL HUNTING KNIVES

7/3-1

Members noted letter dated 21st February, 2017, from the Department of Justice and Equality, in response to Council's motion of 23rd January, 2017, regarding the introduction of tougher laws on the sale of lethal hunting knives, including the setting up of a national register.

Cllr. Noel Collins expressed his disappointment with the response and said as there are no further legislative changes planned to bring forward the necessary legislation, governing the sale of knives is playing into the hands of these home and street knife stabbers. He asked that the matter would now be referred to the European Court of Human Rights.

This was agreed.

CAPITAL EXPENDITURE FOR N72/N73 MALLOW NORTHERN RELIEF ROAD

8/3-1

Members noted letter dated 28th February, 2017, from the Department of Public Expenditure and Reform, in response to Council's motion of 13th February, 2017, regarding Capital expenditure for the N72/N73 Mallow Northern Relief Road.

COMMUNITY EMPLOYMENT SCHEME

9/3-1

Members noted letter dated 27th February, 2017, from the Department of Social Protection, in response to Council's motion of 27th June, 2016, regarding its current restrictions which prevent a person from continuing working on a Community Employment Scheme beyond three years.

Cllr. Paul Hayes asks we write back to the Department asking for greater flexibility for rural areas.

Cllr. D'Alton supports all that has been said, but asks if it could be extended to all areas, not just rural as the same problems exist in urban areas. Members also asked for clarification regarding the TUS scheme.

It was agreed we would write to the Minister again and ask the Social Inclusion SPC to write also.

STATUS OF M20 CORK TO LIMERICK MOTORWAY

10/3-1

Members noted letter dated 6th March, 2017, from the Department of Transport, Tourism and Sport in response to Council's motion of 11th July, 2016, regarding an update of the status of the M20 Cork to Limerick Motorway.

NOTICES OF MOTION

LEASING OF VACANT COUNCIL PROPERTIES

11/3-1

Councillor M. Murphy proposed, seconded by Councillor N. Collins, the following notice of motion:-

“That this Council considers the leasing of vacant Council properties across the County as a permanent base for Men's Shed groups”.

Cllr. Michael Murphy would like to think that if there were buildings available; Cork County Council might lease them out as a start up for Men's Shed. Men's Shed help with the mental health and wellbeing of a lot of men. We have some men in their 80s who wouldn't come outside their doors otherwise.

Members made the following points:-

- Local Authorities must provide a role for providing permanent basis for these facilities.
- Are there growing cases of men living in isolation and these Men's Shed's would bring men back into the community.
- There is a problem getting permanent premises and we should look at empty premises the Council own.
- Success of Men's Shed in Ireland has been phenomenal. They are great for mental health of recipients. There is a huge merit in it for men.
- CCC should allocate buildings in certain towns and make them available to men all around the county;
- The premises should also be available to women's groups.
- The premises would be used by men of all ages and it would keep them out of the pubs.
- The premises should be used for both men and women; it is all about communities coming together.
- Perhaps Men's shed group could join the HSE's care and repair group.
- It is a timely motion and for the well being of all people.

Members would like the motion to be amended to include women.

Cllr. Michael Murphy thanked Members for their support to include women, but stated he doesn't want the motion changed as there is a higher rate of suicide for men in Ireland and they need to have this outlet to share their skills and knowledge effectively.

Cllr. D'Alton said the Men's sheds are for men it is just the premises could be given to women also.

The Deputy CE told Members the Housing Department is not aware of any properties currently in its possession that would be suitable for Men's Sheds but if a specific property that is considered suitable, is identified in any area and is not required for housing purposes, consideration would be given to making it available under lease to a Men's Shed.

RATED INSURANCE PREMIUMS PAID BY CORK COUNTY COUNCIL TO IPB

12/3-1

Councillor D. O'Grady proposed, seconded by Councillor Melissa Mullane, the following notice of motion:-

“To seek a written report on the Retrospectively Rated Insurance Premiums paid by Cork County Council to IPB Insurance in each of the years 2014, 2015 and 2016.

The report to contain the amounts of the premiums paid, the number of compensation claims lodged against the Council, the number of cases settled out of court and the number of cases that were heard in court, the amounts of money paid out to claimants in each category and the cost of legal fees to the Council in regard to claims, in each of the 3 years.

The report to also contain the investigation procedures of the Council in regard to claims, the amounts paid to private investigators dealing with these claims in the same period and the separate number of claims rejected or found to be fraudulent.”

Members noted report from the Senior Executive Officer in Finance, which outlined as follows:-

INSURANCE PREMIUM PAID.

The Council has a retrospectively rated insurance policy in place for Public Liability and Employers Liability cover. This means that Cork County Council pays a deposit premium for the underwriting year in question. Once the amount of the claims exceeds the deposit premium, the Council's insurers invoice Cork County Council for the additional cost of the claims, up to a capped amount.

The premium data is as follows:

YEAR	DEPOSIT PREMIUM PAID. (inclusive of 5% levy)	RETRO RATED PREMIUM PAID IN RELATION TO PREVIOUS YEARS CLAIMS.
	€	€
2014	€2,363,559.00	€1,420,411.65
2015	€2,652,027.00	€1,594,994.02
2016	€2,895,920.00	€3,405,589.95

NUMBER OF COMPENSATION CLAIMS LODGED AGAINST THE COUNCIL

This table sets out the claims data in respect of claims received in the years listed.

YEAR	NUMBER OF CLAIMS
2014	370
2015	283
2016	428

FINALISED CLAIMS

This table includes claims that were submitted in earlier underwriting years but that were settled during the year indicated below.

YEAR	NUMBER OF CLAIMS FINALISED	VALUE OF CLAIMS FINALISED
2014	341	3,406,189
2015	318	3,136,175
2016	500	6,269,362

Please note that the figure given above are composite figures that include the compensation paid to claimants, the legal fees related to the claims and other relevant costs.

It is not possible to break down the finalised claims between the cases that were settled out of court and those that were heard in court.

CATEGORIES OF CLAIMS RECEIVED BY TOP 5 CAUSES

CAUSE CATEGORY	2014	2015	2016
Pothole	157	104	237
Footpath	39	57	76
Road issue	47	34	49
Slipping/tripping	50	39	4
Windscreen	17	16	22

INVESTIGATION PROCEDURES OF THE COUNCIL IN REGARDS TO CLAIMS.

The procedure for investigating claims received by Cork County Council is set out below but can differ depending on the nature and circumstances of each case.

Relevant data is requested by the Insurance section from the claimant or his/her solicitor in order to begin the process of investigating the claim. Examples of the initial information that may be requested are confirmation of the exact location of the incident, photographs, maps or GPS coordinates and other relevant data to assist with the investigation of the incident.

The relevant Council Engineer will be asked to investigate the incident and to prepare a report on the matter. The Engineer's report will present factual information regarding the incident and matters such as weather conditions, lighting conditions and any third party involvement.

The Insurer will frequently assign one of its Loss Adjusters to prepare a report on the incident and to gather further information regarding the incident that lead to the claim.

Investigations will include obtaining any relevant documentation such as maps, measurements and work logs or other data that might assist in dealing with the claim.

Further reports and investigations will be obtained by the legal advisors acting for Cork County Council. There are standard protocols in place for insurance companies and legal practices for data gathering and claims management. Both are regulated entities and have to adhere to national standards and legislation.

Cork County Council has made no payments to Private Investigators in relation to claims for 2014 to 2016.

Members thanked the SEO finance for the detailed report.

Cllr. Des O'Grady said claims have more than doubled over the period and that is a trend Cork County Council should be trying to reverse. The figures and trends are very worrying and we need to drastically reduce the number of payments we are making so we need to look at this.

Following a discussion Members made the following points:-

- Is there a dedicated team involved to seek legal advice, or is it passed straight on to an outside legal firm.
- It appears the underwriter has no risk at all, is this the case?
- What are we doing to tackle this issue?
- What do we learn from claims? It appears we are not learning anything because the claims are rising.
- We must find out what the trend realistically is. How have we had a decrease in slipping and tripping?
- The aim of the new insurance legislation is to give greater transparency; we are always trying to improve things without having information to hand. The government needs to lean on them.
- Engineers in Kinsale have indicated 60 locations which could be easily corrected. This would be low cost and it was easily achieved. Perhaps we could look at this in the Municipal Districts.
- Much of the insurance claims are related to the condition of our roads.
- We don't have enough funding to fix these roads and there is no end to the problem in sight. Some back roads are in an appalling condition. We have to fix our roads before the claims will stop.
- Wonders when the new computerised pothole reporting system is coming in.
- Members requested information on the maximum premium paid each year.
- Members would like the estimate percentage of claims that went to Court.

The Deputy CE told Members the Local Authorities insurance requirements are provided by IPB. This is a private limited company but a mutual insurer and it has operated since 1926. Because it is mutual, it means that we are effectively self – insuring. Some of the figures here relate to when the claims were finalised, not in the year in which they occurred. Weather events have had a huge impact on claims. We have a designated insurance section who deals with this. When you get a claim, a report is obtained from the Local Area Engineer, so if there is a problem with a piece of footpath, the local engineer gets to know about it. We haven't employed private investigators. It is possible that IPB has. We can reduce the costs by keeping our infrastructure in the best condition we can. We haven't examined pooling with other local authorities but IPB is largely of that make up. We asked IPB for a breakdown as to how many went to court and who didn't and the only way to do that was to go through the 1,100 files individually. We are also purchasing new velocity pitchers' and some grading equipment to help with our roads.

As the time was now 1.15 pm an extension of time was agreed on the proposal of D/Mayor Kevin Conway, seconded by Cllr Des O'Grady.

NATIONAL DIFFERENTIAL RENT SCHEME

13/3-1

Proposed by Councillor Melissa Mullane

Seconded by Councillor Des O'Grady

RESOLVED:

“That this Council write to the Minister for Housing, Planning, Community and Local Government seeking the following:

- Re-assurance that Family Income Supplement payment is disregarded for the purposes of calculation of rents under the proposed new National Differential Rent Scheme, as is the present practice in Cork County Council
- That the New National Differential Rent Scheme must be adopted by all Approved Housing Bodies.

Councillor Mullane told Members “as you are currently all aware the making and amending of rent schemes is accordingly the responsibility of housing authorities as an integral part of their housing management functions

But Section 31 of the Housing (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 2009 allows the Minister to make regulations in respect of various matters to be included in a rent scheme. These can include the sources of household income that may be assessed for the purpose of determining rent levels. This includes providing for a common set of income disregards to be applied by all housing authorities in determining a household’s assessable income for rent calculation purposes. This is the section of the Housing Act that the Minister intends of using in order for a national differential Rent scheme to be put in place.

Cork County Council currently disregards Family Income Supplement for the purpose of calculations of tenant’s rents as do many other local authorities and I applaud the council for being so progressive and realizing that Family Income Supplement (FIS) is an in-work support which provides an income top-up for low paid employees with children. FIS is designed to tackle child and family poverty and to offer a financial incentive to take-up employment as compared to social welfare payments

So today I ask for the support of council to write to the Minister and ask for this to income disregard to continue and to aim to ensure that housing supports are fair and sustainable, prioritise those on lowest incomes and avoid creating social welfare traps that may prevent people from either returning to work or to the private housing market, while also recognising the fact that a range of approaches to differential rents have become established in different local authority areas.

In relation to Approved Housing Bodies, It is my understanding that if social housing units are provided by AHBs under Payment and Availability arrangements with local authorities, it is a condition of such funding that rents be determined in accordance with the differential rents scheme of the housing authority in which the house is situated. Information I have received is that this is not the case, and in fact one approved housing body told me that a decision was made by their Board of Directors in Jan 2016 is use FIS as a source of means with calculating tenants Rents. So can I have some clarity on this and perhaps to write to all our Approved housing bodies and ask them for their policy on Rent calculation?”

The D/CE told Members the question of a National Differential Rent Scheme that would apply to all Local Authorities has been under consideration for some time. A draft national scheme was circulated by the Department in 2014. Family Income Supplement was included for rent calculation purposes in the draft scheme. These proposals, if applied uniformly, would have given rise to significant rent increases for tenants in some local authority areas while in others income from rents would have been greatly reduced and were not implemented. Although the Scheme was not introduced at the time, the Department is currently reviewing existing schemes with a view to preparing revised proposals. There are many inconsistencies in the way rents are currently calculated. Some local authorities take FIS into account when calculating rents, Cork Co Council does not. As it appeared a national scheme was imminent, a decision was taken not to amalgamate the County & Town Council Schemes following the abolition of the Town council's in 2014.

Members have previously been advised that it is Cork Co Council's intention to introduce a single countywide scheme with effect from the beginning of 2018, this work is ongoing. Rents, payable by tenants of the AHBs in the county, are calculated in accordance with the County Council's Rent Scheme.

The D/CE asked Cllr. Mullane to give details of the particular case she was referring to. It was agreed we contact the Approved Housing Bodies and ask for their policy on Differential Rent calculation.

FUNDING SCHEME TO AID IN CREATING SAFE COMMUNITY BONFIRES

14/3-1

Proposed by Councillor E. Jeffers

Seconded by Councillor F.O'Flynn

RESOLVED:

“That Cork County Council would establish a funding scheme to be made available to community groups, with its focus to aid in creating safe community bonfires on bonfire night”.

Cllr. Jeffers told Members bonfires are a very historic event in Cork with a long tradition, but in recent years there has been a very significant amount of anti social behaviour on bonfire night. They are a great way for communities to bond together in a community spirit but in many cases this has sadly been overshadowed by violence, drinking and horrible incidents where members of the fire brigade have been abused. Most bonfires in the county are unregulated and are being built in dangerous places such as the side of roads or next to houses which can cause serious harm to people. There is also a problem with what is being burnt on the fires and this is a serious concern with regard to safety and environmental protection. The implementation of a system / strategy to enable community groups to develop a community bonfire will have a huge benefit and start making bonfires a safe, fun and a community driven event for all to enjoy. Togher family fun day is a prime example where the bonfire is the centre piece of a huge community event with many other activities and has helped to stop many of the problems associated with unregulated bonfires. The bonfire itself is safe and environmentally friendly compared to a standard bonfire.

Cllr. Frank O'Flynn told Members a similar motion was discussed at JPC on 27th February, 2017 and this was referred to the Environment SPC for discussion.

The Deputy Chief Executive said it is gone to the Environment SPC we will await the outcome and it can go beyond then if necessary.

It was agreed that the remaining items on the Agenda would be deferred to the Council Meeting to be held on 27th March, 2017

VOTES OF CONGRATULATIONS

19/3-1

TO: Ms. Aileen Loughrey Oifigeach Gaeilge on the tremendous work Aileen is doing in promoting the Irish language.

TO: Ms. Vera Twomey on her courageous stance she has taken for her daughter Ava for the Government to legalise medicinal cannabis.

ANY OTHER BUSINESS

20/3-1

Opening of Tenders

The following tenders were opened at the Meeting:-

- N22 Baile Bhuirne to Macroom Road Development Archaeological Consultancy Services (Stage I – IV) Contract Lot 3.

Tidy Towns Conference

There is a Tidy Towns conference on 24th and 25th March in Westport. Some Members feel it is important that Members who wish to attend should do so.

Closure of Rural Post Offices

News about the post offices lately is very worrying. Almost one third of the country's post offices have closed in the last thirty years. A report was done last year with different ideas as to how might they be made more viable. But the government appears to have dragged its feet on that.

Cllr. Hayes asked we write to Minister for Communications requesting information on planned closures of Post Offices. The Deputy CE said this may have to come from a notice of motion.

This concluded the business of the Meeting