



COMHAIRLE CONTAE CHORCAÍ

Minutes of Proceedings at Meeting of Cork County Council held in the Council Chamber, County Hall, Cork on 25th July, 2016.

I LATHAIR

Comhairleoir S. MacCraith, Méara Chontae

Comhairleoiri Mac Seafrada, Daltúin, D.Ó Donnabháin, Ní Dheasmhumhnaigh, Ó Cainte, S. Ó Coileán, M. Ó Murchú, Ó hEarchaí, R. Mhic Cárthaigh, Ó Colmáin, Lombard, C. Ó Murchú, Coughlan, S. Ó Donnabháin, G. Ní Mhuimhneacháin, Críod, Ó Gráda, Ó Luasaigh, Ó Riain, Ó Conbhuí, C. MacCárthaigh, Ó Ceocháin, Sheppard, De Barra, Uí Chuileannáin, Rasmussen, N. Ó Coileán, A. Ó Suilleabháin, Uí Thuama, Ó hEigearthaigh, Léanacháin-Foghlú, N. MacCárthaigh, Ní Bhrian, Ó Floinn, Ó Dúghaill, Mhic Dháibhí, J. Uí Mhurchú, J. P. Ó Sé, G. Ó Murchú, B. Ó Muimhneacháin, Uí Mhaoláin, T. Ó Coileán, D. Ó Coileán Ó Cearúill, Ó Donnabháin, C. Ó Suilleabháin, Uí hEigearthaigh, Ó hAodha, Ó hUrthuile.

PRESENT

Councillor S. McGrath, County Mayor presided.

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

Deputy Chief Executive, Senior Executive Officer.

CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES

1/7-2

Proposed by Councillor Declan Hurley

Seconded by Councillor Timmy Collins.

RESOLVED:

“That the minutes of meeting of the Council held on 11th July, 2016, be confirmed and signed by the Mayor.”

Mr. Declan Daly, Deputy CE, opened the meeting by making a statement on the fire damage caused to Vernon Mount House on the evening of 24th July, 2016 saying the site is being treated as a crime scene. The Deputy CE told members over many years Cork County Council has been assisting the owners through their local agent to ensure the integrity of the house and its structural stability to the house. The Deputy CE gave members a summary of the work carried out to date on behalf of the owners by Cork County Council.

- In 2012, part of the roof was repaired at a total cost of €106,000 (including security, supervision, slates and main contractors invoice). Part of this amount was off set against funds allocated from the Department of Arts, Heritage and Gaeltacht.
- In 2014, there was a further damage to the roof as a result of the winter gales. Cork County Council engaged the services of consultants to assist in the repairs to the roof and this was carried out during October – November 2014 at a total cost of €63,100 (including contractors invoice, security, slates and consultants fees). Part of this amount was off set against funds allocated from the Department of Arts, Heritage and Gaeltacht of €44,850.
- In early July 2016, following reports of damage to the wall by vandals, Cork County Council alerted the owner's representative to the damage and they subsequently advised the Council that repairs were carried out by them on 10th July, 2016.

The County Council was recently engaging with consultants to make a further assessment of the house.

Members acknowledged the work carried out by Cork County Council in assisting to preserve Mount Vernon House.

Following a discussion, Members then made the following points:-

- It is a very sad day for Cork and especially for the people from Grange / Frankfield area who fought to upgrade the house, the Grange / Frankfield partnership is exceptionally upset.
- The current private owners have a lot to answer for as they did not take enough measures to ensure the security of the site last night.
- We have lost money on this as a Council but the bigger loss is the building itself.
- There should be stronger mechanisms nationally for the state to take over such houses.
- Commend the attempts of Cork County Council and the incredible work of the community in trying to preserve it.
- Inclusion of structures like Vernon Mount in the Record of Protected Structures means that their importance is recognised and that they are legally protected from harm.
- The owners of such buildings are legally required to mind them to make sure they do not decay.
- Did Cork County Council attempt to enforce this legislation; if not would there have been benefit in this case from doing so. Is the legislation not good enough or is it not adequately enforced. Would like these questions addressed.
- We now have a derelict site on our hands now; it is Cork's major loss.
- Would like to commend the fire brigade and the Gardaí.
- It is historic in the world of motor sport and the owner is seriously culpable.
- Members were angry that this was a protected structure and it wasn't properly protected.
- We have legislation but it is not adequately funded, the house is of real historic value and the owners should be legally obliged to look after the house.

The Mayor said it was a great loss and there will be a follow up to see what can be saved. The overriding feeling is sadness and loss, the Mayor commended the Council saying it took courage to put money into a privately owned house. A full investigation will have to be carried out in relation to the property.

Suspension of Standing Orders – Global Valuation undertaken by the Valuation Office.

Councillor Des O’Grady proposed, seconded by Councillor Paul Hayes the suspension of Standing Orders to discuss the €1.3m shortfall from the government in relation to the global re-valuations undertaken in 2015.

It was agreed that this matter would be taken at 1pm.

VOTES OF SYMPATHY

2/7-2

TO: Cllr. Bob Ryan, on the death of his mother Margaret.

TO: Noel Larkin, Mallow Area Roads Office, on the death of his mother-in-law Marie Goggin.

STATUTORY BUSINESS

Section 183 of the Local Government Act, 2001:

AMENDMENT TO DISPOSAL OF 23 OWENTARAGLEN, RIVER VALLEY, MALLOW, CO. CORK.

3/7-2

Members noted amendment to Disposal of Property at 23 Owentaraglen, River Valley, Mallow, Co. Cork, by the substitution of “Joanna Kempa and Patryk Zygmunt Bockenek” in lieu of “Joanna Kempa” being the names of the persons to whom the property is to be disposed.

Section 4(2) and Sections 32-35 of the Local Community Development Committee (Section 128E) Regulations 2014 (SI No. 234 of 2014):

FILLING OF TWO CASUAL VACANCIES ON SOUTH CORK LOCAL COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

4/7-2

Proposed by Councillor Michael Hegarty

Seconded by Councillor Cathal Rasmussen

RESOLVED:

“In accordance with the provisions of Section 4(2) and Sections 32-35 of the Local Community Development Committee (Section 128E) Regulations 2014 (SI No. 234 of 2014), the approval of the members is sought for the appointment of Mr. Martin O’Brien and Mr. Peter Dineen as representatives for Cork County Public Participation Network (PPN) to replace representatives for the Community & Voluntary (C&V) Forum. The previous nominees Ms. Therese Barrett Bourke and Mr. Seán O’Riordan are hereby deselected”.

Cllr. Marcia D’Alton informed members she has no issue with the election of the proposed candidates but wonders why their appointments is to be approved by full Council, the proposed candidates attended last week’s meeting of the South Cork LCDCs.

The Deputy CE informed members it was pointed out at the meeting that they were there in advance of their formal appointment. It gave them a chance to get familiar with their role.

FILLING OF CASUAL VACANCY ON WEST CORK LOCAL COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE.

5/7-2

Proposed by Councillor Declan Hurley

Seconded by Councillor Joe Carroll

RESOLVED:

“In accordance with the provisions of Section 4(2) and Sections 32-35 of the Local Community Development Committee (Section 128E) Regulations 2014 (SI No. 234 of 2014), the approval of the members is sought for the appointment of Mr. Cathal Wilson, as a representative for Cork County Public Participation Network (PPN) to replace a representative for the Community & Voluntary (C&V) Forum. The previous nominee Mr. Gavin Falk is hereby de-selected”.

Section 66C(4)(a) of the Local Government Reform Act 2014:

ADOPTION OF DRAFT LOCAL ECONOMIC & COMMUNITY PLAN.

6/7-2

Proposed by Councillor Michael Hegarty

Seconded by Councillor F.O’Flynn

RESOLVED:

“That the Draft Local Economic & Community Plan (LECP). be hereby adopted”.

Chapter 2 Section 128 B (1) (i) of the Local Government Reform Act 2014

LCDCS ANNUAL REPORT FOR 2015

7/7-2

Members noted the LCDCs Annual Report for 2015.

Section 36(5) of the Garda Siochana Act 2005:

ANNUAL REPORT OF THE JOINT POLICING COMMITTEE

8/7-2

Proposed by Councillor F.O’Flynn

Seconded by Councillor T. Collins

RESOLVED:

“That the Annual Report on the operation of the Cork County Joint Policing Committee (JPC) be hereby adopted”.

**APPOINTMENT OF COUNCIL MEMBER AS DIRECTOR OF PROMOTING CORK LTD
T/A VISIT CORK**

9/7-2

The Senior Executive Officer advised Members that a Council Member is to be appointed as Director of Promoting Cork Ltd T/A Visit Cork.

On the proposal of Councillor D. Hurley, seconded by Councillor F. O'Flynn, Councillor Alan Coleman was proposed as Director of Promoting Cork.

On the proposal of Councillor K. Murphy, seconded by Councillor Mary Hegarty, Councillor Michael Hegarty was proposed as Director of Promoting Cork.

The Mayor requested that a vote be taken which resulted as follows:-

For Cllr. Alan Coleman: Councillors McGrath, Jeffers, D'Alton, Ó Donnabháin, Desmond, M. Murphy, Harris, R. McCarthy, Coleman, Coughlan, G, Moynihan, O'Grady, Ryan, Conway, K. McCarthy, Keohane, Cullinane, Rasmussen, A. O'Sullivan, O'Brien, O'Flynn, Doyle, J. Murphy, O'Shea, Mullane, T. Collins, D. Collins, C. O'Sullivan, Hayes, Hurley.

[30]

For Cllr. Michael Hegarty: Councillors Canty, J.A.Collins, Lombard, K. Murphy, J. O'Donovan, Creed, Barry, N. Collins, Michael Hegarty, Dawson, G. Murphy, N.O'Donovan, Mary Hegarty.

[13]

The Mayor declared Cllr. Alan Coleman appointed as Director of Promoting Cork.

APPOINTMENT OF COUNCIL MEMBER TO THE BOARD OF CORK OPERA HOUSE.

10/7-2

The Senior Executive Officer advised Members that a Council Member is to be appointed to the Board of Cork Opera House.

On the proposal of Councillor F.O'Flynn, seconded by Councillor J.P.O'Shea, Councillor Mary Rose Desmond was proposed to the Board of Cork Opera House.

On the proposal of Councillor K. Murphy, seconded by Councillor Michael Hegarty, Councillor Mary Hegarty was proposed to the Board of Cork Opera House.

The Mayor requested that a vote be taken which resulted as follows:-

For Cllr. Rose Mary Desmond: Councillors McGrath, D'Alton, Ó Donnabháin, Desmond, Harris, Coleman, Coughlan, G, Moynihan, Ryan, Conway, K. McCarthy, Keohane, Rasmussen, A. O'Sullivan, O'Brien, O'Flynn, Doyle, J. Murphy, O'Shea, T. Collins, D. Collins, Carroll, C. O'Sullivan, Hurley.

[24]

For Cllr. Mary Hegarty: Councillors Canty, J.A.Collins, Lombard, K. Murphy, J. O'Donovan, Creed, Barry, N. Collins, Michael Hegarty, Dawson, G. Murphy, N.O'Donovan, Mary Hegarty.

[13]

Abstained: Councillors Jeffers, M. Murphy, R. McCarthy, O'Grady, Mullane, Hayes,

[6]

The Mayor declared Cllr. Mary Rose Desmond appointed to the Board of the Cork Opera House.

REPORTS & RECOMMENDATIONS OF COMMITTEES

Western Committee:

REPORT UNDER SECTION 179 PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT ACT, 2000

11/7-2

Proposed by Councillor Mary Hegarty

Seconded by Councillor Joe Carroll

RESOLVED:

“That the Emergency Repair of Embankment at L47245 Curramore, Borlin, Bantry, be hereby approved.”

Roads and Transport SPC:

CORK ROAD SAFETY PLAN 2016 -2020

12/7-2

Proposed by Councillor D. Hurley,

Seconded by Councillor T. Collins.

RESOLVED:

“That the Cork Road Safety Plan 2016 – 2020” be hereby approved.

Cllr. Hurley informed Members that this was planned to come back the Road & Transport SPC but time doesn't allow. The working group was set up in late 2015 and it comprises of Cork County Council, Cork City Council, TII, Gardai, CUH Emergency Dept. (for the HSE) and the RSA, to mirror the national road safety strategy but with specific emphasis on Cork City and County. Drafts were presented to both City and County SPC meeting and the views were taken on board.

Cllr. Declan Hurley then briefed Members on the following Cork Road Safety Together Working Group, Road Safety Plan 2016 – 2020.

The draft plan was considered by the Roads & Transportation SPC on 13th June last.

Suggestions made by the SPC Members were subsequently considered by the Cork Roads Safety Working Together Group.

The current version of the Plan incorporates a number of those suggestions.

The Cork Road Safety together working group was set up in late 2015 and consists of representatives from;

- Cork County Council
- Cork City Council
- Transport Infrastructure Ireland
- An Garda Siochana,
- Road safety authority, RSA,
- Cork Fire Service
- Health Service Executive – CUH Emergency Dept.

One of the Objectives of this group was to devise a Cork Road Safety Plan to mirror the National Road Safety Strategy but with specific emphasis on Cork City and County. Both the setting up of the Group and publication of a Plan with objective to be met by each Local Authority in the Government's Road Safety Strategy.

A draft of the Plan was presented at both the Cork County & City Transportation SPC meetings and the views of the members of these Committee's was taken on board and incorporated into the plan as appropriate.

Some of the issues identified at the Cork County Transportation SPC meeting of 13/06/16 were;

- That objectives/interventions be input concerning the separation of Vulnerable Road Users (Pedestrians/cyclists) from motorists, e.g. supporting greenway development, cycle paths etc. A new objective No. 25 was inserted under engineering Actions to address this aim.
- That there would be an emphasis on improving road condition to reduce hazards, with emphasis on signage and lining etc. Action No. 7, under engineering Actions, was amended to achieve this objective.
- Improving road drainage, dealing with water from adjacent lands and enforcement of planning conditions relating to surface water and entrances etc., A new objective No. 27 was introduced under Engineering Actions to accommodate this objective.
- Enforce wearing of helmets for cyclists and the wearing of high vis vests for both cyclists and walkers on rural roads especially. This objective was discussed in detail but as the law currently does not require the wearing of helmets or high vis vests, it is not something that can be enforced. Consequently, it was agreed that this would be promoted through its inclusion in the education objectives. It is noted that under Any Other Business at the Council Meeting on 13th June that Cllr. Keohane suggested that a letter should be sent to the Minister suggesting that cyclists should wear helmets. This was seconded by Cllr O'Flynn who added that cyclists should also wear High-VIS Jackets. If a change in legislation occurs as a result the Plan could be amended at that stage.
- Separation of unsafe behaviour towards vulnerable road users, from unsafe behaviour by vulnerable road users. (*we have both grouped together in paragraph 6.0*) A separate bullet points for either, was installed within the main text of plan under paragraph 6.0.
- Promotion of the education of cyclists on safe cycling and the rules of the road. This aim is covered under Education objectives.
- Focus on clampdown on unaccompanied Learner Drivers. The Gardai will aim to increase compliance, through national Campaigns.
- Perceived lack of focus on Public Transport and bus lanes. Table 3.2 was said to be lacking stats on the numbers using Public Transport (e.g. Bus Eireann) Table 3.2 of the plan focuses on travel to/from work only and the figures are reflective of the numbers availing of public transport for that purpose. It was agreed that Public Transport will be inserted in the main text of the plan under the heading of Transportation Links.
- An aim to implement traffic Calming measures as appropriate. This aim is now covered by a new objective, No. 20, under Engineering Actions
- An aim to install cats eyes more consistently on rural traffic routes (e.g. *Regional and national Routes*) and road edge marking lines. Also, for the upkeep of warning signs generally. These aims are covered by amendment to Engineering action No. 7.

The aim of the group will be to have the Cork Road Safety Plan adopted by Q3 – 2016 and the progress on the actions will be monitored and evaluated on an ongoing basis.

It is intended to launch the Plan in mid September with the County and City Mayors being involved.

Following the briefing Members thanked Cllr. Hurley for the report and made the following points:-

- There have been numerous accidents on the N22 and the realignment should be prioritised, it is not good enough that we have to wait until after 2021.
- Hedge cutting doesn't get adequate attention in this report, hedge cutting might be the responsibility of the landowner but it is the responsibility of the Council to provide a safe road for people to travel on.
- Welcomes cats eyes and lining in the report but road surfaces are the key to road safety. The N71 is the main routeway to West Cork and the surface of these roads are not fit to be called national primary or secondary routes.

- The main entrance to Bandon Town is dreadfully unsafe and the road surface needs to be resurfaced immediately.
- Would like to know if there is any truth in a special committee is being set up between Cork and Kerry in relation to the Macroom by-pass.
- It's critical that high vis vest would be worn by workers on the roads.
- Ramps in estates previously could be put in by the engineers when the estate was being resurfaced, now it is not possible without a Part 8 and this makes ramps much more expensive and more difficult to get.
- Traffic calming is essential and also hedgerows but the most important thing about road safety is the condition of our roads. The shelving of the M20 is one of the most serious inadequacies in the Cork Road Safety Plan. The disappointment with the TII lack of funding to make our roads safer is one of the most critical part of the plan.
- The Cork Road Safety Plan is an important aspirational document but it will count for nothing unless we have input from the TII.
- This report should be used to leverage funding from the TII for road safety programmes for small schemes.
- Some peoples were prosecuted for not cutting their hedges on the roadside but they weren't allowed to within the limits of the cutting season.
- The N71 needs to be upgraded to national primary standards and that is the only way it will get funding.

The Deputy CE informed Members that the Cork Road Safety Plan is broader than some of the construction and engineering matters that were brought up. We have engaged in a campaign to advise landowners of their responsibilities in relation to hedge cutting in late August, and we have taken action where landowners do not cut their hedges. If there are areas of particular concern they should be raised at Municipal District level where action can be taken. Regarding a committee being set up between Kerry & Cork County Council, a telephone conversation took place between the Chief Executives in both counties on this matter. Kerry's and Cork's priorities have to be matched and we must remember all our other projects which have priority. The non-national roads are our responsibility and 1st September is the date when people are allowed to cut hedges again.

Cllr. Kevin Murphy proposed, seconded by Cllr. D. Hurley that the Council write to the Minister seeking to upgrade the N71 from a secondary route to a national primary road.

CORRESPONDENCE FROM GOVERNMENT DEPARTMENTS

IRISH PUBLIC BANKING SYSTEM.

13(a)/7-2

Members noted letter dated 18th July, 2016, from the Department of Finance in response to Council's letter of 9th May, 2016 regarding the creation of an Irish Public Banking System.

Cllr. Jeffers welcomed the response saying he is aware of the current schemes but none are significant enough and he welcomed the fact the Department is looking into it.

CAPITAL ACQUISITIONS TAX

13(b)/7-2

Members noted letter dated 18th July, 2016, from the Department of Finance in response to Council's letter of 8th February, 2016, regarding Capital Acquisition Tax and unmarried couples.

NOTICES OF MOTION

RENTAL ACCOMMODATION SCHEME.

14/7-2

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

“To seek a written report on the present number of tenants in the Rental Accommodation Scheme (RAS) in Cork County who are in receipt of Notices of Termination from their landlords. The report to include the present number of tenants on the RAS scheme and the number of contracts that were not renewed in 2015 and 2016 to date. The report to also include the number of tenants who were forced to leave their homes due to landlords issuing notices of termination in the same period and these tenants current housing situation.”

Members noted the report from the Director of Housing, which outlined as follows:-

The Council is presently aware of 15 RAS tenants where the landlord proposes to terminate the contract. RAS contracts are generally renewed unless landlords are putting properties up for sale or taking properties back which they are entitled to do under the Residential Tenancies Act, or also in cases where a tenant may be socially housed (or exits RAS voluntarily in the case of emigration etc.).

In such situations, where a RAS contract is ending due to sale/property being taken back by landlord, the RAS unit makes every effort to source alternative private rented accommodation under RAS for the tenant and the tenant is also asked to engage in this process. Alternatively, there may be social accommodation available to meet the needs of the RAS tenant leaving the property. If a property is up for sale, the Council may be in a position to purchase using the SHIP allocation.

The Council is generally successful in assisting the tenant in this regard.

There are currently 708 private rented tenants on the RAS scheme.

As noted earlier, there are also a number of other situations where a RAS contract is not renewed (e.g.) where the tenant is socially housed or moves on and voluntarily exits the scheme and we would not have details of their current housing tenure.

As regards contracts not renewed, the Council is not in a position to report on these figures at present.

Cllr. Des O'Grady thanked the Deputy CE for the report but is unhappy with the report and during a discussion, Members made the following points.-

- Disappointed we have not been given the figures requested.
- Tenants pay the differential rent in the RAS scheme. They have to be 18 months on rent supplement before they can get on the RAS scheme and the Council believes a tenant's need has been satisfied when they go on to this scheme.
- Last year Cork County Council has a target of 75 houses to be taken into the RAS scheme and they only took in 22. RAS tenants are being evicted and there are not enough houses, there are also not enough social houses hence the tenants become homeless.
- Wants a guarantee that any person on the RAS scheme who is evicted will get a social house.
- Very disappointed with the contracts that were not renewed, there are tenants who have become homeless in the past year and we want the local authority to recognise it has a duty to these people.
- People coming out to RAS cannot access HAP this is very serious and should be followed up.

- Success to date is welcomed, but figures for 2015/16 would indicate how critical the problem is becoming. With the growth in the number of people who are coming under notices from landlords, can the Council keep up supplying social housing?
- The cap on purchase of houses is a major problem for us.

The Deputy CE informed members that a homeless person get preference in relation to future allocations and the Council is generally successful in helping people coming out of a RAS house. It will take a few weeks to get the information requested and regarding the cap on purchasing houses we have got some relief and there is flexibility, however we would prefer if there was no differential between city and the county.

TENDERING PROCESS FOR ALL CONTRACTS

15/7-2

Proposed by Councillor Danielle Twomey seconded by Councillor Melissa Mullane, the following notice of motion:-

“That this council provides a written report on the tendering process of all contracts for all programmes of works, specifically housing maintenance contracts. This report should outline the process from tendering to the completion stage of programme. It should also include whether stage payments are given to contractors and the frequency of inspections made by Cork County Council.”

Members noted the report from the Head of Finance and the Director of Housing, which outlined as follows:-

Report Part 1

Programmes of work from a procurement and contract management point of view are divided into two broad categories which determine the type of contract in place and the subsequent management of the contract.

For all construction works contracts Cork County Council, like all other public bodies, are obliged to use the National template of contracts and tender documents. These documents are standardised across the public service and limit the conditions that Cork County Council can impose on contractors and these templates require the making of stage payments to contractors. For service contracts, e.g. plumbing or electrical repairs to housing and buildings Cork County Council is not obliged to use the construction template documents and this allows Cork County Council more flexibility to impose conditions which make managing the contracts more advantageous to Cork County Council.

A Framework Agreement is a facility in procurement legislation where a public body has recurring need for a service or a type of work. In a Framework Agreement a number of contractors or suppliers are included in the Framework Agreement where they meet certain conditions and all contracts awarded under the Framework Agreement would have similar conditions.

Cork County Council has Framework Agreements in place for:-

- Plumbing
- Electricians
- Building works (minor)
- Supply of Doors and windows
- Boiler Service

Consultant Engineers
Road pavement

Before a Framework Agreement is set up an advertisement is placed on the etenders website which is the government's portal for all public service tendering. This notice sets out the conditions for inclusion in the Framework Agreement, the rules of the competition and the conditions which will attach to any contract awarded under the Framework Agreement.

Cllr Twomey clarified that the reference to inspections in her Notice of Motion refers to housing maintenance.

Report Part 2.

Maintenance works to Council Housing Stock are inspected across the county on a day to day basis, for all the various work types that are undertaken in housing operations, i.e.: vacant house refurbishment, response maintenance, disabled persons grant adaptations, planned maintenance, energy efficiency etc. On all major contracts such as vacant house refurbishment contracts, houses are inspected on an ongoing basis at a number of key points in the contract cycle:

- At the point the house becomes vacant, to ascertain its condition,
- In advance of tendering the works to ensure an adequate works specification is scheduled,
- On an ongoing basis during the works to ensure quality control and adequate management of safety,
- Once works are complete to snag same and ensure perquisite quality standards have been achieved.

These are the standard nature and frequency of inspections on all major works contracts.

During a discussion Members made the following points:-

- There is a lack of information or a disconnection between the contractor and the Council after the tender is accepted and the contract awarded.
- Work is being started and left mid project as the contractors may not have all the materials, why was the contractor allowed to being work without the required materials. This can cause a health and safety issue.
- A tenant was left without water due to a contractor starting a job and not returning to complete it. The Council had to chase this contractor in order for the work to be completed. We shouldn't have to do this.
- How often does Cork County Council carry interim inspections whilst work is ongoing to make sure the contractor is carrying out what was agreed on the contract.
- Are the inspections pre-planned and what how frequent are these inspections carried out.
- How are the interim payments made?
- How does the Council decide whether it is an open or restricted tender?
- Can we increase the number of quotes to more than five?
- How many inspections were there on ongoing works from 2015 to date?
- Are time limits adhered to?
- When a contractor exceeds the contract price is an investigation done as to why.
- There is a retainment fee of 5% to allow work to be inspected, can this be increased as it is too low to be an incentive.
- Service contracts were we don't have to use construction template documents, what guidelines do we use to make sure the contractor does the job as quickly as possible.
- The fairness of the process was carried out in 2014, what was the result of this review. The restricted procedure policy does nothing for SMEs.
- Electricians and plumbers tend to collate jobs in similar areas and prioritise those close to them.

The Deputy CE informed members that the report which was circulated to members answered the queries that were raised. Cllr Twomey has listed additional queries and requested that she provide this information and it will be followed up for her.

Council contracts are administered by professional people who are aware of the conditions which apply nationally to such contracts and they are bound by national figures which are industry wide accepted.

SCOLARSHIP SCHEME FOR APPRENTICES

16/7-2

Councillor Eoghan Jeffers proposed, seconded by Councillor Noel Collins, the following notice of motion:-

“That this Local Authority would establish a scholarship scheme to pay for the training contribution at phase two, four and six for five apprentices per year who come from disadvantaged backgrounds.”

During a discussion Members made the following points:-

- Apprentices are being paid below the minimum wage; Cork County Council can be proactive and show leadership in this area.
- Schemes like this can play a huge part in helping people get access to apprenticeships, the amount of money invested into this would be small and the rewards would be great.
- There is red tape in relation to college admissions and secondary education. We are a nation of hypocrites.
- Funding is with the European Development Fund and we need apprenticeship in all walks of life.
- Very good idea, it would ensure economics wouldn't be a barrier to the brightest in our education system.

The Deputy CE informed Members that there is a charge of €1,000 levied on apprenticeships at certain stages of their training. The Council does not support other 3rd level education and there is no reason why we would support apprentices. Payment for apprentices ranges from €205 per week in the first year to much higher in the fourth year but apprentices are not recompensed for the time they spend in college. There is no precedent for Cork County Council to give such support.

Councillor Jeffers thanked all who supported the motion and said there may not be a precedent but we can show leadership. It is a very small contribution to make and we already give money to budding entrepreneurs.

It was agreed to forward the Motion to the Social Inclusion SPCs.

RECREATION AND AMENITY STRATEGY FOR THE COUNTY

17/7-2

Councillor Marcia D’Alton proposed, seconded by Councillor Claire Cullinane, the following notice of motion:-

“That the current reorganisation of the Directorate structures of Cork County Council would include a section dedicated to Recreation and Amenity, the functions of which would include development of a Recreation and Amenity Strategy for the County, co-ordination of Recreation and Amenity developments throughout the Municipal Districts and development of the proposed network of cycling infrastructure throughout County Cork. Easily accessible Recreation and Amenity opportunities are critical for healthy communities and provision of same is a local authority function which is almost always welcome.”

Councillor D’Alton informed Members that recreation and amenity infrastructure of all kinds is vitally important to establishing and maintaining the quality of life in a community and region. Parks and recreation programmes and services contribute in a significant way to the physical and mental health of people of all ages. They are also very important for the economy. Parks trails and recreation facilities increase property values and tax revenue. Quality parks and recreation are cited as one of the top three reasons that business cites in relocation decisions. Some staff has real expertise in the development of recreational facilities and if that expertise were collated in a dedicated section, it would have the drive to co-ordinate and promote cohesive and structured integration of recreation and amenity facilities in everything we do.

During a discussion Members made the following points:-

- Many other local authorities like Dublin, Cork City, Tipperary, Waterford City and County have departments dealing with Cultural, Recreation, Amenities, Community and Sport.
- Within the Municipal District Directorate the Council could incorporate a small but distinct section with a specific focus on the co-ordination of development of Recreation and Amenity facilities throughout the county.
- We need that kind of structure if we are to optimise limited opportunities for funding, think in an innovative way and advance positively even the plans and strategies we already have in place.
- Recreation and Amenity is one which gives so much pleasure to people and it promotes Cork County Council in a positive way.
- We spend a lot of money on amenity grants and to collate that information appropriately we need this kind of section. This is a clean, clear transparent way of moving this forward.

The Deputy CE said that in the new arrangements from September, we should consider this. He said he would raise it with the new Director of Services of the Municipal Districts, Mary Ryan and that he was confident that she would revert back with her considerations.

TASKFORCE AIMED AT TACKLING PROBLEM OF DERELICTION

18/7-2

Mayor Seamus McGrath proposed, seconded by Councillor Frank O’Flynn, the following notice of motion:-

“To request that Cork County Council establish a ‘ Dereliction ‘ taskforce aimed at tackling the problem of dereliction in selected towns in each Municipal District on a pilot basis. This taskforce should be resourced and staffed to facilitate an active and ongoing engagement with property owners and a relentless focus on improving the problem of dereliction.”

Mayor S. McGrath told Members dereliction was one of the items he highlighted when he was elected Mayor. He acknowledged the work done by Cork County Council even though the legislation is quite restrictive. Mayor McGrath would like a town in each Municipal District to be focused on where the Council is actively focused on dereliction in a way that we can prove that action and progress can be made.

During a discussion Members made the following points:-

- Dereliction is the scourge of all our towns and villages and this is a major frustration for communities.
- We must involve the community in tackling the dereliction like getting school children and various arts groups involved in painting murals on derelict buildings to make them look more attractive.
- Derelict buildings are a major cause of frustration for different tidy towns groups.
- Dereliction is an issue especially in Kanturk. Staff working on dereliction at present should be recognised as doing their absolute best. We get reports on a monthly basis from the Municipal District Officer with a progress report on such sites.
- The effort of Cork County Council needs to be enhanced. It is great for a community to see the Council coming in to sort out the dereliction.
- A small amount of money can go a long way, painting schemes, art competitions etc. we need to look creatively at new initiatives.
- Passage West would be ideal for the pilot area.
- In drawing up the scheme can Members be reported back to regularly so that they could keep aware of how the scheme will work and perhaps be able to contribute suggestions as to how it might operate best?

The Deputy CE informed Members that the importance of the public realm is recognised by management and the impact that dereliction can have on this. There is also great recognition due to the efforts made by local people and tidy towns groups. There is a cross over with the vacant sites levy. Town centres form part of that equation also. The Minister's recent action plan for housing and homelessness mentions dereliction and change of use being supported from commercial to residential.

ALLOW MEMBERS OF AN GARDA SIOCHANA TO PARTAKE IN UNIONS

19/7-2

Mayor Noel Collins proposed, seconded by Councillor Des O'Grady, the following notice of motion:-

“That this Council, in the interests of social justice and equality, request the Minister for Justice to honour the ruling of the European Court in 2012 and allow members of An Garda Síochána to partake in unions and have the right to strike.”

Cllr. Noel Collins told Members the most basic human right is the right to have your voice heard, it is wrong that Gardaí are forced to stay silent.

During a discussion Members made the following points:-

- Gardaí have spoken publicly about their low pay and their difficulties, the number of Gardaí are falling.
- The Court ruled in favour of the Gardaí but the Minister for Justice has not yet honoured the EU ruling.
- Every worker should have the right to join a union and the Gardaí are no different.

- There are Gardaí who are renting their homes and living in their cars in order to make ends meet.
- They have a right to a voice and we are the very people who should be supporting this in every way.
- Gardaí work over and above the call of duty, however we should tread carefully as we need both the Gardaí and the army.
- Anyone within the state should be able to become a member of a union. We are talking here about the EU Court of Human Rights decision.
- Some members voiced dissatisfaction with the inclusion of the word strike and has concerns about the impact of another Blue Flu.

It was agreed we write to the Minister for Justice.

INCREASE BUDGET ALLOCATED TO CITIZENS ADVICE OFFICES

20/7-2

Councillor Ian Doyle proposed, seconded by Councillor Frank O’Flynn, the following notice of motion:-

“That Cork County Council would write to Minister of Social Protection to look at an increase of the Budget allocated to our Citizens Advice offices. These offices are a vital source of information throughout our County but with limited resources are totally dependent on vital Voluntary help to provide the service required.”

Members were in agreement that the Citizens Advice Offices offers invaluable information to citizens on a broad range of public and social services and their budget needs to be increased. The Citizens Information Board also funds and supports MABS. The board comes under the remit of the Department of Social Protection. It is a vital service, they give great advice and the network should be extended. Many of the workers are volunteers and they cannot continue without an increase in the budget to provide the services required.

It was agreed we write to the Minister for Social Protection.

Suspension of Standing Orders – Global Valuation undertaken by the Valuation Office.

Councillor Des O’Grady told members we are going to be left €1.9m deficit in our budget due to major multi-nationals getting their rates reduced. The rates reduction was imposed last year but the government decided it would reimburse the council by €1.3m last year, leaving the Council with a deficit of €600,000.

During a discussion Members made the following points:-

- We need to meet with Minister Coveney to get the minimum of €1.3m reimbursement reinstated.
- If we don’t get this money, people are going to suffer.
- It is a serious matter, we are running the Motor Tax office and we can’t recoup anything from the Government. €1.3m is very serious funding.
- ESB, Vodafone, and other multi-national companies are extremely profitable companies that got the reduction and the small businesses are struggling to survive.
- We need the money, it is important we get it as we have a homeless and housing crisis.
- Taking anything from local services has a very negative impact, communities and vital services are going to suffer.

- We hear every day how well the economy is doing; now we hear there will be a drop in funding to County Councils. We at least need the €1.3m shortfall like last year.
- We were informed last year that we would not have the difference made up this year.

The Deputy CE informed Members that the Department informed the Council last year that the subvention for 2016 was a once off measure. At members request, that Council wrote to the Department to express their concern at the serious impact that the re-valuations would have on the Council's finances. This issue affects all local authorities. The Deputy CE said there is no suggestion that the shortfall will be recovered from other businesses so we will have to make other arrangements in relation to balancing the books.

Cllr. O'Grady said the statement was issued by a previous government, so how could the then Minister make a statement on what is going to happen next year.

Mayor Cllr. Seamus McGrath informed Members that the Council will write to the different government departments, Mr. Michéal Martin, other Local Authorities and the City and County Managers Association.

All agreed.

CORRESPONDENCE FROM OTHER BODIES

21/7-2

Members noted letter dated 12th July, 2016, in response to Council's letter of 27th June, 2016, regarding the screening of "Atlantic" documentary.

VOTES OF CONGRATULATIONS

22/7-2

TO: Cork City Football Club on their recent victory over BK Hacken in the second round of the Europa League in Turners Cross.

TO: John Twomey on his success in being named as Ireland's flag bearer for the Paralympic Opening Ceremony in Rio de Janeiro.

TO: John Murphy on his success in winning the Munster Open Boys Golf Championship in Dromoland Golf Club.

TO: Cathal Butler on his success in winning the Munster Men's Stroke Play at Cork Golf Club.

TO: The Cork Opera House on their recent productions of God Bless the Child and Prodigijg.

ANY OTHER BUSINESS

23/7-2

REMOVAL OF GRAVEL FROM THE BANDON RIVER

Members from the Kinsale Bandon MD asked that the removal of gravel from the Bandon River downstream of the weir be expedited.

The Deputy CE informed Members that the Council will contact the OPW and lend our support to the suggestion that it be done quickly.

LIGHTHOUSE KEEPER'S COTTAGE YOUGHAL

Cllr. Mary Linehan-Foley informed Members that the well known Lighthouse Keepers Cottage in Youghal is for sale and would like Cork County Council to look at the possibility of buying it and to investigate the potential behind the tourist value of the cottage. It is a golden opportunity for the Council to preserve it for future generations and it is also great for tourism. The lighthouse keeper's cottage preserves the access to the historic lighthouse site. Members supported Cllr. Linehan-Foley stating it is a very picturesque cottage and has a lot of history attached to it and urges all interested parties with an interest in tourism to explore the possibilities of acquiring this.

The Deputy CE told Members he is not familiar with the keeper's cottage but would investigate the matter.

This concludes the business of the meeting.