**COMHAIRLE CONTAE CHORCAÍ**

**Minutes of Proceedings at Meeting of Cork County Council held in the Council Chamber, County Hall, Cork on 27th April 2020.**

**I LATHAIR**

**Comhairleoir Ian Ó Dubhghaill, Méara Chontae**

Comhairleoiri Ó Dubhghaill, Ó Sé J.P., Léineacháin – Ui Foghlú, Ó Héigheartaigh, MacCarthaigh S, Ní Cheallaigh, Ó Muirthile, Ó hAodha Pól, Uí Chochláin G, Ó Murchú Caoimhín, Ó Coileáin D, Ó Murchú P.G., MacCraith, Lombard, Ó Conchubair L, Rasmussen, Ó Conchubair A, DeRóiste.

**PRESENT**

**Councillor Ian Doyle, County Mayor, presided.**

Councillor Doyle, O’Shea J.P., Linehan-Foley, Hegarty, McCarthy S, Kelly, Hurley, Hayes Paul, Coughlan G, Murphy Kevin, Collins D, Murphy P.G., McGrath, Lombard, O’Connor L, Rasmussen, O’Connor A, Roche.

Chief Executive, Senior Executive Officer.

**[a] CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES**

***Proposed by Cllr. Cathal Rasmussen* 1/4-2**

***Seconded by Cllr. Seamus McGrath***

**RESOLVED:**

“That the minutes of the Meeting held on 14th April 2020 be confirmed and signed by the Mayor.”

**[b] VOTES OF SYMPATHY**

**TO:** Carmel Gunkel on the death of her husband, Bob. **2/4-2**

Phillip O’Sullivan on the death of his sister, Catherine.

Meagan Condon & family on the death of their father, Simon.

Jean Russell on the death of her son, Brian Connery.

**[c] STATUTORY BUSINESS**

**Section 183 of the Local Government Act 2001: 3/4-2**

**Municipal District of West Cork**

**Members noted the following disposal:**

***Disposal of land at Lisheenleigh, Dunmanway, Co Cork***

In accordance with the provisions of Section 183 of the Local Government Act 2001, the disposal of the property as shown hereunder shall be carried out in accordance with the terms specified in the notice issued to members dated 17th April 2020:

**Situation:** Disposal of land at Lisheenleigh, Dunmanway, Co Cork.

**Area:** 0.0252 hectares / 0.0624 acres.

**Consideration:** €1 plus discharge of Council’s costs.

**[d] FINANCIAL BUSINESS**

**Section 106 of the Local Government Act 2001 4/4-2**

**(as amended by the Local Government Reform Act 2014)**

“That the raising of a loan up to €22 million from the Housing Finance Agency plc for the purposes of executing and delivering Cork County Council’s specific scope elements of the Public Lighting Energy Efficiency (LED Retrofit) Project and to enable Cork County Council to act as the Lead Authority for the Public Lighting Energy Efficiency (LED Retrofit) Project - South West Region and to be the contracting authority on behalf of the constituent local authorities, be approved.”

***Proposed by Cllr. John Paul O’Shea***

***Seconded by Cllr. Seamus McGrath***

**[l] ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

**Municipal District Meetings: 5(a)/4-2**

**During this discussion the Members made the following points:**

* Members asked if Municipal District meetings could resume in the coming weeks.
* It is appreciated that we are living in extraordinary times at present however Members need a forum to deal with local issues and ordinary everyday matters.

***The Chief Executive said he supported Members’ previous proposal to temporarily suspend Municipal District meetings however agreed that there is a benefit to engagement on local issues and steps will be taken to facilitate these meetings, taking into account social distancing measures. It was noted that statutory business cannot be conducted via teleconferencing / video media.***

**Broadband: 5(b)4-2**

**During this discussion the Members made the following points:**

* Broadband in Cork county is not currently fit for purpose.
* With more people working from home, it is becoming increasingly problematic.
* Would it be possible for the Council’s broadband officer to give a presentation to Members?

***The Chief Executive advised that it would be difficult for the Broadband Officer to present to the Members in the Chamber given the current restrictions. Arrangements will be made to circulate an updated report by email.***

**Carbon Tax: 5(c)4-2**

***Proposed by Cllr. Gillian Coughlan, seconded by Cllr. Ian Doyle***

**During this discussion the Members made the following points:**

* Carbon tax is coming into force in the coming weeks.
* Due to current cocooning restrictions, older people may be in their homes all winter and there will be a bigger reliance on coal.
* Some people are experiencing fuel poverty and we should write to the Minister and ask for a stay to be put on carbon tax for now.
* There should also be a bigger incentive for people to use smokeless coal.
* There should be a “polluter-pays” system.

***Members asked Cork County Council to write to the Minister for Finance requesting a temporary stay on the introduction of Carbon Tax in light of the current Covid-19 restrictions which will result in elderly and disabled citizens needing to cocoon in their own homes for health reasons.”***

**Planning: 5(d)4-2**

**During this discussion the Members made the following points:**

* There seems to be inconsistencies in the interpretation of planning framework.
* The Government Development Plan affects the County Development Plan and rural housing guidelines.
* This is a national issue, not just affecting decisions local to Cork county.
* Members asked if it is possible for the Planning Policy Unit to look into An Bord Pleanála’s decision.

***Members agreed that the Rural Housing Sub-Group will convene by teleconference and will review.***

**Return to Work by Staff: 5(e)4-2**

**During this discussion the Members made the following points:**

* There are concerns from staff who have family members with health issues as new Covid-19 cases as well as deaths continue to rise.
* People are becoming complacent about going outside resulting in more traffic on the roads and activity on streets.

***The Chief Executive advised that it is not appropriate to comment on operational issues however he did confirm that staff are being deployed within national guidelines. Cork County Council has appropriate operational procedures in place and is ensuring that urgent and safety works are being carried out.***

**Social Housing Allocations: 5(f)/4-2**

**During this discussion the Members made the following points:**

* It is accepted that it is difficult to progress social housing allocations at present.
* Some applicants are living in overcrowded and substandard housing conditions.
* It is unclear how the Council can progress allocations under the current circumstances but any alternative arrangements would be very welcome as it is clear that the restrictions will be in place for some time.

***The Chief Executive confirmed that the Housing Directorate are assessing applicants and offers are ready to issue when conditions make it possible to do so. He advised that there are some practical issues to be considered such as pre-tenancy meetings.***

**Motor Tax Exemptions: 5(g)/4-2**

***Proposed by Cllr. Declan Hurley, seconded by Cllr. Kevin Murphy***

**During this discussion the Members made the following points:**

* Businesses who are currently not operating because of Covid-19 and that have commercial vehicles are struggling to cover the cost of motor tax.
* These companies did not know that the pandemic would hit so could not declare their vehicles off the road in advance of business closures.
* The current guidelines state that any vehicle where the text disc has expired must pay a minimum of 3 months tax and the arrears and there is no method of exemption for vehicles that have not been used since Government restrictions came into force.
* This is a particular issue for bus/coach companies that operate school-runs and they now know that they will not be returning to employment until at least September 2020.

***Members asked Cork County Council to write to the Minister for Transport, Tourism and Sport requesting an introduction of a temporary amendment to legislation governing Motor Taxation, to allow companies to declare non-use of vehicles in retrospect so that they are not be liable for arrears or mandatory three-month tax payment since March 2020.***

**Covid-19 Information: 5(h)/4-2**

**During this discussion the Members made the following points:**

* Thanks expressed to staff for ensuring regular updates and information is issued to Members and the public.
* There is a lot of concern and uncertainty in the public domain and the Council’s continuous communication provides comfort and reassurance.
* Community and volunteer groups also complimented for work being carried out locally in this unprecedented and difficult time.

**Dog-Fouling and Fly-Tipping: 5(i)/4-2**

**During this discussion the Members made the following points:**

* Fly-tipping and, in particular, dog-fouling has increased dramatically since the Covid-19 lockdown.
* Confinement to local areas has exacerbated the issue.
* A new scheme needs to be developed, possibly in conjunction with Tidy Towns Committees.
* Cork County Council needs to highlight how bad the situation is and ‘naming and shaming’ offenders may be a possible deterrent to dog-owners not picking up after their pets.
* Additional bins may also help to resolve the issue and well as spot-checks that dog-owners are carrying bags and possibly issuing fines if they are not.

***The Chief Executive advised that enquiries will be made with the Dog Wardens Unit to see if there is a resolution to the matter.***

**Community Grants: 5(j)/4-2**

**During this discussion the Members made the following points:**

* Members asked if it is possible to get an update on funding allocations from community grants.

***The Chief Executive advised that Directors of Service and Municipal District Officers are looking at a range of grants at present. Applications are being reviewed to see if groups have the capacity to spend their proposed level of funding before the end of 2020. It may be that some of the proposed works now contravene national social distancing guidelines or they may now have different needs.***

**Civic Amenity Sites: 5(k)/4-2**

**During this discussion the Members made the following points:**

* The operation of civic amenity sites is welcome however there are restrictions on green waste which is resulting in a large build-up particularly in urban areas.
* Members asked if it is possible to review the current policy to ease pressure.

***The Chief Executive outlined that civic amenity sites have been open since 12th April and the categories are being increased this week to include plastic and paper. Members were reminded that operations at civic amenity sites must be carried out with public and staff safety in mind and it is not desirable to see significant queuing at sites. While grass-cutting is not deemed to be critical waste, the current restrictions will be reviewed.***

**Social Housing Construction: 5(l)/4-2**

**During this discussion the Members made the following points:**

* Members asked for an update on social housing construction for Cork County.
* Members asked what activity is currently being carried out.

***The Chief Executive confirmed that a submission has recently been made to the Department for funding for 15 sites which contain more than 5 units and that would be completed within 6 weeks of the commencement of works. A decision is currently pending.***

**~ This concluded the business of the Meeting ~**