**Minutes of Meeting of Cavan County Council held on Monday 14th December 2020 in Hotel Kilmore, Cavan at 2.00p.m.**

Councillor S. O’Reilly, Cathaoirleach presiding

Present; Councillors M. Argue, W. Bennett, C. Brady, B. Fay, A. Fitzpatrick,

J. P. Feeley, C. Kelly, C. Lovett, P. McDonald, P. McVitty, S.P. O’Reilly,

T.P. O’Reilly, T. Smith, V. Smith, P. Walsh.

In Attendance; T. Ryan, Chief Executive

 E. Doyle, Director of Service

 P. Connaughton, Director of Service

 B. Jennings, Director of Service

 M. McNally, A/Head of Finance

 L. McGavigan, Senior Executive Officer

 E. McGinn, Senior Staff Officer

Apologies were received from Councillors P. Brady and S. Smith.

1. **To confirm Minutes of Monthly Meeting held on 9 November 2020.**

**Miontuaririsci cruinnithe 9 Mí na Samhna 2020 a dhearbhu.**

It was

Proposed by Councillor P. McVitty

Seconded by Councillor W. Bennett

And

Resolved;

“that minutes of meeting of Cavan County Council held on 9 November 2020 be hereby approved”

1. **Disclosures of Interests (Section 177 Local Government Act 2001)**

Noted.

**Note Minutes of Committee Meetings**

1. **To note Minutes of Strategic Policy Committee Meetings on Housing, Social Inclusion and Corporate Services held on 4 February and 11 September 2020.**

 Noted

1. **To note Minutes of Corporate Policy Group meeting held on 8 October 2020.**

Noted.

**Note Members’ Reports from Conferences / Training events**

**5. To note members’ reports from conferences and training events *(Section 142 and***

 ***Section 143 of the Local Government Act 2001; Local Government (Expenses of Local***

 ***Authority Members) Regulations 2014 Part V Section 5 (1)).***

 Noted.

**Correspondence**

**6(i) To note reply from the Office of the Minister of State regarding the impact the additional costs of Covid-19 are having on the finances of Cavan County Council.**

Noted.

 **(ii) To note reply from Primary Care, Health Service Executive regarding the recruitment of a permanent GP for Swanlinbar Health Centre.**

Noted.

 **(iii) To note correspondence from Monaghan County Council regarding resolution passed by the members of Monaghan County Council regarding the North South Interconnector.**

Noted. Councillor C. Kelly stated that the Bailieborough Cootehill Municipal District will be putting this motion on the January Agenda for Council meeting.

 **(iv) To note reply from the Office of the Minister for Finance regarding keeping the network of Ulster Bank branches open in the region.**

Noted.

 Councillor P. McVitty asked if any reply had been received from the Northern Ireland First Minister and Deputy First Minister in relation to letters sent regarding an all-Island approach towards Covid-19.

 Mr. Eoin Doyle, Director of Service informed Councillor P. McVitty that the Council had written to both Ministers twice and to date no reply has been received.

 Councillor P. McVitty stated that he would be making no further contact on the matter.

**7. MEMBER’S QUESTIONS – Councillor P. McDonald**

 **To ask Cavan County Council if they are aware that objections to planning permission are being lodged by people using false names and addresses.**

An answer to the question posed by Councillor P. McDonald was circulated to him prior to the meeting.

**Business prescribed by Statute, Standing Orders or Resolutions of the Council.**

**8. To hear presentation from Mr. Shane Campbell, Chief Executive, ICBAN on the “Framework of Regional Priorities for the Central Border Region, 2021-2027” Strategic Document.**

Mr. Shane Campbell, Chief Executive, ICBAN gave a detailed presentation to the members on the “Framework of Regional Priorities for the Central Border Region, 2021-2027” Strategic Document. Mr. Campbell informed the members that ICBAN works in the Central Border Region and the eight Council members of the partnership are Cavan, Monaghan, Sligo, Leitrim, Donegal, Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon, Mid Ulster and Fermanagh and Omagh. He stated that the partnership has been advocating for solutions to common cross-border problems since 1995. He stated that there are three key challenges faced by the Region, Brexit, the effects of Covid 19 pandemic and Climate change. He stated that the framework aims to explore new opportunities based on regional strength for the Central Border Region of Ireland/Northern Ireland. He stated that the framework is shaped as part of the overall Spacing Planning Initiative. He stated that the aim is to set out a strategic way forward for the redevelopment of the area. He stated that supporting economic development, enhancing citizens’ quality of life, enabling greater connected or remote working and the development of the regional tourism offering were all identified as key areas of focus for the local authorities in the region. Mr. Campbell stated that to achieve the goals, ICBAN will work with local authorities, tap into regional and national expertise, influence investment by government and identify potential funding opportunities. Mr. Campbell stated that in relation to funding support is available from both sides of the border, ICBAN works to develop the opportunities provided through the funding available. Mr. Campbell stated that €1bn will be spent as part of the Peace Plus initiative. He stated that it is vital that a strong case is made to bring as much of these funds as possible to the region.

 The members in turn thanked Mr. Campbell for his presentation and unanimously supported the Framework of Regional Priorities for the Central Border Region.

**9.**  **Review of Chief Executive’s Report on submissions and observations received on**

**the Stage 1 of the Review of the County Development Plan and Local Area Plan for Cavan Town and Environs and direction to prepare a draft County Development Plan including a draft Local Area Plan for Cavan Town and Environs.**

Mr. Brendan Jennings, Director of Services outlined in detail to the members the process to date in relation to the review of the County Development Plan and Local Area Plan for Cavan Town and Environs. He stated that the County Development Plan is a document that sets out the overall strategy and vision for the proper planning and sustainable development of the County over a 6 year period which in this case is 2022-2028. He stated that the plan must be prepared in the context of the framework of national and regional strategies and guidelines and must be prepared in accordance with the provisions of the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended). Mr. Jennings noted that the Chief Executive, Mr. Tommy Ryan prepared a report (8th October 2020) dealing with pre-draft consultation phase of the preparation of the new draft County Development Plan and Local Area Plan for Cavan Town and Environs Area and this was submitted to the Elected Members for their consideration. He stated that 84 submissions were received from the public and these were taken into consideration when preparing the Chief Executive’s report. Mr. Brendan Jenningsasked the members for their support in preparing a draft County Development Plan including a draft Local Area Plan for Cavan Town and Environs.

Councillor T.P. O’Reilly asked that the executive of Cavan County Council ensure that parts of the plan are zoned for economic and employment purposes.

Councillor P. McDonald stated that it is important that we move people into the centre of our towns by turning first floors of premises into accommodation.

Councillor J.P. Feeley acknowledged the good work being done by the Planning Department and the great response from the public in their submissions to the plan. He stated that it is important to zone land for economic development. He stated that we also need to promote sustainable communities and residential development.

 Councillor S. P. O’Reilly stated that we need to be cognisant of the fact there is a lot of

backland development in our towns and villages and these need to be developed. He stated that as a rural county we need to oppose any move that will stop people building on their own lands.

Councillors T. Smith, C. Kelly, B. Fay and S. O’Reilly concurred with the previous members.

It was

Proposed by Councillor T.P. O’Reilly

Seconded by Councillor P. Walsh

And

Resolved;

“that the preparation of a draft County Development Plan including a draft Local Area Plan for Cavan Town and Environs be hereby approved”.

**10. To consider and approve proposed Amendment to Standing Orders.**

It was

Proposed by Councillor J.P. Feeley

Seconded by Councillor T.P. O’Reilly

And

Resolved;

“that the proposed amendment to Standing Orders be hereby approved subject to virtual meetings only being held in the context of a National Health Emergency.”

**11. To note Chief Executive’s monthly report (Section 51 Local Government Reform Act 2014).**

Noted.

**12. To approve disposal of plot of land containing 0.8658 acres or 0.3504 hectares (Railway Building, Crenard, Crossdoney, Ballinagh, Co. Cavan) to Mr. David Bates, The Station House, Crenard, Ballinagh, Co. Cavan for the sum of €20,000.00, pursuant to *Section 183 of the Local Government Act 2001 and Section 211 of the Local Government (Planning and Development) Act 2000, and notices circulated.***

It was

Proposed by Councillor W. Bennett

Seconded by Councillor T. Smith

And

Resolved;

“that the disposal of plot of land containing 0.8658 acres or 0.3504 hectares (Railway Building, Crenard, Crossdoney, Ballinagh, Co. Cavan) to Mr. David Bates, The Station House, Crenard, Ballinagh, Co. Cavan for the sum of €20,000.00, pursuant to *Section 183 of the Local Government Act 2001 and Section 211 of the Local Government (Planning and Development) Act 2000,* and notices circulated, be hereby approved”.

**Votes of Sympathy**

* The Pilkington Family, Cootehill on the death of Vincent Pilkington. Vincent is in the Guinness Book of Records for setting the record in 1980 as the world’s fastest turkey plucker which he still holds.
* Lorraine Teevan and the McElgunn Family, Belturbet on the death of her father Mr. Jim McElgunn.
* Ms. Savina Donohoe, Curator of Cavan County Museum on the death of her uncle Mr. Peter Shaffrey.
* The Bradley Family, Cootehill on the death of Mr. John Bradley who was Cootehill’s oldest parishioner at the age of 100.
* The Boylan Family, Cootehill on the tragic death of their son Daragh Boylan.
* Olive Hannigan, staff member Housing Section, Cavan County Council and the Hannigan Family on the death of her father Mr. Tom Hannigan, Cootehill.

**Vote of Congratulations**

* The Cavan Senior Football team on winning the Ulster Final. Councillor S. O’Reilly stated that when time allows, a Civic Reception will be held to honour the Cavan Senior team and their manager Mr. Mickey Graham.
* The arts and library service for all the good work they do throughout the County. They currently have a van travelling to nursing homes where music is played outside to patients in the nursing home.
* The Purcell Family, Bailieborough for putting Cavan on the map on the Late Late Toy Show with their review of books.
* Councillor M. Argue on her recent elevation to Vice-President of the Fine Gael National Executive.
* Cavan County Local Development Food Emergency Response, devised in St. Bricin’s College and rolled out across the County on winning a pride of place award.
* Councillor S.P. O’Reilly and his wife Elisha on opening their new Chapel of Rest Funeral Home in Mullagh.
* Cavan County Council for providing funding to local communities to put up Christmas lights in their towns and villages.
* Sheila Naughton, Northern Sound on winning the Special Recognition Award at this year’s Headline Mental Health Media Awards.
* Cavan Camogie team on winning the Nancy Murray Cup and reaching the Premier Junior Final.

Councillor M. Argue thanked the members for their kind words.

**Roads Meeting.**

Councillor S.P. O’Reilly expressed his disappointment that he found out about a roads meeting with Minister Ryan T.D. through local media. Councillor S.P. O’Reilly stated that he was annoyed that all Councillors were not invited to the meeting. He stated that members of the CPG and the executive met with the Minister for Roads, Mr. Eamon Ryan T.D. on Friday 11th December to discuss the need for increased funding for roads in County Cavan and there was no Independent Councillor or a member from the Sinn Féin party represented. Councillor S.P. O’Reilly asked the executive if Minister Ryan T.D. requested the meeting.

Councillors B. Fay and P. McDonald supported Councillor S.P. O’Reilly stating that it should not have been only the two main parties that were included in the meeting,

Mr. Paddy Connaughton, Director of Service informed the members that the meeting was organised by Deputy Niamh Smyth and it was only members of the CPG that attended the meeting.

**MEMBERS’ ITEMS – DEFERRED FROM NOVEMBER MEETING**

1. **North South Interconnector**

Councillor C. Kelly asked the Director of Service, Mr. Brendan Jennings if there had been any communication or discussions between Cavan County Council and Eirgrid or ESB in relation to the North South Interconnector. Councillor C. Kelly stated that Monaghan County Council had a motion on their agenda in relation to the North South Interconnector and the Bailieborough Cootehill Municipal District will be putting this motion on the January Agenda for Council meeting.

 Mr. Brendan Jennings, Director of Service informed the members that since the last Council meeting there had been no correspondence from anyone in relation to the North South Interconnector.

1. **To request an update on the Wastewater Treatment Plant in Virginia**

Councillor T.P. O’Reilly requested an update on the Wastewater Treatment Plant in Virginia.

Mr. Paddy Connaughton, Director of Service stated that the Water Services Major Capital Section are working in collaborative partnership with Irish Water’s Wastewater ECI team to progress design submissions in consultation with VEOLIA Water Ireland with particular emphasis being placed on the Virginia Wastewater treatment plant. He stated that the next stage in the process involves a programme review and this is ongoing at present. He stated that this should provide greater clarity and at present the guildline/estimated completion date is Quarter 1 2024.

Coucillor T.P. O’Reilly thanked Mr. Connaughton for his report and stated that he hoped the project would not be kicked down the road again.

Mr. Connaughton stated that Quarter 1 of 2024 was a realistic completion date.

**MEMBERS’ ITEMS – DECEMBER MEETING**

1. **That we call on Government Departments to channel business through An Post and come up with a strategy for sustainability of An Post network which will cost €17 million next year, otherwise more rural post offices will close.**

Councillor B. Fay proposed that Cavan County Council call on Government Departments to channel business through An Post and come up with a strategy for sustainability of the An Post network which will cost €17 million next year or otherwise more rural post offices will have to close. Councillor Fay noted the importance of post offices to rural citizens who want to do their business through their local post office where they feel safe and secure and are known by post office staff. He stated that the Government should look at initiatives like issuing social welfare payments, banking, payments through the PUP scheme, motor taxation and driving licences through An Post. Councillor B. Fay stated that An Post cannot survive on cash only.

Councillor S.P. O’Reilly supported the motion. Councillor S.P. O’Reilly stated that communities have got stronger due to Covid 19 and the local Post Office is playing a major role during the pandemic.

Councillor T.P. O’Reilly supported the motion noting that Post Offices are a necessity for older people as they are not as intimidating as banks. He stated that more services need to be offered through the local post office.

Councillors J.P. Feeley, T. Smith and S. O’Reilly supported the motion.

1. **That the Department of Defence consider awarding medals of gallantry and distinguished service medals to the soldiers who fought during the Siege of Jadotville.**

Councillor B. Fay proposed that Cavan County Council write to the Department of Defence asking them to consider awarding medals to gallantry and distinguished service medals to the soldiers who fought during the Siege of Jadotville. Councillor B. Fay gave a detailed report on the Siege of Jadotville stating that when you see what happened to these people you will find it astonishing at the way they have been treated since they returned home from the Congo in the early 1960s. He stated that there are only eight surviving soldiers now alive and these young men were put into a situation that was completely alien to them, but they stood their ground and the Irish army was recognised worldwide for their work. He stated that these families have been treated very badly and it is important that these men gain recognition that is being denied to them by the State. He asked that the Council write to the Chief of State of the Irish Army, the Department of Defence and President Michael D. Higgins to award these medals.

 **7. That Cavan County Council request the Government to award bravery medals to**

 **the soldiers that took part in the Siege of Jadotville in the Congo in 1961.**

Councillor P. McDonald called on Cavan Council to request the Government to award bravery medals to the soldiers that took part in the Siege of Jadotville in the Congo in 1961. He stated that although the men of A Company have been recognised with several honours in recent years as a result of a campaign by the late Col Quinlan’s son Leo and others, they have never been awarded the individual medals for bravery they were recommended for following the Siege in the Congo in 1961. He stated that this motion is close to his heart as he had an uncle who served in the Congo for three terms during the 1960s.

Councillor P. Walsh supported the motion stating that it was a sad occasion for men who put their lives on the line not knowing what lay ahead for them. She stated that there are still people in Cavan town who fought in the Congo in the 1960s and these men should be recognised for what they did for their Country.

1. **That Cavan County Council needs to relet houses more quickly when they become vacant because of the number of people on the waiting list to get housed.**

Councillor P. McDonald called on Cavan County Council to speed up the process to re-let houses once they become vacant because of the number of people on the waiting list to get housed. He stated that by leaving houses vacant for so long there is a loss of revenue for the local authority. He asked that the Council review the practice of putting plywood over the windows and doors of vacant houses as this leads to the unsightly appearance of the dwellings and was of the opinion that street grills would be more presentable. He stated that the Council should engage with local builders to carry out renovations and reduce the letting time to three months or less.

Councillor P. Walsh supported the motion and expressed her shock after being informed at a municipal district meeting of the percentage of people turning down houses in the County.

Councillor S.P. O’Reilly stated that some people were on the housing list in order to avail of the Housing Assistance Payment. He stated that in order to qualify for HAP, a household must be qualified for social housing support by their local authority. Councillor S.P. O’Reilly suggested that the Council look at the Welsh model that allows prospective tenants engage the contractors to undertake the work on the property.

Councillor S. O’Reilly asked the executive to outline the reasons for prospective tenants refusing houses.

Mr. Eoin Doyle, Director of Service stated that the rate of re-letting was determined by funding. He stated that each year between two and three percent of the Council’s housing stock is released by tenants. He stated that the shortfall in funding needed to undertake repair work to make the houses suitable for return to the market has seen a build up in the numbers on the list over the last few years. Mr. Doyle stated that thanks to the recent Voids Programme, the Council have been able to reduce the number of vacant houses. Mr. Doyle noted that applicants had the right to make two refusals in a twelve month period before they are taken off the list. He stated that the reason for refusal varies from case to case. Mr. Doyle noted that in Bailieborough, 30% of the housing offers were refused and stated that such refusals did slow up the process of re-allocation as factors like Garda vetting of tenants had to be re-initiated. Mr. Doyle stated that in relation to the Welsh method it would need to be discussed at a National Level and would require Government funding and commitment.

 **9. That in the context of the current revision of the County Development Plan, Cavan**

 **County Council commit to facilitating the provision of serviced sites for**

 **residential development in our towns and villages.**

Councillor W. Bennett stated that in the context of the current revision of the County Development Plan, Cavan County Council commit to facilitating the provision of serviced sites for residential development in our towns and villages. Councillor W. Bennett asked that sites be made available to small developers on the edge of towns to build three or four houses on serviced sites instead of building large estates in towns.

Councillor C. Kelly supported the motion stating that this system is used in other Counties and would be of great benefit to people to be able to purchase a serviced site.

Councillor T.P. O’Reilly supported the motion.

Mr. Brendan Jennings, Director of Service thanked the members for their motion and stated that it would be worthwhile investigating in the Development Plan and pursuing same. He stated that support would be required from the private sector.

Councillor T.P. O’Reilly thanked his fellow Councillors for their support over the last two years and on behalf of the Fine Gael Group wished everyone a Happy Christmas and New Year.

Councillor J.P. Feeley on behalf of the Fianna Fáil Group wished all a Happy Christmas and all the best for 2021 and stated that hopefully 2021 will bring good news. Councillor J.P. Feeley thanked the executive and staff for their help and co-operation throughout the year.

Councillor B. Fay thanked all in Cavan County Council for their great work in a very difficult year. He wished all a Happy, Peaceful and Healthy 2021.

Councillor P. McDonald thanked everyone for their help throughout the year and wished all a Happy Christmas.

Councillor S. O’Reilly wished all a Happy Christmas and thanked all in Cavan County Council and her colleagues for their help throughout the year.

Mr. Tommy Ryan, Chief Executive joined with the well wishes for Christmas and stated that hopefully 2021 will be a better year. He thanked everyone for their help during 2020 which was a very difficult year.

 **Item Nos. 6,8,10,11,12,13,14 and 15 were deferred to the January meeting.**

 **The meeting concluded at 15.55.**