

KILDARE COUNTY COUNCIL

Minutes of Monthly Meeting of Kildare County Council held at 2.00p.m on Monday 23 February 2015 at Áras Chill Dara, Devoy Park, Naas, Co Kildare

Members Present: Councillor F O'Loughlin (Mayor), Councillors A Breslin, A Breen, F Brett, K Byrne, D Callaghan, R Cronin, W Crowley, M Dalton, S Doyle, T Durkan, D Fitzpatrick, B Hillis, I Keatley, P Kennedy, A Larkin, J Lawless, M Lynch, P McEvoy, J McGinley, F McLoughlin Healy, M. Miley, S Moore, J Neville, S O'Neill, J Pender, R Power, S Power, T Redmond, D Scully, M Stafford, M Wall, P Ward, B Weld, B Young

Apologies: Councillors B Caldwell, I Cussen, T Murray, N O'Cearuil, F O'Rourke

Also Present: Mr. P Carey, Chief Executive, Messrs. E O'Sullivan and P Minnock, (Directors of Services), Ms. E Hanlon (Head of Finance), Ms. S Kavanagh and Mr. M Kenny (A/Directors of Services), Ms. A. Aspell (Meetings Administrator) and other officials.

Vote of Sympathy

The Mayor recalled the recent death of Pat Whelan, retired Senior Executive Officer and extended sincere sympathy to his family. A minutes silence was observed as a mark of respect.

01/0215

Adoption of minutes

The council considered the minutes of the 23 January 2015 together with the progress report.

Resolved on the proposal of Councillor Kennedy, seconded by Councillor Wall that the minutes of 23 January 2015 be adopted and the progress report noted.

02/0115
Disposal of Land

0.0656 ha of land at Rye River, Commons East, Kilcock, Co. Kildare

The council considered statutory notice dated 11 February 2015 which had been circulated to the members pursuant to Section 183 of the Local Government Act 2001 signifying intent to dispose of 0.0656 ha of land at Rye River, Commons East, Kilcock, Co. Kildare in accordance with drawing L/1241.

Resolved on the proposal of Councillor Weld, seconded by Councillor Ward, that pursuant to Section 183 of the Local Government Act 2001, the council consent to disposal of the land in accordance with the terms set out in the statutory notice.

03/0215
Appointments to Strategic Policy Committees

The Meetings Administrator referred to report dated 4 February 2015 circulated to the members informing them that Councillors Breen and O'Rourke have indicated that they wish to swap appointments to their respective strategic policy committees (SPC). Councillor O'Rourke has indicated a preference for appointment to the Environmental Services and Water SPC of which Councillor Breen is a member, and Councillor Breen indicated her agreement to being nominated to the Transportation, Safety and Emergency Services SPC, of which Councillor O'Rourke is a member. The members were also requested to approve the appointment of Councillor Dalton to the Transportation, Safety and Emergency Services SPC.

Resolved on the proposal of Councillor Kennedy, seconded by Councillor McEvoy, that Councillors Breen and Dalton be appointed to the Transportation, Safety and Emergency Services SPC and Councillor O'Rourke be appointed to the Environmental Services and Water SPC.

04/0215
Management Report

The members considered the monthly Management Report.

Resolved on the proposal of Councillor McEvoy, seconded by Councillor Hillis, that the Monthly Management Report be noted.

05/0215

Special Speed Limit Bye Law

The members considered report of 5 February 2015 advising that the statutory procedure for the Making of Road Traffic (Special Speed Limit) (County of Kildare) Bye Law for the R448 at Prumplestown/Knocknagee, Castledermot, Co Kildare under Section 9 of the Road Traffic Act 2004 has been completed subject to the approval of full Council.

Resolved on the proposal of Councillor Miley, seconded by Councillor Redmond, with all members in agreement, that the making of the Road Traffic (Special Speed Limit) (County of Kildare) for the R448 at Prumplestown/Knocknagee, Castledermot, County Kildare under Section 9 of the Road Traffic Act 2004, to change the speed limit from 80kph to 100kph, be approved.

06/0215

Decade of Commemoration

Ms Higgins, Library Services, presented the Decade of Commemoration Strategy Document 1913 – 1923 to the members for consideration and approval. The decade from 1913 to 1923 was the defining period in modern Irish history which culminated in the achievement of Irish Independence and the foundation of the Irish Free State. The presentation set out how the commemorative programme for Kildare shall mark the centenary of key historic events that will occur between 2013 and 2023 with particular emphasis on 1916 : 2016. It will focus on all aspects of life in Kildare; social, cultural, economic, political, industrial, agricultural and educational.

The Mayor acknowledged the presentation and the work that has been undertaken by the committee to date. The Chief Executive thanked Ms Higgins for her presentation and commended the work of the committee and their approach on preparing the strategy.

The Mayor and the members contributed to a discussion around the positive nature of the presentation, the benefits for education, preserving our heritage and encouraging community participation and they hoped that the strategy document would support a strong case for funding.

Resolved on the proposal of Councillor McEvoy, seconded by Councillor Miley, with all members in agreement, that the Decade of Commemoration Strategy Document 1913 – 1923 be approved.

07/0215

Housing Action Programme 2015

Mr Minnock, Director of Service, presented the Housing Action Programme 2015, together with letter dated 12 February 2015 from the Department of the Environment, Community and Local Government in relation to targets for delivery under the Social Housing Strategy 2015, 2016 and 2017. He advised that an analysis of the returns from the Housing Needs Assessment 2013 provides a breakdown of the output requirements per county. For Kildare the figure under Stream 1 is 2618 units (2015 – 2020). Preliminary estimates from the Department give a target output for Kildare in 2015 of 176 units (including refurbishments) with a further 160 – 170 leasing units and 70 -80 additional units under the Rental Accommodation scheme. In light of these figures, Kildare has put in place an interim Housing Action Programme to maximize the output in the current year. Kildare will plan to draw down all available public funds, capital and revenue, and put itself in a position to avail of any additional monies that might become available during the year.

Mr Minnock referred to Table 1, page 3 of the Housing Action Programme which sets out the projected social housing output figures for 2015 under the various schemes available. He outlined the Part VIII planning process and the subsequent procurement process and explained that there would be a slow lead in time to direct construction projects. He went through the risks associated with the targets and explained that there will be an analysis of all public land, graded by its readiness for development. He further stated that it is the intention of Kildare County Council to launch the Housing Assistance Payment (HAP) scheme in Kildare in the first half of 2015. This is an important step in the creation of a suite of products that can encourage private landlords to offer accommodation for social housing purposes. Resources will be required to enable a better service to be provided for both landlords and tenants. Mr Minnock also referred to the tenancy agreement, the Differential Rent scheme, and the Allocations Policy which will require review. He said that there are 6,500 people on the waiting list in Kildare and applications are coming in at the rate of 50 per week. Full use of opportunities under the Part V process will be made to negotiate with developers for the provision of social housing units.

The Mayor thanked Mr Minnock for the report. The members contributed to a debate around the funding and its availability when Kildare will be in a position to draw it down. They asked are we ready as a Council for this programme of work and, in particular, requested confirmation that adequate resources be made available. While there was a broad welcome for the plan, the members expressed their concern regarding the already overstretched resources in the Housing Department. Several members commended the staff there for their work in a stressful environment where applicants in vulnerable situations are presenting on a daily basis. Members acknowledged the enormous challenge that this programme and the introduction of HAP will present. The availability of units within unfinished estates was highlighted and the members asked

the Director to follow up on these units. The issue of a vacant house in Clane which was not listed on the vacant house report was also raised. The Director was asked to explain the background to the 39 units in Cuan Mhuire, mentioned on page 4 of the report.

Mr Minnock responded that he has been assured by the Department that the funding will be available. There may be a swap of exchequer money for private money over the period of the programme and perhaps leasing arrangements and Approved Housing Bodies delivering the product. With regard to unfinished estates, he has consulted with the Building Control Team in the Planning Department and all avenues will be explored. With regard to the vacant house, Mr Minnock advised that as it is a fire damaged house it has to go through an insurance investigation and a different process. He undertook to include the fire damaged houses in a separate category on the vacant house reports in the future. The 39 units in Cuan Mhuire are supported historically through Section 10 funding, but those beds are mainly assigned as addiction beds and are not normally available to the housing staff for emergency accommodation. However, people from Kildare are supported in other counties where facilities are available through the programme in Cuan Mhuire. Mr Minnock stated that we are dependent on the market to deliver this programme and that this will be managed carefully. As the outgoing Director, he conveyed his thanks to the staff of the Housing Department and he assured the members that there is a request for more staff to meet the need to deliver the Programme.

The Mayor and members thanked Mr Minnock and the Housing Action Plan was noted.

Resolved that the Housing Action Programme 2015 be noted.

08/0215

Presentation from Tusla on Local Area Pathways

Ms Patricia Finlay, Manager, and Ms Claire McCabe, Principal, Social Worker Operations Kildare West Wicklow, made a presentation to the members on the work of Tusla, the Child and Family Agency in Kildare.

Ms Finlay outlined the background to the statutory responsibility under the Child and Family Agency Act 2013 to provide a range of services including child welfare and protection services, family support services, family resource centres and associated programmes and early year (pre-school) inspection services. Tusla also have responsibility for the educational welfare including statutory education welfare service, school completion projects, home school community liaison schemes, alternative care such as fostering, residential care and aftercare services and services relating to the psychological welfare of children. The data for Kildare and how the National

Service Delivery Framework operates was also presented. Ms McCabe outlined the functions of the Local Area Pathway and explained the Meitheal scheme to the members.

The Mayor and members thanked both Ms Finlay and Ms McCabe for their presentation and wished them well with their work in Kildare/West Wicklow. The figures provided startling reading and the connectivity and multi-agency approach was welcomed. The issues of changes to the lone parents' allowance and staff reduction in Kildare Youth Services were raised. Members asked if it would be possible to extend the multi-agency approach to involving SOLAS for those young people leaving care and the use of the Integrated Services Programme (ISP) approach was encouraged.

Ms Finlay responded that a wraparound response was the aim and agreed that the involvement of SOLAS was a good idea. Staffing and resources are an issue and it has now been confirmed that maternity leave absences will be covered. Ms Finlay outlined the processes involved and thanked the members for the opportunity to make the presentation and withdrew from the meeting.

Resolved that the presentation from Tusla, Child and Family Agency be noted.

09/0215

Out of Hours Homeless Service

The following motion in the name of Councillor Doyle was considered:

That this Council prioritise the provision of an out of hours homeless service and in line with commitments made at the adoption of the budget that a dedicated housing sustainment service be set up to assist in supporting those facing housing crises due to property repossession or sale.

The motion was proposed by Councillor Doyle and seconded by Councillor Redmond. A report from the Housing Department was circulated to the members outlining the procedures in place for those who find themselves without accommodation. The Housing Assistance Payment (HAP) is being introduced this year for people who have a long term housing need and who qualify for social housing support. The report stated that it would not be equitable to provide a sustainment service for one element of applicants and not others and it is also not sustainable to provide such a service from the current resources of the Housing Department.

The Mayor informed members that she had a discussion with the Chief Executive in relation to this motion and she was assured that the staffing situation is being examined through the workforce planning document. Councillor Doyle said that she has concerns about the capacity of some applicants to source accommodation in the private rented sector. She said that some people will become homeless out of hours. The success of organisations such as Simon and Focus in this area of work should be replicated where possible. The topic is important and Councillor Doyle asked that the motion be referred to the Housing Strategic Policy Committee for further recommendation.

Resolved on the proposal of Councillor Doyle, seconded by Councillor Redmond that the motion be referred to the Housing Strategic Policy Committee for consideration.

10/0215

Service Level Agreement for Out of Hours Homeless Service

The following motion in the names of Councillors Pender and Crowley was considered:
That the council inserts a clause in their Service Level Agreements with homeless service providers in the county to include the condition that an out of hours referral service is provided for persons seeking emergency accommodation.

The motion was proposed by Councillors Pender and Crowley and seconded by Councillor Young. A report from the Housing Department was circulated to the members outlining the procedures in place for those who find themselves without accommodation. The report stated that the goal is to get to the root of the persons homelessness and get them to the position where they can sustain a tenancy themselves. The start of this process is to have the individual assessed and accommodated in the most appropriate emergency accommodation for their particular needs.

Councillor Pender said that she concurred with Councillor Doyle's previous motion regarding homelessness and that people do become homeless out of hours. She cited a number of situations where it was not possible to get appointments for assessment and that people slept on chairs in A & E to have shelter. There needs to be adequate assessment and the service providers should be in a position to do this on behalf of council. Councillor Crowley said that he would just deal with the report which he said conflicted directly with his experience during negotiations on Michael Garry House. He disagreed with the report and said that the service provider should be in a position to carry out the assessment.

The Chief Executive thanked Mr Minnock for the Housing Action Programme presented earlier. He stated that the housing situation is posing a huge challenge and in recognition of this, he has appointed a Director of Service with specific responsibility for this area. He referred to the workforce planning document and said that members will see improvements over the coming months. He cautioned that there is no magic solution to the issues raised, but that he is determined to meet the challenges and persevere with the programme as outlined in the presentation from Mr Minnock.

Councillor Pender said that she would like to see the Service Level Agreements with the service providers and asked that the motion be placed on the agenda for the next meeting of the Housing SPC.

Resolved on the proposal of Councillors Pender and Crowley and seconded by Councillor Young that this motion be referred to the Housing SPC for consideration.

11/0215

Amendment of Homeless Policy

The following motion in the name of Councillor Redmond was considered:

That the council amend the homeless policy to allow people who present as homeless be helped regardless of which county they have come from.

The motion was proposed by Councillor Redmond and seconded by Councillor Lynch. A report from the Housing Department was circulated to the members outlining the procedures in place for assessment of applicants for housing supports under the 2011 Assessment Regulations. Under these regulations, applicants have to demonstrate that they have a long term housing need in the county. The report stated that it was not sustainable to provide a homeless service to persons outside the county.

Councillor Redmond said that he was aware of a number of women who found themselves in a homeless situation having come to Kildare from other counties. He asked that the motion be referred to the Housing SPC to examine the merits of amending this policy. Several members contributed to the discussion and asked the Director how many emergency beds were available to Kildare County Council and how a programme to assist the person move on to independent living could be integrated into the existing system.

Mr Minnock cited the Peter McVerry model as an example of an integrated programme for the homeless person which included a move on plan. He said that there were circa 70 bed spaces receiving financial support but that 39 of these beds were for persons with addiction and were not available for emergency use. With regard to instances of domestic violence, the responsibility for funding such facilities now rests with Tusla and protocols have been agreed on a national basis.

Resolved on the proposal of Councillor Redmond, seconded by Councillor Lynch that the motion be referred to the Housing SPC.

12/0215

Votes of Sympathy

The Mayor and members expressed sympathy to the family of the late:

Mr Paddy Murphy, retired General Operative, formally of Naas Town Council

Mr Ferdinand (Ferne) Breen, father of Trish Fogarty, Finance Department

Mr Mick Tyrrell, father of Michael Tyrrell, Human Resources

Mr Pat Whelan, retired Senior Executive Officer, Economic Development

Mr Michael Fitzpatrick, father of Lorraine Fitzpatrick, Finance Department.

13/0215

Mayors Business

The Mayor informed members of the St Brigid's Cross displayed in the Chamber and advised of the following events which she attended on behalf of the members:

- Farm Machinery and Trade Exhibition held in Punchestown over 3 days which brought in excess of 25,000 visitors to Kildare.
- A fundraiser organised by the Moone ladies club which was an excellent example of a small community working together.
- The Blueway presentation which was held in Rathangan.

The Mayor noted that the Strategic Policy Committees are now in place and it would be very positive to see the work programmes being developed over the coming months. The first meeting of the Joint Policing Committee was held last week. The Mayor thanked the outgoing Chairman Councillor McEvoy and welcomed Councillor Miley as the incoming Chairman and wished him well for his term of office.

Councillor S Power is the Kildare representative on LAMA and he informed the Mayor that the members should register with that body. The Mayor asked members to consider completing the appropriate application form for membership.

14/0115

Conferences and Training

The Meetings Administrator referred to report dated 13 February circulated to the members regarding the following training events,

AILG Module 1 – Governance (part 1) for Local Authorities scheduled for 21 February 2015

AILG Module 1 – Governance (part 1) for Local Authorities scheduled for 26 February 2015

AILG – Annual Conference 2015 scheduled for 12 and 13 March 2015.

Resolved on the proposal of Councillor Kennedy, seconded by Councillor McEvoy, that the members approve of the attendance of:

- Councillors Crowley, Kennedy, Caldwell, O'Loughlin, Miley and O'Neill on 21 February 2015
- Councillor Dalton on 26 February 2015
- Councillors Crowley, O'Loughlin, Murray, Miley, Brett, Kennedy and Dalton on 12 & 13 March 2015.

15/0215

Webcasting of Council Meetings

The following motion was referred from the Protocol Committee:

To consider webcasting of council meetings.

The Protocol Committee has considered the following two motions referred by full council:

Councillor Pender

That in the spirit of openness and making local government more accessible to the people of Kildare, the council will stream its full monthly council meetings live by webcast and recordings of each meeting will be archived and made available to the public on the council website.

Councillor Lawless

That this council explores the possibility of streaming meetings of the full council and the municipal districts via live webcast in order to enhance transparency and accessibility of local government to its citizens.

These motions were considered at meetings of the Protocol Committee held on 20 October 2014 and 26 January 2015. At the meeting of 20th October, the committee received a report and briefing from the Head of ICT and Procurement, Mr Bernard Higgins. In considering this issue the main area of concern to the committee was the costs associated with the system. In addition it was noted during discussions that there is no parliamentary privilege in the council chamber, there is no indication that such a forum will reflect positively on the council and also no indications as to whether it is of interest to the general public.

Further consideration of this matter was given by the committee at their meeting on 26th January. Further to a vote taken by the Protocol Committee with four members in favour of webcasting, six members against and no member abstaining, it is therefore recommended by the Protocol Committee to full council that webcasting of council meetings not be introduced.

Councillor Scully, Chairman of the Protocol Committee, outlined the process that the committee followed in reaching the recommendation. Councillor Pender expressed her disappointment at the recommendation from the Protocol Committee. She asked that her original motion be put to a vote. Councillor Young seconded Councillor Pender's motion.

Resolved with 9 members voting in favour, 18 members voting against and 2 members abstaining, the motion was defeated.

16/0215

National Transport Authority

The following motion was referred by the Maynooth Municipal District to full council:
That an invitation be extended to the National Transport Authority to come to address the full council on their plans to put a number of bus routes in County Kildare out to tender.

Resolved on the proposal of Councillor Weld, seconded by Councillor McEvoy, with all members in agreement that an invitation to be issued to the National Transport Authority to attend the next full Council meeting.

17/0215

Policy on Dog Fouling

The following motion in the name of Councillor O'Loughlin was considered:
That the council adopt a strict policy around the issue of dogs fouling footpaths and public spaces

in terms of signage, disposal facilities and deterrents.

A report from the Environment Department was issued to the members informing them that the issue of dog fouling is of concern throughout the county. It is a difficult area to enforce and it is agreed that in order to address the matter a formal policy is required. A pilot scheme along a walking route may be helpful to establish requirements and that the matter could be referred to the Environmental Services and Water Strategic Policy Committee (SPC) for further consideration.

The Mayor thanked Mr Dunne for the report and said that while the majority of dog owners were compliant, those who were not were making life difficult for the general public to enjoy their facilities. She said that she would not be in favour of a pilot as there would be a higher level of compliance in this area but that she was happy to refer the motion to the SPC for further consideration.

Resolved That this motion be referred to the Environmental Services and Water SPC

18/0215

Reduction in Planning Levies

The following motion in the name of Councillor Moore was considered:

That the council introduce a two year 50% reduction of planning levies for first time buyers of houses that are built and purchased between 31 March 2015 and 31 March 2017 to assist home buyers get started with new homes and expedite the return of employment in the construction industry.

Councillor Moore proposed the motion but as there was no member seconding it, the motion fell.

19/0215

Local Roads Funding

The following motion in the name of Councillor Brett was considered:

That the Council seek additional funding for local roads in Kildare due to the increasing traffic volume associated with commuter belt status

The Mayor said that, as they were similar issues, she was proposing to take agenda items 17, 26 and 28 together. This was agreed by the members.

This motion was proposed by Councillor Brett and seconded by Councillor Durkan. A report from the Roads, Transportation and Public Safety Department stated that if the members are in agreement, a letter will issue to the Department of Transport, Tourism and Sport seeking additional funds as outlined in Councillor Brett's motion.

Councillor Brett spoke on the motion and said that during the years of tight budgets the local roads had deteriorated and with funding becoming available through the Local Property Tax and other funding mechanisms it was an opportune time to seek the additional funding. Councillor O'Neill requested that such a letter to the Department should also include a request to return the Motor Tax fund to Local Authorities for local roads.

Resolved on the proposal of Councillor Brett, seconded by Councillor Durkan, with all members in agreement, that a letter issue as outlined in the motion and also to take cognisance of the motor tax fund.

20/0215

Allocation for Non National Roads and Footpaths

The following motion in the name of Councillor Power was considered

That the council outline the 2015 allocation set out by the Department of Transport, Tourism and Sport for non-national roads and footpaths in Kildare and where such a figure has been identified, that this be broken down by electoral area.

The motion was proposed by Councillor Power and seconded by Councillor Doyle. The 2015 Regional and Local Road Grant Allocations from the Department of Transport, Tourism and Sport were circulated to the members from the Roads, Transportation and Public Safety Department. Ms Kavanagh advised that the draft Roadworks Programme for 2015 will be circulated to the members for their consideration in March 2015. Councillor Power thanked Ms Kavanagh for the report.

Resolved That the report be noted.

21/0215

Completion of Roads Projects

The following motion in the name of Councillor Stafford was considered:

That the council confirm that all of the projects funded pursuant to the Regional and Local Grant

Scheme including additional funding under the Restoration Improvement Grant as well as the Community Involvement Scheme and NTA grants for 2014 were completed and the council has the requisite resources and manpower to carry out the relevant schemes scheduled for 2015 particularly in light of additional projects sanctioned from the Local Property Tax funds.

Councillor Stafford proposed the motion and it was seconded by Councillor Brett. The members considered a report from the Roads, Transportation and Public Safety Department which indicated that the projects funded under the Regional and Local Road Grant Scheme, including additional funding under the Restoration Improvement Grant, were completed. The Community Involvement Scheme was completed in 2014 in all cases where the community co-funding was forthcoming. The National Transport Authority Grants for 2014 which involved construction were completed with the exception of three grants, which are now nearing completion. It is hoped that there will be sufficient resources to complete the 2015 programme.

Councillor Stafford welcomed the report. A concern was raised about the shift of the Local Property Tax funds to roads and footpaths. The Mayor said that some Municipal Districts have indicated that they wish to allocate some of their funds to roads and footpaths. Ms Kavanagh, said that the core work of road maintenance was financed by grant and the Council's own resources.

Resolved that the report be noted.

22/0215

Additional Powers to Traffic Wardens

The following motion in the name of Councillor McLoughlin-Healy was considered:

That the council outline any impediments to giving traffic wardens, powers to enforce other laws including but not exclusive to litter and dog-fouling. Giving traffic wardens the power to enforce the law across traffic, litter and fouling would reduce overall costs and result in cleaner walking routes and communities.

This motion was proposed by Councillor McLoughlin-Healy and seconded by Councillor Stafford. A report circulated to the members from the Environment Department indicated the arrangements in place and stated that, because the present system is working well, it is not proposed to alter the existing arrangements.

Councillor McLoughlin-Healy was not satisfied with the report and questioned it on several points. She said that there is a recurring difficulty in getting information. Other members contributed to the discussion stating that the issue of dog fouling was going to be very difficult to patrol.

The Mayor suggested that the motion be referred to the Environmental and Water Services Strategic Policy Committee (SPC).

Resolved on the proposal of Councillor McLoughlin-Healy, seconded by Councillor Stafford that the motion be referred to the Environmental and Water Services SPC.

23/0215

Public Conveniences

The following motion in the name of Councillor Scully was considered:

That this council enter into negotiations with our public toilet providers to agree a more favourable contract which has been achieved by other local authorities.

The motion was proposed by Councillor Scully and seconded by Councillor Brett. The members were informed that the process as outlined has commenced as indicated to the members of the Athy, Kildare-Newbridge and Naas Municipal Districts.

Councillor Scully spoke on the motion and said that he had been told that the contract was non-negotiable while he was a member of Naas Town Council. He said that the service providers were in business and the fact that they used the facilities for advertising purposes could be used as a negotiating tool.

Resolved to note that it had been agreed at Municipal District level to hold further negotiations with the service providers.

24/0215

Allocation of Retained Local Property Tax

The following motion in the name of Councillor Young was considered:

This council acknowledges that the current procedure for the allocation of approximately €1.66 million (€322,000 per municipal district) in retained Local Property Tax is problematic in as much as there is a general lack of public awareness, input or consultation on the allocation of these funds resulting in their disbursement according to individual proposals by councilors raising possible accusations of cronyism or that grants are awarded according to councilors preferred projects. In the interest of transparency and openness, the council resolves to publicise in future the availability of funding from the retained Local Property Tax for use on local projects and services, rather than national infrastructure which has historically been or should be funded from

central exchequer funds, and to allocate those funds according to agreed criteria such as, for example, the criteria for the allocation of grants under the community, culture, festival, heritage or residents association grant schemes albeit with provision for larger grants or bigger projects.

Councillor Young proposed the motion and it was seconded by Councillor Pender. A report from the Head of Finance informed members that, in accordance with statutory requirements, Kildare County Council made a decision to reduce the rate of the local property tax by 7.5% at its meeting on 22 September 2014. It was also agreed at that meeting that the retained LPT monies would be spent in accordance with allocations determined by the Municipal Districts, and not by individual councillors. Councillor Young acknowledged the report but said that the procedures that have been adopted are a mistake. He said that roads should not be repaired from Local Property Tax [LPT] funds and the motor tax fund should not be used to support Irish Water. He asked members to defer the deadline for adopting proposals for expenditure of LTP funds and put it out to public consultation so that the public would have a say in how their money is distributed. Otherwise members are making assumptions and they do not know what projects require funding because they have not asked.

Several members contributed to a debate on this motion with the point being made that the consultation took place at Municipal District Level and projects were agreed through consultation with the Municipal District engineers and the members. It was stated that the process was auditable, in that the decisions were taken by the majority vote of the members and that the process was open and transparent. Councillor Young said that he is committed to the people of Celbridge-Leixlip and he asked that a vote be taken on the motion.

Resolved with 8 members voting in favour, 25 members voting against, and no member abstaining, the motion was defeated.

25/0215

M7/M9 Road Widening and Improvement Scheme

The following motion in the name of Councillor Lynch was considered:

That this council acknowledges that the M7/M9 road widening and improvement scheme is a critical infrastructure project for the county and that we call on the NRA and the Minister for Transport, Tourism and Sport to follow through on commitments and commence the works as a priority project. This road improvement will not only benefit Kildare but the wider country including local and multi-national businesses and improving journey times and road safety for Kildare residents.

Councillor Lynch proposed the motion and it was seconded by Councillor Redmond. A report from the Roads, Transportation and Public Safety Department informed the members that Kildare County Council has brought these three schemes through the planning process and is in a position to progress these projects when funding becomes available. The progression of these schemes is hugely important in a local, national and European context in terms of economic benefit, the improvement in accessibility and the improvement in road safety.

Councillor Lynch asked the members to support this motion. He said that in order to keep Kildare competitive pressure needs to be placed on Government and the Minister to deliver these schemes, noting that there is additional traffic on the roads as more people are back at work. The Mayor stated that every pressure has been applied both from the Executive and the members. Several members contributed to a discussion around the availability of the funding and an imminent announcement in this regard. It was acknowledged by all that it is a priority and also that the M7 Osberstown interchange is vital.

Resolved that the report be noted.

26/0215

Representation on the Finance Committee

The following motion in the name of Councillor Cussen was considered
To ensure party representation in financial matters of the council that I be allowed to join the Finance Committee.

Councillor Cussen was not in attendance at the meeting, but has given her consent in writing to allow Councillor Cronin to speak on this motion on her behalf. Councillor Cronin proposed the motion and it was seconded by Councillor Redmond.

A report was circulated to members from the Corporate Services Department informing them that the Finance Committee is a committee of council and, as such, the membership of the committee is a matter for the members. At the annual meeting of the council on 6 June 2014 it was agreed that five members would be appointed to this committee, one member representing each municipal district.

Councillor Cronin said that she considered that there was general agreement that Sinn Fein should be represented on this committee. Councillor Scully, as Chair of the Protocol Committee, reiterated the procedures involved in selecting members to the various committees. He said that party representation was not a reason for representation and, in fact, several committees did not have all party representation. Other members said that the principal of representation from the

municipal districts was agreed and that this was the democratic way to be represented. Councillor Cronin asked if it would be in order to attend this committee as an observer and was informed that this would be a matter for the committee. The motion was put to the floor.

Resolved with 12 members voting in favour, 17 members voting against, and 1 member abstaining, the motion was defeated.

27/0215

E-Commerce Strategy with Local Enterprise Office

The following motion in the name of Councillor Cronin was considered:

That this council develop an e-commerce strategy with our Local Enterprise Office and in partnership with relevant stakeholders to ensure local businesses are maximizing the full potential of online sales.

The motion was proposed by Councillor Cronin and seconded by Councillor Redmond. A report from the Local Enterprise Office stated that the office is working with the Department of Communications, Energy and Natural Resources to support the National Digital Strategy which aims to increase the number of businesses trading online and gave details of the breakdown of funding allocations for the Online Trading Voucher programme. Councillor Cronin stated that 50,000 jobs were lost in retail and spending patterns have changed. She said that it was positive to have 29 grants approved to date and thanked the office for the report. Several members contributed to a discussion around the support for local businesses, free Wi-Fi, an e-on-line strategy. The Mayor said that a website called Best of Kildare had been launched and that 5 March 2015 was Local Government E-Day supporting twitter and social media.

Resolved on the proposal of Councillor Cronin, seconded by Councillor Redmond, with all members in agreement, that the motion be passed.

28/0215

Grant Scheme for Sports Clubs

The following motion in the name of Councillor Neville was considered:

That this council resolve to set up a grant scheme for sports clubs in the county. This scheme would be especially targeted at smaller clubs with limited access to funds with grants to be capped at €2,000 a year per club. This would ensure a fair and equitable spread of funding to a wide variety of clubs.

The motion was proposed by Councillor Neville and seconded by Councillor Brett. A report from the Community and Cultural Section stated that the financial implications of such a scheme would have to be considered as part of the budgetary process.

Councillor Neville spoke on the motion and referred to the effective work carried out through such schemes during his term on Leixlip Town Council. Several members contributed to a discussion on the merits of such a scheme.

Resolved on the proposal of Councillor Neville, seconded by Councillor Brett that the motion be considered during the Budget 2016 process.

29/0215

Bus Services

The following motion in the name of Councillor Miley was considered:

In light of the change of government policy to withdraw bus services on many routes in Kildare, that we formulate policy through our SPC's to ensure that adequate bus services are returned on main corridors throughout our county.

The motion was proposed by Councillor Miley and seconded by Councillor R Power. The members were informed that the Transportation, Safety and Emergency Services Strategic Policy Committee (SPC), chaired by Councillor Scully, will endeavour to work with the National Transport Authority, the public transport providers and the Kildare/South Dublin Local link to address this issue.

The members supported this motion and contributed to a discussion noting that it has also been raised in the Dail. The outcome of withdrawing services will have a huge effect on people who depend on the bus service to keep hospital appointments and transact their business. Councillor Miley stated that he was happy with the report and asked that the SPC lobby the National Transport Authority and all other relevant stakeholders in relation to this crisis.

Resolved on the proposal of Councillor Miley, seconded by Councillor R Power that the motion be referred to the Transportation, Safety and Emergency Services SPC.

30/0215

Wind Turbine Regulations Bill

The following motion in the name of Councillor Cronin was considered:

That this council writes to the Minister for Environment, Community and Local Government requesting to bring Wind Turbine Regulation Bill 2014 to committee and remaining stages at the Oireachtas.

The motion was proposed by Councillor Cronin and seconded by Councillor Lawless. Councillor Cronin spoke on the motion and said that regulation is needed, not guidelines. Councillor Lawless said that large scale developments are proceeding at pace and regulations are urgently required. The members agreed that a letter be issued as outlined in the motion.

Resolved on the proposal of Councillor Cronin seconded by Councillor Lawless with all members in agreement that the council write to the Minister for the Environment, Community and Local Government requesting that the Wind Turbine Regulation Bill 2014 be brought to Committee and remaining stages of the Oireachtas.

31/0215

Overcrowding at Naas General Hospital

The following motion in the names of Councillors Redmond and O'Neill was considered:

That this council calls for a delegation from the management of Naas General Hospital to meet with the council to explain the level of overcrowding noting that one nursing union has stated dangerous conditions for both staff and those receiving treatment. This council would like assurances from the management that all possible means are being used to rectify this situation for our constituents.

The motion was proposed by Councillor Redmond and seconded by Councillor Cronin. Councillors Redmond and O'Neill spoke on the motion citing incidences of dangerous overcrowding and that the reported numbers of patients on trolleys was 40 last week, the third highest in Leinster. Councillor O'Neill asked that the Board of Management be brought before the members of Kildare County Council to address this issue, the ratio of nurse to patient and how they would cope in the event of a major emergency.

Several members contributed to a discussion stating that the correct forum to raise such an issue was the Dublin Mid-Leinster Regional Health Forum as several members of the council are represented on that Forum and the concerns should be raised there.

Councillors Weld, Moore and McEvoy wanted to put it on the record that, while there was an issue with access to Naas Hospital, the service was excellent once a patient was admitted. It was also noted that the issues were obviously being addressed because an additional 39 nurses are due to be appointed to Naas General Hospital. Following a debate on the matter, it was agreed that the members of Kildare County Council, who are represented on the Forum, will convene a meeting to discuss this motion.

Resolved on the proposal of Councillor Redmond, seconded by Councillor Cronin that the members representing Kildare County Council on the Forum meet and agree how to proceed on this matter.

The meeting concluded.
