

**Minutes of the February Monthly Meeting of Clare County Council held in the
Council Chamber, Áras Contae an Chláir, New Road, Ennis, Co. Clare on
Monday, 11th February, 2019 at 3:45 p.m.**

Present:

Councillors J. Breen, J. Flynn, P. Daly, A. Norton, T. McNamara, M. Howard, P. Murphy, C. Colleran Molloy, J. Cooney, M. Begley, T. O'Brien, P. Burke, A. O'Callaghan, C. Crowe, J. Crowe, G. Flynn, P.J. Ryan, P. McMahon, M. McKee, C. Curtin, R. Nagle, B. Slattery, I. Lynch, M. Hillery, P.J. Kelly, B. Chambers, G. Keating.

- Mr. Pat Dowling, Chief Executive.
- Ms. Ann Reynolds, Meetings Administrator.
- Ms. Margaret O'Rourke, Assistant Staff Officer.
- Ms. Anne Haugh, Director of Social Development.
- Mr. Liam Conneally, Director of Economic Development.
- Mr. Leonard Cleary, Director of Rural Development.
- Ms. Carmel Kirby, Director of Physical Development.
- Ms. Noeleen Fitzgerald, A/Head of Finance.
- Mr. Cyril Feeney, Senior Engineer, Physical Development.
- Mr. Sean Lenihan, Senior Engineer, Physical Development.
- Mr. John Leahy, Senior Engineer, Physical Development.
- Ms. Siobhan McNulty, Senior Executive Officer, Social Development.
- Mr. John Corry, Administrative Officer, Physical Development.

The Cathaoirleach, Cllr. Michael Begley presided.

Vote of sympathy.

At the outset a vote of sympathy was extended to the following:

- The Wainwright family on the death of Doreen Wainwright.
- The Canny family, Ennis on the death of Eileen Canny.
- The Greene family, Kilnamona on the death of Nora Greene, Oranmore, Galway.
- The Chambers family, Cooraclare on the death of Senan Chambers.
- The Melican family, Lissycasey on the death of Michael Melican.

Item 1: Minutes of Council Meetings.

a. Ar moladh Cllr. B. Chambers
Cuidithe ag Cllr. R. Nagle agus glacadh leis

“That the Minutes of the January Meeting of Clare County Council held on 14th January, 2019 be adopted and signed.”

Item 2: Matters Arising.

Cllr. J. Breen requested an update on Item No 21 at the January Council Meeting. Cathaoirleach, Cllr. M. Begley read the contents of e-mail received from the Department of Health confirming that the Minister for Health is available to meet with Councillors T. McNamara, P.J. Ryan, A. Norton and P. Burke on Thursday, 7th March at 4:00 p.m. in Miesian Plaza.

Cllr. J. Breen agreed to further defer this motion for one month pending the outcome of this meeting.

Cllr. P. Daly welcomed progress on proposed works at Ballymacahill junction.

Cllr. R. Nagle informed the members that at the Economic Development S.P.C. meeting the members unanimously agreed that the proposed Data Centre would proceed as a matter of urgency. Cllr. R. Nagle complimented the Director of Economic Development and staff in the Economic Development Directorate for the work and progress on the project to date.

Item 3: Minutes of Municipal District Meetings.

a. Ar moladh Cllr. P.J. Ryan
Cuidithe ag Cllr. P. McMahon agus glacadh leis

“That the Minutes of the Shannon Municipal District Meeting held on the 20th November, 2018 be noted.”

b. Ar moladh Cllr. A. O’Callaghan
Cuidithe ag Cllr. P. Burke agus glacadh leis

“That the Minutes of the Killaloe Municipal District Meeting held on the 28th November, 2018 be noted.”

c. Ar moladh Cllr. G. Keating
Cuidithe ag Cllr. B. Slattery agus glacadh leis

“That the Minutes of the West Clare Municipal District Meeting held on the 30th November, 2018 be noted.”

d. Ar moladh Cllr. P. Daly
Cuidithe ag Cllr. A. Norton agus glacadh leis

“That the Minutes of the Ennis Municipal District Meeting held on the 11th December, 2018 be noted.”

Item 4: Minutes of S.P.C. Meetings.

a. Ar moladh Cllr. G. Flynn
Cuidithe ag Cllr. P. Burke agus glacadh leis

“That the minutes of the Social Development S.P.C. meeting held on 5th September, 2018 be noted”.

b. Ar moladh Cllr. P. McMahon
Cuidithe ag Cllr. P.J. Ryan agus glacadh leis

“That the minutes of the Economic Development S.P.C. meeting held on 10th September, 2018 be noted”.

c. Ar moladh Cllr. B. Chambers
Cuidithe ag Cllr. G. Keating agus glacadh leis

“That the minutes of the Rural Development S.P.C. meeting held on 20th November, 2018 be noted”.

Item 5: Minutes of the Corporate Policy Group Meetings.

The members noted the minutes of the meeting held on 7th January, 2019 as presented.

Item 6: Monthly Management Report.

The monthly management report attached to the agenda included key activities in the principal service areas and was noted by the members.

Cllr. C. Curtin commended the Rural Development Directorate initiative on informing local groups of apprenticeship and employment options. Cllr. Curtin also commended the housing section on the Rebuilding Ireland Affordable Loan scheme. He informed the meeting that the public lighting was out of order in Miltown Malbay for three nights recently and requested an overview on meeting held with O.P.W. on 8th February in relation to water and infrastructure. Cllr. Curtin referred to legal expenses incurred in defence of Council position.

Cllr. J. Flynn complimented the Road Design Office on the huge works being planned and implemented in 2019. Cllr. J. Flynn also referred to waste management and enforcement and stated that activity is needed on enforcement.

Cllr. J. Breen welcomed advancement of works on the N85.

Cllr. A. Norton welcomed the ongoing investment in disability services at Active Ennis Leisure Complex.

Cllr. I. Lynch referred to the development potential of the Cahercon Marine Related Site and requested that the elected members be briefed on the planned works. He also requested that the members be briefed on the design works for Cappa.

Cllr. P. Burke referred to the success of the trail walk from Killaloe to Two Mile Gate.

Cllr. R. Nagle acknowledged the briefings that have taken place in relation to the N85 and requested continued engagement with all parties in moving the project forward.

Cllr. G. Keating informed the meeting of difficulties being experienced by people when applying for planning permission due to percolation issues and the impact this is having on rural west Clare.

Cllr. C. Crowe requested that the application form for Community Supports Scheme be amended to allow local communities who carry out tidying and grass cutting in their areas to avail of the grants.

Cllr. Crowe noted the key priorities in relation to public lighting in the changeover to energy efficient lights and expressed concern at the lack of new street lighting being installed in village centres.

Cllr. C. Crowe complimented the Cliffs of Moher Visitor Experience for introducing the new pricing model.

Cllr. A. O'Callaghan welcomed the announcement of 22 bed unit in Tulla, three of which are specially adapted units.

Cllr. G. Flynn informed the meeting that the work being done by the Social Development Directorate has exceeded the targets set by the Department. He also advised the members that Councillor information briefings are taking place on Monday, 25th February and Wednesday, 6th March.

Cllr. R. Nagle also welcomed the new policy introduced by the Cliffs of Moher Visitor Experience and stated that it has been Council policy over a number of years to spread economic benefit to the whole county. This is as a result of extensive engagement with all tourism interests in the county.

Cllr. P.J. Kelly agreed with issues raised by Cllr. G. Keating in relation to planning permission in West Clare.

Cllr. M. Begley, Cathaoirleach informed the meeting that O.P.W. officials are meeting with the Council executive on 25th February in relation to Springfield, Clonlara flood relief scheme.

Cllr. Begley also informed the meeting that the Cliffs of Moher won the 2019 C.I.E. Tourism in Excellence Award.

P. Dowling, Chief Executive addressed the meeting and agreed that significant capital investment is needed in relation to water treatment initiatives and the Council is examining all possible avenues for funding. He welcomed the new policy introduced by the Cliffs of Moher Visitor Experience in spreading economic benefit to the entire county and stated that a full report on tourism will be presented at a future Council meeting. In relation to legal costs, Mr. Dowling stated that the legal costs incurred relate to defence of the Council in planning enforcement, fire enforcement, etc. He

stated that the Council is happy to receive Enterprise Ireland funding and discussions are ongoing in relation to the nature of facility in Cahercon.

Carmel Kirby, Director of Physical Development stated that a very positive meeting was held with O.P.W. officials on the 8th February and that Clare projects will be prioritized. In relation to fly tipping, she stated that Council resources will be used as best we can to enforce the recently adopted Bye Laws.

Leonard Cleary, Director of Rural Development addressed the meeting and stated that a common sense approach will be taken in relation to the Community Supports Scheme. He stated that the Council are awaiting an announcement in relation to Category 2 funding for Holy Island.

Liam Conneally, Director of Economic Development informed the members that he will be happy to provide a briefing in relation to proposed development at Cahercon. He stated that each planning application is considered on its own merits and that poor drainage areas do cause problems in relation to percolation.

Item 7: Fix date for March Council meeting.

Having been proposed by Cllr. M. Begley, seconded by Cllr. P.J. Ryan, it was agreed that the March Council meeting will be held on Friday, 8th March, 2019 at 3:45 p.m.

Item 8: Disposal of lands to the rear of house Nos. 26 and 27 Kilcornan, Ennistymon, Co. Clare pursuant to Section 183 of the Local Government Act, 2001 and Section 211 of the Planning & Development Act, 2000.

Report dated 31st January, 2019 from Carmel Greene, Senior Executive Officer, Economic Development Directorate was circulated with the agenda together with map. The report states that it is proposed to dispose of an area of lands measuring 0.034 hectares to the rear of 26 and 27 Kilcornan, Ennistymon, Co. Clare.

Ar moladh Cllr. B. Slattery

Cuidithe ag Cllr. P. Burke agus glacadh leis

“Notice having been served pursuant to Section 183 of the Local Government Act, 2001, Clare County Council approves pursuant to the powers vested on it at Section 211 of the Planning & Development Act, 2000 as amended, of the disposal of lands to the rear of house Numbers 26 and 27 Kilcornan, Ennistymon, Co. Clare subject to the conditions as set out in the notice served on the members dated 31st January, 2019.”

Cllr. C. Curtin queried the legal costs being incurred in relation to this disposal. P. Dowling, Chief Executive undertook to revert to Cllr. Curtin on this matter.

Item 9: Disposal of property at Danganella, Cooraclare, Kilrush, Co. Clare pursuant to Section 183 of the Local Government Act, 2001 and Section 211 of the Planning & Development Act, 2000.

Report dated 31st January, 2019 from Anne Haugh, Director of Service, Social Development was circulated with the agenda together with map. The report states that it is proposed to dispose of property at Danganella, Cooraclare, Kilrush, Co. Clare.

Ar moladh Cllr. B. Chambers
Cuidithe ag Cllr. G. Keating agus glacadh leis

“Notice having been served pursuant to Section 183 of the Local Government Act, 2001, Clare County Council approves pursuant to the powers vested on it at Section 211 of the Planning & Development Act, 2000 as amended, of the disposal of property at Danganella, Cooraclare, Co. Clare subject to the conditions as set out in the notice served on the members dated 31st January, 2019.”

Item 10: Community facilities.

Ar moladh Cllr. C. Curtin
Cuidithe ag Cllrs. I. Lynch, G. Flynn, J. Flynn agus P.J. Kelly agus glacadh leis

“That the Council undertake research on a suitable management model of financial and technical support for sustaining community facilities and that the assistance of the Department of Community Affairs and Clare Local Development Company be enlisted for same.”

Leonard Cleary, Director of Rural Development replied as follows:

“The Rural Development Directorate will scope out a research proposal on this topic with a view to undertaking research in this area.

Community groups all over County Clare undertake invaluable work within their communities which supports the development and growth of towns and villages. The Council provides several supports to groups by way of advice, guidance, assistance and financial support which benefits all areas of the County. A key role which has recently been assigned and led under the Rural Development Strategy is that of the Rural and Community Development Officer. The four Officers (each assigned to a Municipal District) support groups by assisting them to develop their capacity so that they can sustain themselves into the future and therefore ensure the future of any facilities that are developed.

The members will be aware of the significant financial support provided to three leisure centres in the county and the due diligence process that has commenced. The outcome of this process may provide a signpost for other groups in terms of a suitable management model.”

Item 11: Incentives to tourists.

Ar moladh Cllr. P.J. Ryan
Cuidithe ag Cllr. P. McMahon agus glacadh leis

“That this Council in partnership with Shannon Heritage, would offer an incentive to passengers flying into Shannon Airport for entry to their facilities, i.e. Bunratty Folk Park and the Cliffs of Moher, and for such an incentive to be advertised globally on the internet.”

Leonard Cleary, Director of Rural Development replied as follows:

“Clare County Council is very committed to working in partnership with Shannon Airport as the main air access point to the Wild Atlantic Way, Hidden Heartlands and the Mid-West. In this regard that this proposed incentive requires further research on

the costs involved. There will need to be detailed consideration as part of the consultations on the new Clare Tourism Strategy and discussion with Shannon Heritage, Shannon Airport and other relevant attractions.

The Cliffs of Moher Visitor Experience introduced a new dynamic pricing model for FITs (Fully Independent Travellers) for the 2018 summer season. The new booking system at www.cliffsofmoher.ie enables customers to purchase tickets online with up to 50% off the gate rate for early and late visits (€4.00 from 8-11a.m., €8.00 from 11-4p.m., €4.00 from 4p.m. to close. All kids under 16 year old go free, students and seniors tickets are from €3.50 online).

The aim of the new online booking engine is to encourage visitors to visit during off-peak times and to stay in the in the area either before or after their visit to the Cliffs of Moher. There has been a notable increase in visitor numbers at off-peak times (up 15% in June-July 2018 compared to June-July 2017) since the introduction of the new pricing model on April 30th. Customers visiting during off-peak times are FITs and therefore, many originate from or journey on to other Clare locations. For tickets and information visit www.cliffsofmoher.ie.”

Item 12: Rural houses.

Ar moladh Cllr. P.J. Kelly

“That the Director of Services (Planning, etc.) report in writing on my unanswered questions at the January 2019 meeting on planning and rural houses by:

- (a) Detailing all considerations which determine “appropriate siting” of rural houses
- (b) Detailing all considerations which determine “appropriate design” of houses
- (c) Reference County Development Plan contents which support (a) and (b) above and which are in line with High Court decision on content and language of County Development Plan.”

Liam Conneally, Director of Economic Development replied as follows:

“The considerations which determine siting and design of housing are set out in the *Clare County Development Plan 2017-2023*. In particular Chapter 17 – ‘Design and Built Environment’ elaborates on the design process. The 2000 Planning and Development Act, as amended, also sets out matters to which all Planning Authorities, including Clare County Council, must have regard to in the preparation of Development Plan policies and objectives on design and in the assessment of planning applications.

In addition to the provisions of the Development Plan, regard must be had to Guidelines and Policies issued by the Minister and the Government. These include *Delivering Homes, Sustaining Communities* (Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government, 2007); *Sustainable Residential Development in Urban Areas* (Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government, Guidelines for Planning Authorities 2008); *Urban Design Manual: a best practice guide* (Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government, 2008); *Sustainable Rural Housing – Guidelines for Planning Authorities* (Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government, 2005); *Quality Housing for*

Sustainable Communities – design guidelines (Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government, 2007).

The *Sustainable Rural Housing Guidelines* indicate that “*Planning authorities have a key role to play in ensuring that new housing development in rural areas integrates well with its physical surroundings*”. The Guidelines suggest that a key action to support such a role will include outlining advisory guidance in the form of either the planning authority’s own design guidelines or such guidelines as the planning authority may wish to refer to. In that regard, the members will be aware of the *Clare Rural House Design Guide* which again provides advice, guidance and examples of considerations required in the appropriate siting and design for rural houses. The considerations of design and siting formed part of the assessment and granting permission in accordance with the provisions of the Development Plan of over 280 rural houses by Clare County Council Planning Authority in 2018.

There have been a number of High Court decisions regarding content and language of Development Plans and it unclear from the Notice of Motion which specific High Court decision is referred to. However for the avoidance of doubt, I am satisfied that the content and language of the *Clare County Development Plan 2017-2023* is in compliance with the requirements of the Planning and Development Act 2000, as amended, the relevant Ministerial Guidelines and the precedents set out by Court decisions.”

Cllr. P.J. Kelly voiced his dis-satisfaction with the reply and this was acknowledged by the Chief Executive.

At this point in the meeting, the Cathaoirleach had to excuse himself to attend another engagement and Cllr. A. O’Callaghan presided.

Item 13: Gort Road Business Park.

Ar moladh Cllr. J. Flynn
Cuidithe ag Cllr. C. Curtin agus glacadh leis

“That Clare County Council rebrand and carry out re-investment of Gort Road Business Park (Industrial Estate) and its properties to create a Clare Green or Clean Tech Park in order to address among other things, current vacancy rates, lack of roundabout access, quality of properties, change in property solutions needs of potential enterprise & technology occupiers, to meet County Development Plan 2017-2023 objectives, etc.”

Liam Conneally, Director of Economic Development replied as follows:

“One of the initiatives of the Atlantic Economic Corridor work is the carrying out of enterprise space audits in a number of towns in each County along the Corridor. As part of this process, the AEC officer in the Economic Development Directorate has completed the audit of the Gort Road Business Park.

As well as a small number of larger floorplates the Gort Road Estate contains many small units. The survey work done shows that the current vacancy level is 45% (28 vacant units out of a total of 62) across various segment types, as shown in the following table.

Total Units Vacant	Availability			Segment Type			
	For Sale	To Let	Not Available	Industrial / Warehouse	Office	Greenfield Site	Brownfield Site
28	12	15	1	27	1	1	2

Of the 28 units, 11 are shell and core, externally complete but requiring internal fit out and services. 14 have services, toilets, access floors, suspended ceilings, internal wall finishes and blinds. 2 are fully fitted out, including furniture, air conditioning, audio visual equipment, offices, meeting and conference rooms and kitchen areas. One unit is in a turn-key condition.

With this current occupancy information, the Council is in a strong position to deal with enquiries and to work with the owners to maximise the use of the properties and develop optimum solutions to meet the needs of the emerging economic sectors, such as the technology sector.

With regard to the access, the Economic Development Directorate submitted an application for funding to Government under the Urban Regeneration and Development Fund (U.R.D.F.) for the extension of the Northern inner Relief road to the Tulla Road and to include a new junction treatment for both the Clare Technology Park and the Gort Road Business Park. Further efforts will be made to secure a funding stream for a new and improved access to the site, taking account of current and future needs in this area.

The work being done on the Ennis 2040 strategy is evidence-based and will inform the re-branding exercise also it is intended to provide new signage for this Business Park in 2019.”

Item 14: Film screening in Glór.

Ar moladh Cllr. A. Norton

Cuidithe ag Cllrs. P. Murphy agus P. Hayes agus glacadh leis

“The film by Nicholas Ryan-Purcell, who has Aspergers and suffers from depression, has recently been shown in Limerick. The showing of the film is by invite with Nicholas in attendance and partaking in a Q & A session after the film. The film is extremely informative and would aid understanding of aspergers, autism and depression. With this in mind we are requesting that Clare County Council with the Arts Officer invite Nicholas to Glór for screening of his film.”

Anne Haugh, Director of Social Development replied as follows:

“The Arts Officer is currently liaising with glór and Nicholas Ryan Purcell to select a mutually convenient date for the screening of ‘This is Nicholas – Living with Autism’.”

Anne Haugh, Director of Social Development informed the meeting that the screening of “This is Nicholas – Living with Autism” is scheduled to take place in Glór on 10th April next.

Item 15: Housing Schemes.

Due to the absence of Cllr. M. Hillery at this time, this motion was moved by Cllr. B. Chambers

"That the management of Clare County Council would inform this Council as to when the following schemes will re-open to accept new applications and to state the amount of funding received for these schemes from the government for 2019.

1. Housing Aid for Older People Schemes.
2. Housing Adaption Grant for People with a disability.
3. Mobility Aid Housing Grant.
4. Housing Adaption Grant for New Houses."

Anne Haugh, Director of Social Development replied as follows:

"Private House Grants

The Council decided at its October monthly meeting to suspend the acceptance of new private house grant applications due to the volume on the waiting list, the lack of financial resources to deal with these applications and the consequent inability to approve and finalise payments within a reasonable timeframe. However, Priority 1 cases that have the appropriate letter of referral from the H.S.E. are still being accepted. This decision enables the Social Development Directorate to concentrate on dealing with the applications on hand with a view to re-opening the Scheme again when the backlog is significantly reduced or cleared.

2018 outturn

The following Table shows a breakdown of the outturn at the end of 2018 and the number of approved applications on hands. A total of 418 applications with a value of €2.9m were approved and paid in the year. Extra funding of €700k was received over and above the original allocation due the high demand for all grant types.

Grant type	No. Approved and paid in 2018	Value of works	Grant type	No. Approved and works not completed yet	Value of works
Housing Adaptation Grant for People with a Disability	106	1,583,041	Housing Adaptation Grant for People with a Disability	27	400,000
Housing Aid for Older People	182	880,222	Housing Aid for Older People	48	192,000
Mobility Aids Grant	130	503,540	Mobility Aids Grant	58	290,000

Total applications paid to 31/12/2018	418	2,966,803	Total applications approved but not claimed 25/01/2019	133	882,000
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Current Position

- Currently 133 applicants have been issued with approvals to the value of €882k. The above shows the breakdown between the 3 grant types. The Council is awaiting completion of the relevant works and a 6 month window is available to applicants to take up the grant offered.

- A further 360 applications have been received with an estimated value of €2.2m but are not yet approved.
 - (a) It is estimated that 140 of these cases will be deemed Priority 1 or 2 and result in a commitment of over €1m.
 - (b) Close to 120 further unapproved applications on our waiting list fall into Priority 3 & 4 categories and as such are not deemed emergency works in the medium term. However, the Council will examine these and issue approvals having regard to their level of priority, length of time on the waiting list, and availability of financial resources.
 - (c) A number of other applications will not proceed or will be delayed for a variety of reasons such as changing circumstances of the applicant, ineligibility, financial constraints, etc.

- 52 no. Priority 1 applications have been received since closure last October which will result in an estimated commitment of €300k. On this basis the exposure for Priority 1 applications for the year is likely to be €1.2m to €1.4m.

Based on the above an allocation in the region of €3m is required to substantially deal with the backlog in 2019.

Reopening the Scheme will cause a swell in the number of applications received and it is therefore vital that the majority of the above applications have been cleared before doing so. An allocation which is at least similar to that received in 2018 is required to substantially deal with those on hand and also the Priority 1 applications to be submitted this year. The Council will seek an additional allocation from the Department and is committed to providing matching funding to enable these applications to be processed.”

Item 16: Rental property.

Ar moladh Cllr. G. Flynn
 Cuidithe ag Cllr. A. Norton agus glacadh leis

“In view of the completion of the survey on rental property owned by the Council and the shortage of adequate funding to support the housing grants, I am calling on the

housing section to expedite the substantial work needed to bring the Councils rental property up to an acceptable level and make provision for an increase in funding to support the Planned Maintenance Program going forward, and also follow up on the recent request made to Minister Damian English for additional funding to help with the shortfall in funding to support the housing grants initiative that stands suspended due to lack of adequate funding to address the huge backlog.”

Anne Haugh, Director of Social Development replied as follows:

“Planned Maintenance

This Council is leading the sector in the development and implementation of a planned maintenance model for the maintenance of social housing in its functional area.

The initial surveys of the properties are nearing completion with the surveyors attaining access to 94% of social housing stock. The surveys have informed a schedule of priority works which are required across the entire stock to comply with minimum rented standards and the cost reports available to date demonstrate an average priority works spend per property of circa €500. Applying this across the entire stock of over 2500 units will incur an expenditure of close to €m. Procurement is underway presently to commence this programme and it is anticipated that there will be expenditure in the region of €m in 2019.

The exercise has also identified that once priority works are completed there will be an ongoing average life cycle spend per property of approximately €1600 per annum. This has been determined by the condition survey and the scheduled frequency of repair/upgrade/replacement which will be required for the various elements of the properties throughout a 30 year life cycle.

While a loan of €10m has been approved by the Council, it is clear from the above that further significant investment will be required to meet the annual maintenance requirements if we are to fully embrace the transition from largely responsive to planned/preventative maintenance. Recent indications of a redirection of national funding for Voids towards the implementation of a planned maintenance system for local authority housing stock supports the approach taken by the Council to date. The Housing Department is actively pursuing recognition of Clare County Council’s advances in the implementation of a planned maintenance system as a valuable pilot for the sector in anticipation of some recovery of costs incurred should a national system be rolled out in the near future.

A report on the grants follows hereunder:

Private House Grants

The Council agreed at its October monthly meeting to suspend the acceptance of new private house grant applications due to the volume on the waiting list, the lack of financial resources to deal with these applications and the consequent inability to approve and finalise payments within a reasonable timeframe. However, Priority 1 cases that have the appropriate letter of referral from the H.S.E. are still being accepted. This decision enables the Social Development Directorate to concentrate on dealing with the applications on hand with a view to re-opening the Scheme again when the backlog is significantly reduced or cleared.

2018 outturn

The following Table shows a breakdown of the outturn at the end of 2018 and the number of approved applications on hands. A total of 418 applications with a value of €2.9m were approved and paid in the year. Extra funding of €700k was received over and above the original allocation due to the high demand for all grant types.

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 - (d) It is estimated that 140 of these cases will be deemed Priority 1 or 2 and result in a commitment of over €1m.
 - (e) Close to 120 further unapproved applications on our waiting list fall into Priority 3 & 4 categories and as such are not deemed emergency works in the medium term. However, the Council will examine these and issue approvals having regard to their level of priority, length of time on the waiting list, and availability of financial resources.

- (f) A number of other applications will not proceed or will be delayed for a variety of reasons such as changing circumstances of the applicant, ineligibility, financial constraints, etc.
- 52 no. Priority 1 applications have been received since closure last October which will result in an estimated commitment of €300k. On this basis the exposure for Priority 1 applications for the year is likely to be €1.2m to €1.4m.

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Reopening the Scheme will cause a swell in the number of applications received and it is therefore vital that the majority of the above applications have been cleared before doing so. An allocation which is at least similar to that received in 2018 is required to substantially deal with those on hand and also the Priority 1 applications to be submitted this year. The Council will seek an additional allocation from the Department and is committed to providing matching funding to enable these applications to be processed.”

P. Dowling, Chief Executive informed the meeting that he will be attending a Housing Summit on Wednesday where he will be making a strong case that more funding be made available.

Item 17: Housing report.

Ar moladh Cllr. C. Crowe
Cuidithe ag Cllr. I. Lynch agus glacadh leis

“That this Council's Housing Department provide elected members with a comprehensive report detailing the following:

- a) The number of people on the housing lists for each municipal area at the start of 2019
 - broken down by preference area and categorised as 'housing applicant' or 'transfer applicant' (so as to establish net figures).
- b) The number of people who are currently categorised as 'homeless':
 - broken down by municipal area
- c) Details of the number of houses that were purchased by Clare County Council in 2018 and a projection of the quality of housing stock the Council intends to purchase in 2019.
- d) Details of the number of housed currently being built directly by Clare County Council and / or other housing bodies and their locations, including their anticipated completion dates.

e) Details of how ‘rental contributions’ for homeless accommodation are calculated and, in particular, if the method is identical to that used in either R.A.S. or Council-owned housing.”

Anne Haugh, Director of Social Development replied as follows:

- (a) Clare County Council (C.C.C.) has 2776 applicants on the social housing waiting list as of 31st January, 2019 broken down by area of preference as per the table hereunder:

Municipal District	Location	Transfer Applicant		Total
		No	Yes	
Ennis	Clarecastle	54	26	80
	Ennis	452	685	1,137
	Quin	11	10	21
	Kilmaley	9	9	18
	Connolly	0	1	1
Ennis MD Total		526	731	1257
Shannon	Meelick	15	7	22
	Newmarket on Fergus	44	23	67
	Parteen	9	17	26
	Shannon	128	139	267
	Sixmilebridge	39	30	69
	Westbury	21	21	42
Shannon MD Total		256	237	493
Killaloe	Balinruan	2	0	2
	Broadford	4	8	12
	Clonlara	33	17	50
	Crusheen	4	2	6
	Feakle	17	22	39

	Kilkishen	7	4	11
	Killaloe	47	48	95
	Mountshannon	5	8	13
	O'Briensbridge	6	3	9
	Ruan	4	4	8
	Scarriff	21	32	53
	Tubber	4	5	9
	Tulla	11	24	35
	Whitegate	4	4	8
Killaloe MD Total		169	181	350
West Clare	Ballynacally	9	2	11
	Ballyvaughan	13	11	24
	Carrigaholt	7	9	16
	Cooracalare	7	6	13
	Corofin	20	34	54
	Cross	0	1	1
	Doonbeg	11	22	33
	Ennistymon	44	45	89
	Inagh	9	10	19
	Kildysart	6	11	17
	Kilbaha	1	0	1
	Kilfenora	3	7	10
	Kilkee	31	30	61
	Kilmihil	11	14	25
	Kilrush	66	77	143
Labasheeda	8	3	11	

	Lahinch	14	26	40
	Liscannor	1	0	1
	Lisdoonvarna	10	21	31
	Lissycasey	0	2	2
	Miltown Malbay	22	28	50
	Mullagh	1	1	2
	Quilty	11	11	22
West Clare MD Total		305	371	676
Grand Total		1256	1520	2776

It should be noted that at the end of January 1350 housing applicants were supported in private rented accommodation through the Housing Assistance Payment (H.A.P.).

- (b) The Council submits monthly returns through the P.A.S.S. system (Pathway Accommodation and Support System) to record homeless presentations and the numbers in emergency accommodation. These returns are submitted one month in arrears to facilitate verification of data and cannot be interrogated by municipal district.

The homeless figures for **December** indicate full occupancy of 13 beds at Laurel Lodge and on **31 December** there was also **49 adults and 33 dependents** in emergency accommodation.

- (c) During 2018 Clare County Council purchased 93 properties 68 straight acquisitions, 16 under the Buy and Renew scheme and 9 properties acquired by A.H.B.'s. To date this year the Council has sale agreed on 12 properties. The Council undertake works on all properties purchased to bring the property to minimum rented standard prior to allocation.

- (d) Hereunder is the status of the Councils construction programme:

SHIP Capital	No. approved	Current stage	Commencement Date	Completion Date
Clonlara	9	Under construction by Pat Keogh Construction Ltd.	20 th November 2018	Q4 2019
Feakle	13	Under construction by	5 th November	Q1 2020

		Custy Construction Ltd.	2018	
Quilty	18	Tender completed, Stage 4 submitted for approval	March 2019	Q3 2020
Roslevan, Ennis	8	Tender completed, Stage 4 submitted for approval	March 2019	Q1 2020
Ashline, Ennis	40	Stage 2 to be submitted to DHPLG for approval	Q4 2019	Q2 2021
Tullyglass Shannon	21	Following announcement of funding for embankment works this project will recommence.	Q1 2020	Q2 2021
Ballaghboy TAU	5	Tenders returned.	Q2 2019	Q3 2019
Miltown Malbay	27	Stage 1 approval received, preparation of stage 2 submission	Q1 2020	Q3 2021
Shannon NDFA project	51	NDFA bundle being prepared for tender.	Q3 2019	Q3 2021
Subtotal	192			
CAS - Cahercalla Phase 2 <i>(Cuan an Chlair)</i>	15	CAS Construction Stage 3 submitted to DHPLG for approval 14.11.2018	March 2019	Q2 2020
Roslevan <i>(CoOperative Housing Ireland)</i>	2	CALF Turnkey. 3 units were delivered with the 2 remaining units to be delivered in 2019	Q1 2018	Q2 2019
Bruachlan, Westbury <i>(CoOperative Housing Ireland)</i>	22	CALF - Property transfer complete, CHI to commence procurement of design team.	Q4 2019	Q3 2021
Tullyvarraga, Shannon	47	CALF Acquisition application approved works ongoing, expect stage	Q2 2018	Q2 2020

<i>(CoOperative Housing Ireland)</i>		delivery with some units delivered in 2019		
Meelick <i>(Thomond Housing Association)</i>	4	CAS construction, works nearing completion	Q1 2018	Q2 2019
Clonlara <i>(Newgrove Housing Association)</i>	4	CALF construction, works complete.	Q4 2017	Q1 2019
Subtotal	94	AHB delivery		
Total	286			

The projects above are all current approved projects, it should be noted the housing capital delivery team are progressing proposals for development on existing landbanks in Kilmaley, Kilmihil, Sixmilebridge, Newmarket on Fergus and Ennistymon. In addition we are working with Approved Housing Bodies who are working with Developers to provide housing in areas of demand.

- (e) This Council does not currently apply a ‘rental contribution’ to those in emergency accommodation. With the change in service provision whereby the Council are managing the provision of accommodation to those presenting as homeless we will continue to review our position.”

Anne Haugh, Director of Social Development clarified that as of the 1st February the Department of Social Protection are no longer providing homeless services with responsibility for the provision of homeless accommodation resting with Clare County Council as the Housing Authority.

Item 18: Library services.

Ar moladh Cllr. C. Curtin
Cuidithe ag Cllr. G. Keating agus glacadh leis

“That the Director of Services update the Council on the

1. No. of registered readers,
2. No. of book issues
3. No. of internet sessions

for each branch library in 2018 and as acknowledgement of their contribution to national and local community life in the county that a concert under the “Riches of Clare” series be organised in each branch area.”

Anne Haugh, Director of Social Development replied as follows:

“Library Statistics 2018

Branch	Membership	Issues	Internet sessions
Corofin	273	11,835	183
Ennis	6,421	157,778	17,203
Ennistymon	1,495	54,098	4,749
HQ/Local Studies	18	3,733	12
Kildysart	246	8,450	117
Kilkee	1,259	36,156	2,888
Killaloe	1,024	35,108	2,081
Kilmihil	176	5,211	59
**Kilrush	1,259	35,232	3,203
Lisdoonvarna	279	5,271	54
Miltown Malbay	684	24,256	1,760
Newmarket	382	16,181	314
Scariff	1,443	59,298	5,271
Shannon	2,585	67,127	7,857
Sixmilebridge	1,524	38,826	1,380
Tulla	643	25,344	258
E resources		22,045	
Total	19,711	605,949	47,389

**Kilrush Library was closed from Jan – March 2018 for refurbishment upgrade works

Loans increased by 1.4% over 2017.

Memberships increased by 5.7% over 2017.

Internet usage decreased by 8.7% on 2017.

And as acknowledgement of their contribution to national and local community life in the county that a concert under the “Riches of Clare” series be organised in each branch area.

The Riches of Clare Concert series takes place each summer in Ennis and a number of venues throughout the county – most concerts attract an audience of approx 100 attendees. Library venues are not the most suitable locations for these concerts as they require adequate space and good acoustics. There are only a very small number of library venues that would be suited to this.

The Riches of Clare Concerts are funded by the Arts Council of Ireland and demand for the concerts is high from festivals countywide Unfortunately, there has been no increase in funding in 2019 from the Arts Council and therefore the costs associated with extending the number and locations of concerts are unable to be met this year by the Arts Office. Sixteen concerts will take place, as in previous years in Ennis, Feakle and in association with Fleadh Cheoil an Chláir.”

Cllr. C. Curtin informed the members that the Head of Library, UCD commended Clare library service on having the most excellent mapping service in the country.

Item 19: Bridge survey.

Ar moladh Cllr. J. Crowe
Cuidithe ag Cllr. C. Crowe agus glacadh leis

“That Clare County Council carry out a survey of all bridges in the County that have not been checked in the past 10 years in the interest of safety.”

John Leahy, Senior Engineer, Transportation replied as follows:

“It is estimated that there are between 1,400 and 1,500 bridges throughout the road network in County Clare. As one would expect, the priority in terms of monitoring and maintenance of bridge structures leans towards the most heavily trafficked routes and those which are subject to the greatest stress or loading because of the nature of the traffic using them.

Transport Infrastructure Ireland (T.I.I.) has responsibility for bridges supporting the National Route network. T.I.I. has a detailed database of all national road bridges on the Eirspan System which have been assessed in some detail structurally and which in recent years have had the benefit of a number of remediation contracts which were deemed to be necessary.

Regional and Local road bridges are the responsibility of the Council and within the past 5 years or so all regional road bridges with a span of 1.8m or more (206 in total) have been the subject of detailed inspections as have a total of 59 local road bridges where Area Engineers have raised concerns. Numerous local road bridges have been inspected to a lesser degree of detail. The detailed inspections and preparation of ancillary reports were funded by the Department of Transport and to date a significant proportion of those which were identified as in need of remediation, have been restored. A rolling programme of bridge remediation is continuing which is funded by the Department of Transport.

We have spent over €4.6m in the past 4 years (2015 to 2018) on Bridge Rehabilitation on Regional and Local Roads in County Clare. This figure includes the deck replacement of Latoon Creek Bridge.

Rehabilitation works will be carried out on the following 19 bridges in 2019 with a grant of €1,021,420.

2019 Bridge Rehabilitation Works on Regional and Local Roads				
	Road Number	Bridge Name	MD	General Location
1	CL-L4120-010	Inghid Bridge	Killaloe	Near Crusheen
2	CL-R469-007.00	Quin Bridge	Ennis	Quin Village
3	CL-R473-003.00	Ballycorrick Bridge	Kilrush	Near Ballnacally
4	CL-L3016-001	Pollagh Bridge	Killaloe	Near Kilkishen
5	CL-L6246 -002.00	Annagh River Bridge	Ennistymon	South of Miltown Malbay
6	CL--R461-008.00	Doorus West Bridge	Killaloe	Killanena
7	CL-R462-016.00	Kelly's Pass Bridge	Shannon	Between Cratloe and Sixmilebridge
8	CL-L2120- 002.00	Aghy Br.	Ennistymon	South of Miltown Malbay
9	CL-L51081	Caherbarnagh Bridge	Ennistymon	Liscannor
10	CL-R460-006.00	Cloonanaha South Bridge	Ennistymon	Between Inagh and Miltown Malbay
11	CL-R-473-010.00	Goleensallagh Bridge	Kilrush	Between Kiladysert and Labasheeda
12	CL-L61682-001.00	Breaghva Bridge	Kilrush	Near Kilmurry McMahan
13	CL-L8038-001.00	New Bridge	Killaloe	Near Scariff
14	CL-R471-006.00	Mountievers Bridge	Shannon	Sixmilebridge
15	CL-R471-005	Sixmilebridge Bridge	Shannon	Sixmilebridge
16	CL-R474-011.00	Aughaglanna Bridge	Ennistymon	Kilmaley

17	CL-R474-017.00	Barony Bridge	Ennistymon	Between Connolly and Miltown Malbay
18	CL-L6352-001.00	Ballyvohan Bridge	Kilrush	Kiladysert

In addition final repairs will be carried out to Latoon Bridge Piers.

With regard to local road bridges in general we understand that the Department of Transport is considering implementation of a strategy which would identify the locations, basic structural characteristics and condition of all such bridges. The Departments position on this will become clearer in due course.

Meanwhile we will continue to respond vigilantly to concerns regarding structural integrity of bridges brought to our attention – either as a result of storm damage or otherwise – and for the present our priorities will continue to be to achieve completion of our remediation programme for regional road bridges and on local road bridge remediation as issues arise.”

Cllr. P.J. Ryan sought clarification on repairing bridges that are covered by a preservation order. John Leahy, Senior Engineer stated that safety takes priority.

Item 20: Playground insurance.

Ar moladh Cllr. M. Howard
Cuidithe ag Cllr. I. Lynch agus glacadh leis

“I am requesting can Clare County Council's public liability insurance be extended to cover all public playgrounds.”

Leonard Cleary, Director of Rural Development replied as follows:

“The majority of playgrounds in the county are managed and operated by community groups and have been realised as a result of funding provided by the Department, Clare County Council and the Leader Programme. The Council’s Community Supports Scheme can fund insurance costs for playgrounds and groups are encouraged to apply.”

The elected members expressed the views that playgrounds are an essential asset to communities and that community groups are struggling to raise funds to cover insurance costs. Leonard Cleary, Director of Rural Development stated that Clare County Council cannot insure playgrounds but the community support grants are tailored so it will support groups in maintaining playgrounds.

Item 21: Domestic violence.

Ar moladh Cllr. C. Colleran Molloy
Cuidithe ag Cllr. M. Howard agus glacadh leis

Cllr. C. Colleran Molloy requested that the wording of this notice of motion be amended to read as follows:

“That Clare County Council call on

1(a) the Commissioner of Garda Síochána and the Minister for Justice to approve the proposal from Haven Horizons to have the Clare Division the first in Ireland to adopt the St. Paul, MN, “blue print” to avert domestic violence incidents and fatalities;

1(b) to send representatives from Garda Síochána (from Clare Division and Garda National Services Unit) and representatives from Department of Justice (COSC) to St. Paul for the “blue print” training specifically designed for the Irish delegation

2. The commissioner of an Garda Síochána to provide training to members to ensure their understanding of the new “coercive control” legislation

3. the Taoiseach’s Office to implement an Awareness Campaign to educate the public on the new law on coercive control to expand the understanding of what “domestic violence” actually entails.”

“That Clare County Council call on

(1) the Commissioner of Garda Síochána to approve the proposal from Clare Haven to have the Clare Division the first in Ireland to adopt the St. Paul, MN, “blue print” to avert domestic violence incidents & fatalities;

(2) the Commissioner of an Garda Síochána to provide training to members to ensure their understanding of the new “coercive control” legislation.

(3) the Taoiseach’s Office to implement an Awareness Campaign to educate the public on the new law on Coercive Control to expand the understanding of what “domestic violence” actually entails.”

Cllr. M. Begley resumed as Cathaoirleach at this point.

Item 22: Adoptee identity rights.

Ar moladh Cllr. C. Colleran Molloy

Cuidithe ag Cllrs. M. McKee agus C. Crowe agus glacadh leis

"On behalf of Aitheantas I am calling on Clare County Council to write to Minister Zappone's Department requesting/demanding that her Department acknowledges Adoptee Identity Rights and immediately allows adoptees access to their own information on health, history and heritage in line with the equality and personal autonomy rights of other citizens and as voted for in two referenda’.

Item 23: Disability Act.

Ar moladh Cllr. A. Norton

Cuidithe ag Cllr. C. Colleran Molloy agus glacadh leis

“With assessment of needs waiting lists at an average of 18 months and with families resorting to using the courts to compel the completion of assessments, I’m asking Clare County Council to write to the appropriate Ministers requesting that the Disability Act be reviewed as soon as possible.”

Item 24: Kidney dialysis centre.

Ar moladh Cllr. P. Daly
Cuidithe ag Cllrs. P. McMahon agus J. Breen agus glacadh leis

“We call on Clare County Council to ask the H.S.E. and the Department of Health to provide a kidney dialysis centre at Ennis General Hospital.”

Item 25: Health service.

Ar moladh Cllr. P. McMahon
Cuidithe ag Cllr. P.J. Ryan agus glacadh leis

“In view of the large scale public concern regarding the accelerating difficulties in the health service (failed screening services, massive cost over-run, Shannondoc, childrens psychiatric care, mental health services, failure to implement the Slainte Care Report and the availability of new drugs) that Clare County Council call on the Government to set out a clear plan for health services to 2030 and onwards to 2050 and try to sort out the industrial relations and staff recruitment retention.”

Cllr. T. McNamara stated that he will raise these issues at the next Regional Health Forum West meeting and will discuss it with Minister Harris in March.

Item 26: Comhfhreagras. Correspondence.

The following correspondence was circulated with the agenda:

1. Correspondence dated 28th January, 2019 from Shannon Group regarding (a) the strategy to promote the recognition of the airport and (b) the potential rebranding of the airport.
2. Correspondence dated 21st January, 2019 from the Department of Housing, Planning and Local Government in relation to attendance by elected members at out of region training in 2019.
3. Correspondence dated 16th January, 2019 from the Department of Transport, Tourism and Sport in connection with funding for grass cutting and verge trimming on regional and local roads.
4. Correspondence dated 19th January, 2019 from Transport Infrastructure Ireland regarding the M18 at junctions 12, 13 and 14.
5. Correspondence dated 1st February, 2019 from the Revenue Office regarding the purchase of registration plates.
6. E-mail received from the Office of the Minister for Health in relation to meeting with Clare County Council members.
7. Correspondence dated 18th January, 2019 from the Office of the Minister for Health in relation to supporting our youth.
8. Correspondence dated 22nd January, 2019 from the Department of Children and Youth Affairs in relation to supporting our youth.
9. Correspondence dated 17th January, 2019 from the Department of Transport, Tourism and Sport regarding learner drivers.

10. Correspondence dated 9th January, 2019 from the Department of Justice and Equality regarding registered licence plates for vehicles.
11. Correspondence dated 17th January, 2019 from the Department of Rural and Community Development in relation to request for an increase L.I.S. allocation in 2019.
12. E-mail dated 11th January, 2019 from Irish Water in relation to attending meeting of Clare County Council.
13. Resolution circulated by Sligo County Council in relation to Irish Nurses and Midwives Organisation.
14. Resolution circulated by Leitrim County Council in relation to speech therapy in primary and post primary schools.
15. AILG Annual Training Conference 2019 being held in the Longford Arms Hotel on 21st and 22nd February, 2019.
16. LAMA 2019 Spring Training Seminar taking place in the Bush Hotel, Carrick on Shannon, Co. Leitrim on 7th & 8th March, 2019.
17. Conference entitled “Ireland and Plastic Waste” being held in the Four Seasons Hotel, Carlingford, Co. Louth on 8th – 10th March, 2019.
18. Conference entitled “The Finance Act 2018 – Cost Analysis” taking place in O’Donovan’s Hotel, Clonakilty, Co. Cork on 22nd – 24th March, 2019.
19. “Cross Border Tourism Conference 2019” taking place in the Four Seasons Hotel, Carlingford, Co. Louth on 10th April, 2019.

Conferences.

Reports on Seminars/Conferences attended.

With regard to seminars/conferences attended, reports completed in accordance with Section 142 of the Local Government Act 2001 were made available at the meeting.

AILG training taking place in Horse & Jockey Hotel, Co. Tipperary on 24th January, 2019.

The Meetings Administrator informed the Members that the estimated average cost per Councillor attending this Conference was €301.76 including conference fee of €55.

It was agreed that Cllrs. M. Howard, P. Murphy, J. Crowe and P.J. Kelly attend this Conference.

AILG training taking place in Mullingar Park Hotel, Mullingar on 19th January, 2019.

The Meetings Administrator informed the Members that the estimated average cost per Councillor attending this Conference was €352.82 including conference fee of €55.

It was agreed that Cllrs. R. Nagle, J. Breen, P.J. Ryan, P. Daly and A. Norton attend this Conference.

Lecture on Finance and Global Warming taking place in N.U.I.G. on 5th February, 2019.

The Meetings Administrator informed the Members that the estimated average cost per Councillor attending this Conference was €14.19.

It was agreed that Cllr. P.J. Kelly attend this event.

Conference entitled “A Guide to EU Educational Programmes” taking place in The Four Seasons Hotel, Carlingford, Co. Louth on 8th – 10th February, 2019.

The Meetings Administrator informed the Members that the estimated average cost per Councillor attending this Conference was €18.43 including conference fee of €100.

It was agreed that Cllr. M. Howard attend this Conference.

AILG training entitled “120 years of Irish Local Government” taking place in Longford Arms Hotel, Longford on 21st and 22nd February, 2019.

The Meetings Administrator informed the Members that the estimated average cost per Councillor attending this Conference was €94.19 including conference fee of €

It was agreed that Cllrs. M. Hillery, A. O’Callaghan, B. Chambers, C. Curtin, T. O’Brien, J. Crowe, J. Cooney, P. McMahon, P.J. Ryan, R. Nagle, P. Daly, A. Norton, C. Collieran Molloy and P.J. Kelly attend this Conference.

LAMA 2019 Spring Training Seminar taking place in the Bush Hotel, Carrick on Shannon, Co. Leitrim on 7th & 8th March, 2019.

The Meetings Administrator informed the Members that the estimated average cost per Councillor attending this Conference was €73.29 including conference fee of €180.

It was agreed that Cllrs. M. Hillery, A. O’Callaghan and C. Curtin attend this Conference.

The meeting then concluded.

Signed: _____
Riarthóir Cruinnithe

Signed: _____
Cathaoirleach

Date: _____

Minutes of Special Meeting of Clare County Council held in the Council Chamber, Áras Contae an Chláir, New Road, Ennis, Co. Clare on Monday, 25th February, 2019 at 2:00 p.m.

Present:

Councillors J. Breen, J. Flynn, A. Norton, T. McNamara, P. Murphy, C. Colleran Molloy, J. Cooney, P. Hayes, M. Begley, T. O'Brien, P. Burke, A. O'Callaghan, J. Crowe, G. Flynn, P.J. Ryan, P. McMahan, C. Curtin, R. Nagle, B. Slattery, M. Hillery, P.J. Kelly, B. Chambers, G. Keating.

- Mr. Pat Dowling, Chief Executive.
- Ms. Ann Reynolds, Meetings Administrator.
- Ms. Margaret O'Rourke, Assistant Staff Officer.
- Ms. Anne Haugh, Director of Social Development.
- Mr. Liam Conneally, Director of Economic Development.
- Mr. Leonard Cleary, Director of Rural Development.
- Ms. Carmel Kirby, Director of Physical Development.
- Ms. Noeleen Fitzgerald, A/Head of Finance.

Apologies: Cllrs. M. McKee, P. Daly.

The Cathaoirleach, Cllr. M. Begley presided and he outlined that this special meeting had been convened specifically to discuss the future of the Clare Garda Division. He welcomed Assistant Garda Commissioner Anne Marie McMahon, Chief Superintendent Tom Curley and Regional Inspector Paudie O'Shea and invited Assistant Commissioner McMahon to address the meeting.

Assistant Commissioner Anne Marie McMahon addressed the meeting. She stated that in relation to the replacement of recently retired Chief Superintendent John Kerin, there will be a replacement Chief Superintendent appointed in the near future. She informed the meeting that it is a matter for the Policing Authority when these appointments are made, but this appointment is imminent.

In terms of the Commission on the Future of Policing in Ireland Report (C.F.P.I.), she informed the elected members that there are many recommendations in that report and the focus is towards community policing by improving the service provided to the communities, protecting the vulnerable, providing local community guards and the provision of professional trained people dealing with victims of crimes. She stated that the recommendations contained in this report have been accepted by government.

Cathaoirleach, Cllr. M. Begley then invited the elected members to participate in the discussion.

Tributes were paid to retired Chief Superintendent John Kerin.

The elected members welcomed Assistant Commissioner Anne Marie McMahon and her colleagues to the meeting. The imminent appointment of Chief Superintendent was unanimously welcomed by the members. Concerns were raised in relation to the loss of the Ennis Joint Policing Committee and the future of local policing in Clare. Concern was also raised regarding the rumoured merger between the Clare and Galway policing districts. It was stated that it is important that garda services in Clare are retained and that we have a Chief Superintendent management in County Clare. Queries were raised in relation to the availability of an Armed Response Unit in Clare.

The Assistant Commissioner addressed the meeting and stated that the structure of the J.P.C. is not within the remit of the Policing Authority and that the Garda Commission is fully committed to supporting Councillors and customers in County Clare. She referred to the structure in Clare and re-iterated the future focus in community policing, where the guards have a specific area, know the needs of an area and take a pro-active approach. In relation to the A.R.U. she stated that there is a system in place for deployment across divisional or regional boundaries and that there is a commitment to have the A.R.U. rolled out in each division.

The elected members welcomed the emphasis put on pro-active policing approach and community policing and requested assurance that the relevant supports and equipment be made available in local garda stations to enable the efficient provision of services.

Enquiries were made in relation to the re-opening of garda stations.

The Assistant Commissioner acknowledged the support and kind words regarding the relationship with gardai in Clare and welcomed the engagement and collaboration. She stated that no consideration has been given to re-opening garda stations and emphasised the hope that the future model would be able to bridge the gap to reassure people that there will be improved service and improved supports available. She stated that there has been a lot of investment in cars, technology and resourcing personnel.

The elected members queried if the allocation of resources is demand led. Clarification was sought in relation to the joining of the Clare and Galway division and the timeframe for implementing the report was requested.

The Assistant Commissioner responded and stated that it is really important that people report crime incidents and stated that the allocation of resources is also dependent on other variables such as population and crime prevention. She also stated that no conversation has taken place regarding amalgamating Clare with Galway and that work is ongoing on developing a new operating model which will take until the end of the year to finalise.

The Assistant Commissioner was asked if it is a recommendation of the report that divisions be amalgamated. She responded by saying that the Garda Commissioner and his team has to come up with the best possible structure for policing in the future which will focus on more community focused policing.

The elected members stated that it is important for Clare to remain independent and retain its own service. They re-iterated that losing services does not have the same outcome and they are not in favour of control going to Galway.

The Cathaoirleach, Cllr. M. Begley informed the members that the Assistant Commissioner will bring their concerns back to the Garda Commissioner.

P. Dowling, Chief Executive thanked the Assistant Commissioner and her colleagues for attending the meeting and stated that there is a strong working relationship between Clare County Council and An Garda Síochána. He informed the members that when the new Chief

Superintendent is appointed the Council will look to develop a strong working protocol for the future.

Any other Business

It was agreed that the March Council Meeting will take place on Monday, 11th March next as the LAMA Conference is taking place on Friday, 8th March.

The meeting then concluded.

Signed: _____
Riarthóir Cruinnithe

Signed: _____
Cathaoirleach

Date: _____