

MINUTES OF ORDINARY COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON MONDAY, 23rd MARCH, 2020 AT 3.00 P.M.

Chair: Peter Cleere.

Clirs: Eamon Aylward, Tomás Breathnach, Martin Brett, Fidelis Doherty, Michael Doyle, David Fitzgerald and Andrew McGuinness. All others members had been requested not to attend and were excused due to restrictions from COVID-19.

Officials: Colette Byrne, Martin Prendiville, Sean McKeown, Tim Butler and Anne Maria Walsh.

Cathaoirleach Cllr Peter Cleere opened the meeting and advised that further to the agreement reached with all the members in proceeding to have the meeting, only 4 statutory items would be dealt with and all other items would be deferred to the next meeting.

It was proposed by Cllr Andrew McGuinness, seconded by Cllr David Fitzgerald and agreed by all that non-statutory items would be deferred to the next available meeting. It was further agreed that all members would be updated on the proceedings of this meeting.

1. Confirmation of Minutes

(a) **Minutes of Ordinary Meeting of Kilkenny County Council held on Monday 17th February, 2020**

It was agreed to defer this item to the next meeting.

(b) **Minutes of Special Meeting held on Tuesday, 25th February, 2020.**

It was agreed to defer this item to the next meeting.

2. (a) **Housing & Other Disposal – Tithíocht & Díuscairt Eile**

(i) It was proposed by Cllr. Andrew McGuinness seconded by Cllr. Martin Brett and agreed:

“That, in accordance with the provisions of Section 183 of the Local Government Act, 2001, Kilkenny County Council hereby approves of the disposal of its interest by way of Lease of the property known as the former Castlecomer Courthouse, Kilkenny Street, Castlecomer, Co. Kilkenny, to Foroige National Youth Development Organisation, Block 12D, Joyce Way, Park West, Dublin 12, for a period of 5 years, at a rent of €1.00 per week, and with each party to be responsible for their own legal costs.”

(b) **Pleanail - Planning**

(i) **Part 8 Planning: Footpath - Ballyhale to Knocktopher**

Mr Tim Butler presented the Chief Executive's Report on Part 8 Planning for the footpath from Ballyhale to Knocktopher. He advised that the proposed works were on public display. A number of submissions were received and these submissions have been considered and taken into account in the Chief Executive's report. Funding for the project has been approved under the Town & Village Renewal scheme. An allocation has also been included in the Council's Annual Roads Programme for 2020. Mr Butler advised that the Chief Executive is recommending that the Council proceed with the proposed works.

It was proposed by Cllr. Michael Doyle, seconded by Cllr. David Fitzgerald and agreed:

"We the members of Kilkenny County Council approves Part 8 in accordance with Section 179 of the Planning & Development Act 2000 as amended and Part VIII of the Planning & Development Regulations 2001, as amended, for the Ballyhale to Knocktopher Footpath, as circulated."

(ii) **Commencement - Part 8 Sessions House, Thomastown**
Presentation deferred.

(iii) **Update on new Development Plan**
It was agreed to defer this item to the next meeting.

(c) Tithíocht - Housing

(i) **Scheme of Letting Priorities**
It was agreed to defer this item to the next meeting.

(d) (i) Airgeadas - Finance

(i) **Approve Overdraft of €20 million for 2020**

Mr Martin Prendiville stated that due to the current crisis there is a necessity to increase our current overdraft approved in the sum of € 13m to € 20m. There will be a severe strain on the Council's finances due to the unfolding events of COVID-19 with businesses closing and people losing their jobs. He gave an overview on the following:

- Current cash balance
- Weekly expenditure on Payroll & Payments
- Affect on collection of Rates, Rents & Housing Loans
- Deferral of payment of rates
- Ongoing capital commitments on existing contracts
- Staff resources have been dedicated to deal with all our debtors and there are adjustments being made to payments of rates, rents etc
- Review of Budget 2020 will be required
- Seeking subvention from the Government
- Other bodies supported by the Council are also seeking assistance.

Contributions were received from Cllrs M Brett, A McGuinness, T Breathnach, D Fitzgerald, F Doherty and E Aylward. Members supported the increase in the overdraft. Queries were raised on the following:

- Priority of Council should be to assist people in financial difficulties due to loss of income, losing jobs etc.
- Parking Charges/Fines should not be implemented at this time
- Early review of 2020 Budget
- Is € 20m sufficient, has approval of Bank been received

Mr Prendiville responded to the queries raised by the members. He advised that staff are dealing with a lot of calls from the public who have lost jobs etc. Revised payment arrangements are being put in place immediately. Every support is being given by our staff at this difficult time for people. There will be a necessity to review the Budget for 2020 at a later stage. Discussions have taken place with the Bank and the Department in relation to the increase in the overdraft. The evolving financial situation will be kept under review.

It was proposed by Cllr. Martin Brett, seconded by Cllr. Andrew McGuinness and agreed:

“That subject to the sanction of the Minister for the Department of Housing, Planning and Local Government, Kilkenny County Council hereby approves increase to overdraft borrowings by €7,000,000 to a maximum amount of €20,000,000 for the full year ending 31st December, 2020.”

(ii) **Raising of Loan of €5 million from Housing Finance Agency.**

Mr Martin Prendiville advised that members approval is required to raise a loan of € 5m from the Housing Finance Agency for the purpose of lending to approved housing loan applicants. The last approval was in 2018 for € 5m and to date € 4.8 m has been drawn down. The loan approval will allow the Council to lend in 2020 and 2021 depending on the number of approved applications.

It was proposed by Cllr. Martin Brett, seconded by Cllr. Tomas Breathnach and agreed:

“That Kilkenny County Council hereby approves the raising of a loan of five million Euro (€5,000,000) from the Housing Finance Agency plc for any purpose authorised under the Housing Acts”.

(iii) **Draft Annual Financial Statement 2019**

It was agreed to defer this item to the next meeting.

(e) Pobal Cultúr - Community & Culture

(i) **LCDC Annual Report 2019**

It was agreed to defer this item to the next meeting.

(ii) **Arts Grants 2020**

It was agreed to defer this item to the next meeting.

(f) Timpeallacht - Environment

(i) **Animal Welfare Charter Committee – Appointment of Members**

It was agreed to defer this item to the next meeting.

(g) Gnóthaí Corparáideacha - Corporate Affairs

(i) **Chief Executive’s Monthly Report**

It was agreed to defer this item to the next meeting.

(ii) **Annual Report 2019**

It was agreed to defer this item to the next meeting.

(iii) **Audit Committee Annual Report 2019**

It was agreed to defer this item to the next meeting.

(iv) **Appoint Members to Board of Castlecomer Discovery Park**

It was agreed to defer this item to the next meeting.

(h) Bóithre - Roads

(i) **Public Lighting Energy Efficiency Project**

It was agreed to defer this item to the next meeting.

3. **Correspondence**

4. **Business Adjourned from a Previous Meeting**

5. **Schedule of Meetings**

(i) **Schedule of Meetings**

It was agreed to defer this item to the next meeting.

6. **Consideration of Reports and Recommendations of Committees of the Council**

7. **Other Business set forth in the Notice convening the Meeting–**

8. **Conferences – Request for approval to Attend**

It was agreed to defer this item to the next meeting.

9. **Matters Arising from Minutes**

10. **Any Other Business**

Cathaoirleach thanked the 7 Members for facilitating this meeting and dealing with the statutory items on behalf of all the members.

He wished the Executive and staff who are now working on behalf of all of us in assisting the HSE in dealing with the COVID-19 crisis. He asked that a message of support from the members would be given to all staff acknowledging their work on behalf of all the people in Kilkenny.

Ms Colette Byrne thanked the members for their kind words of support. She updated the members on the current position in the Council and briefed them on the following:

- Maintaining critical council services and dealing with emergencies only
- Testing capability of all systems to work remotely and from home
- Supporting HSE personnel, reassignment of staff to assist the work of the HSE in Contact Tracing and Property Services
- Ensuring our staff are briefed on all guidelines and keeping the public informed on hygiene practices and social distancing, number of staff are currently not at work
- Offices will remain open, contact numbers have been published for phone calls and emails are encouraged
- Financial situation facing the Council

Contributions were received from Cllrs E Aylward, T Breathnach, M Brett, M Doyle, A McGuinness, F Doherty, and D Fitzgerald in relation to the following:

- Closure of Parks and Playgrounds
- Availability of vacant properties for testing centres
- Car parks should be free to the public
- Staff Welfare

Ms Byrne thanked the members for their comments and advised that we are following all National Guidance and will implement any new guidelines issued in relation to open space's. and amenity areas. She advised that we will inform the staff of the members support and good wishes.

11. **Notices of Motion**

It was agreed to defer Notice of Motion 01(20) to the next meeting.

12. **Notices of Motion from other local authorities seeking support of Kilkenny County Council**

It was agreed to defer Notice of Motions 05(20) & 06(20) to the next meeting.

That concluded the business of the meeting.

CATHAOIRLEACH

DATE