

Minutes of the April Meeting of the Municipal District of Callan-Thomastown

Date: Wednesday 12th April, 2023 at 4.00p.m.

Venue: Kilkenny County Council Callan Area Office, Prologue, Callan, Co. Kilkenny.

Chair: Cllr Matt Doran

Present: Cllr Peter Chap Cleere, Cllr Deirdre Cullen, Cllr Michael Doyle, Cllr Joe Lyons.

In attendance: Fiona Deegan, A/Director of Services; Mary Mulholland, Director of Services; Anne Marie Shortall, Meetings Administrator; Frank Stafford, Senior Engineer; Declan Murphy, Area Engineer; Carmel Brett, Staff Officer.

Apologies: Cllr Patrick O'Neill.

1) Confirmation of Minutes

(a) Minutes of the Municipal District meeting of Wednesday 8th March, 2023.

The minutes of the March meeting of the Municipal District held on Wednesday 8th March 2023 were adopted, proposed by Cllr Deirdre Cullen and seconded by Cllr Peter Cleere.

2) Consideration of Reports and Recommendations

(a) Housing Capital Delivery Update (Mary Mulholland)

Ms Mary Mulholland briefed the members on Kilkenny County Councils Housing Capital Delivery programme, providing data relevant to the housing demand within the Callan-Thomastown Municipal District and listing the status of current housing projects.

The conditions relating to Section 179A Planning & Development Act Temporary Exemption for Local Authority Housing were outlined, Ms Mulholland explaining that this is a temporary measure where planning permission for social housing on publicly held lands is not subject to Part VIII planning.

Areas where mains water and wastewater capacity (per IW Capacity registers) is available were identified and some of the current challenges to achieving new house capacity were listed, such as cost of construction and limited Local Authority owned lands.

Ms Mulholland explained the tenure types available of social housing, market rental, cost rental, affordable purchase and market purchase.

The removal of the eviction ban has led to new measures being introduced to prevent homelessness and Ms Mulholland said where a valid notice to quit has been issued, the Local Authority will endeavour to find alternative housing - where no alternative arrangement can be found, the Local Authority can consider the purchase of the property. Kilkenny County Council now have a standard application process for this situation and are currently assessing 31 properties to purchase, which if purchased would be let on a cost rental basis. However, the Council have been mostly successful in sourcing alternative housing. There are currently 42 homeless people in Kilkenny in emergency accommodation, should hotels and other emergency accommodation become full there is backup capacity in the Councils own housing stock.

The members thanked Ms. Mulholland for her update and raised the following items:

- Croí Cónaithe (Towns) Fund Scheme – 32 applications processed and approved, 33 applications on hand. Changes in the scheme to include outside of town centre locations has led to applications which were previously refused being reassessed;
- Request for progress on proposal for cluster housing in Rower/Inistioge area, Irish Water investment required in areas lacking in water and wastewater services;
- It was noted that the figures for housing demand within the Municipal District appear to be reducing;
- The allocation of the proposed 25 housing units near the Health Centre in Thomastown will increase HAP capacity, however historically it has been shown only a small percentage of owners re-enter the HAP system;
- Potential increase in development capacity due to future upgrade of Wastewater facilities in Bennettsbridge would take a few years;
- Servicing the zoned land in Stoneyford – concern that a larger development might have issues with water capacity;
- Timeframe for works to the two houses purchased by Kilkenny County Council on Bridge Street, Callan – design team appointed;
- Windgap serviced sites – Serviced Sites Scheme, which issued in 2022, stated that serviced sites can only be located where there are water and wastewater facilities. Department have agreed to look at four locations in Kilkenny which do not have services but there is no guarantee of progression with these;
- Length of time for those waiting to be assessed for the housing list – timeframe of 12 weeks to process an application, with numerous applications requiring clarifications. This, together with the means test now requiring an assessment of 12 months of income statements and volume of applications increasing from approximately 30/40 per month to 80/90, means the 12-week timeframe is required to assess applications, with those with the highest need being prioritised;
- Housing staff vacancies currently numbering 14;
- As per presentation, numbers on the waiting list have decreased;
- Graiguenamanagh housing delivery will be led by demand, additional site purchased in Graiguenamanagh but most pressing need has been met;
- Priority to keep people out of homelessness, Kilkenny County Council have emergency accommodation available and people in need are asked to contact the Housing Section as soon as possible and to check the website.

(b) Monthly Roads Update (Declan Murphy)

Mr D. Murphy, Area Engineer, updated the members on the following roads related matters, outlining updates and timelines of various projects since his previous report of 8th March, 2023.

- Restoration Improvement works completed: Marnells Cross L1014, Rogerstown L5076, Dunbell L6706, Neigham L6724;
- Restoration Improvement works planned for week commencing 17th April were listed;
- 8 drainage projects complete and in progress were listed;
- Bridge Street, Callan, Active Travel Scheme – project is now out for e-tender, closing date 5th May;
- Town & Village renewal works are continuing at the Thomastown recreational area, the main works resurfacing the Dock Road in Graiguenamanagh under ORIS are completed, and contractor has been appointed for ORIS work on a new footpath link between the boat house and Wood Road in Graiguenamanagh, works to commence early May;

- Surfacing works on N10 Danesfort is now complete, including cats' eyes and road markings;
- LIS County allocation of €361,156, Callan-Thomastown allocation of €126,820 which should allow for the first three projects on the list, totalling 12, to be completed. If a second allocation of funds is allowed it may be possible to allow 2 further projects to progress.

The members thanked Mr. Murphy for his update and raised the following items:

- Timeframe for cleaning eye of bridge in Callan – an update will be provided at the May MD meeting, however works will not commence prior to August due to Inland Fisheries restrictions;
- Irish Water Carrickmourne Scheme – issue with meter boxes impeding people accessing their properties.

(c) Monthly Rural Development Update (Anne Marie Shortall)

Ms Anne Marie Shortall updated the members on Rural Development:

- CLÁR Scheme has opened for submissions for 2023, no change to eligibility criteria. Inviting local communities to apply for funding of new facilities or to improve existing facilities. Closing date 24th May;
- Commercial Premises Paint Scheme is also open, closing date for applications 5th May;
- The Community & Cultural Facilities Capital Scheme (CCFCS) offers grant of 75% of project costs to a max of €45,000, with beneficiary match funding of 25% required;
- Feasibility study being considered for the old Supervalu site in Marshes Street, Thomastown;
- Details of all the Community Schemes are available from the Community Section.

The members thanked Ms Shortall for her update

3) Business prescribed by Statute, Standing Orders or Resolutions of the Municipal District members for transaction of such meeting.

(a) Nomination of two Municipal District elected representatives for Joint Working Group with Municipal District of New Ross

Ms Fiona Deegan informed the members it was agreed with the elected members of the Municipal District of New Ross that a joint working committee should be set up to engage with the local community of the New Ross Environs within the Callan-Thomastown Municipal District, and two representatives of the Callan-Thomastown Municipal District were required for the committee.

Cllr Michael Doyle and Cllr Deirdre Cullen were nominated, proposed by Cllr Peter Cleere and seconded by Cllr Matt Doran.

(b) Appointment of Special Committee: "The Woodstock Gardens & Arboretum Committee"

Mr. Frank Stafford, Senior Engineer, gave the members a presentation on the proposed Terms of Reference for Woodstock Gardens & Arboretum Committee, saying this is a Non-Statutory Committee which will conduct its business in workshop format and will report to Kilkenny County Council.

The Committee to consist of 3 elected members of the Callan-Thomastown Municipal District, 2 representatives of Coillte (Mary Clifford, Estates Manager and Jesper Petersen, Recreation Manager) and the following community representatives:

Georgina Morrissey, Community Council;
Eddie Keher, Community Leader;
Carmel Cummins, Inistioge Tidy Towns;
Frank Sullivan, Inistioge Tidy Towns;
Gerry Malone, Community Leader.

A maximum of 10 members shall sit on the committee at any one time, the Chairperson and Vice Chairperson to be elected from the nominated elected members of the Callan-Thomastown Municipal District at the inaugural meeting with terms of respective positions for a period of 24 months.

A minimum of 2 meetings will be held per annum in the Woodstock Tea Room, requiring a quorum of 4 committee members with a minimum of 2 Elected Members present to proceed. Meeting agenda and minutes will be prepared and distributed one week in advance of each meeting by staff of Kilkenny County Council, who will provide secretariat to the Committee and support it in its work.

Kilkenny County Council staff who will attend Committee meetings, as required, include:

Denis Malone, A/Director of Services;
Frank Stafford, A/Senior Engineer;
Eoin Dullea, Landscape Architect;
John Delaney, Head Gardiner;
Lisa Bourke Assistant Staff Officer.

Cllr Michael Doyle, Cllr Peter Cleere and Cllr Deirdre Cullen were nominated as elected members from the Callan-Thomastown Municipal District for the Woodstock Gardens & Arboretum Committee, proposed by Cllr Matt Doran and seconded by Cllr Joe Lyons.

It was agreed that the inaugural meeting will be held on Friday 12th May at 2pm.

4) Other business set forth in the Notice convening the meeting

There were no items for discussion

5) Notices of Motion

There were no items for discussion

6) Correspondence

7) Any other Business

It was agreed that the May meeting of the Callan-Thomastown Municipal District would be held via remote access and the June meeting would take place in the Thomastown Community Centre.

This concluded the business of the meeting

Chairperson: 