

Borough District of Drogheda - April 2021

Minutes of the Meeting of the Borough District of Drogheda held via MS Teams, hosted from the Chamber, County Hall, Dundalk on Monday 12th April 2021 at 4.15 p.m.

In attendance:

Mayor: Cllr. Kevin Callan - Present in Chamber

Members: Attended Remotely: Councillors James Byrne, Joanna Byrne, Tom Cunningham, Michelle Hall, Fiachra MacRaghnaill, Paddy McQuillan, Declan Power, Pio Smith, Eileen Tully

Officials: Gráinne Tuomey, Meetings Administrator - Present in Chamber
Paddy Donnelly, Director of Services - Present in Chamber
Frank Pentony, Director of Services - Remote
Mark Johnson, Senior Engineer - Remote
Patricia Hughes, Senior Executive Planner - Remote
James Searson, Executive Engineer - Remote
Clare O'Hagan, Senior Staff Officer - Remote
Emma Eaton, Staff Officer - Present in Chamber

Minute No. 31/21

Confirmation of Minutes

The minutes of the monthly meeting held on Monday 1st March 2021 were confirmed on the proposal of Cllr. Joanna Byrne and seconded by Cllr. Pio Smith.

Minute No. 32/21

Matters Arising

Minute 21/22 - Update requested on ownership of collapsed wall in College Rise as in dangerous state.

Minute No. 33/21

Housing Progress Report

Members discussed the report as circulated at the meeting.

Director of Services, Paddy Donnelly addressed all matters raised by the Members and clarified the following:

- Homeless figures for Louth while noticeably higher were not comparable to Cavan or Monaghan as much higher urban density in Louth.
- The increase in homeless presenters might be in part due to people being more comfortable presenting remotely.
- Disabled Grant criteria was set by the Department.
- Choice Based Letting adverts would be reviewed to see if more photos could be included.

Minute No. 34/21

Operations and Marine Progress Report

Members discussed the report as circulated at the meeting.

Mark Johnson, Senior Engineer addressed all Operations Matters raised.

Paddy Donnelly, Director appealed to public for give evidence where illegal dumping is witnessed.

Frank Pentony advised on infrastructural items which were also raised under this section.

On request from members the following was agreed:

- A presentation on the Outdoor Dining Enhancement Scheme will be arranged for May.
- Aoife Lawler, Senior Executive Officer remit was overall vision for Drogheda and to meet Ireland 2040 objectives but would be requested to attend meetings quarterly.

Minute No. 35/21

Taking in Charge Report

Members discussed the report as circulated at the meeting and James Searson, Executive Engineer responded on all matters raised. Members noted that James was moving onto a new section within the Council and thanked him for his work on Taking in Charge.

Minute No. 36/21

Strategic Housing Development - Marsh Road, Drogheda - Planning Ref: 21/258 by Hallscotch Venture Ltd.

Patricia Hughes, Senior Executive Planner gave a briefing on the Strategic Housing Development Application as lodged with An Bord Pleanála.

Members discussed the report as circulated at the meeting, requested that the following concerns be relayed within the Chief Executive submission to the Bord and to include mention of collective disfavour of application by Members:

- Additional traffic congestion on Marsh Road and environs resulting from proposed build
- Lack of community facilities included in application and associated effect on quality of life of residents within and around build
- Inappropriate height of building, and possible overshadowing of D Hotel and area affecting tourism
- Inclusion of Poor House Lane in application

Patricia Hughes responded to some of concerns raised but advised that as LCC role in this matter was purely informational, advised that these would be forwarded for inclusion in Chief Executive submission.

Minute No. 37/21

Drogheda Allocation of Members Community Grants

To approve Members Community Grant Allocations as circulated with the agenda

Proposed by: Cllr. Kevin Callan
Seconded by: Cllr. Joanna Byrne

Minute No. 38/21

Road Works Programme

The Road Works Programme 2021 was circulated with the agenda.

Proposed by: Cllr. Kevin Callan
Seconded by: Cllr. Eileen Tully

Minute No. 39/21

Condolences

Members extended sympathy to the family and friends of:

- Noel Nugent
- Ronan Owen Connor
- Ronan Caffrey
- Therese Hamlin

Minute No. 40/21

Notice of Motion

Proposed by: Cllr. Declan Power
Seconded by: Cllr. Kevin Callan

“Calling on Louth County Council to make provision of funding to install a footpath on the grass bank in Termon Abbey adjacent from Beech Wood Drive to the main road. Most residents in this area would use the grass bank as a short cut when walking to school or heading to town. The provision of a footpath in this area would greatly improve the quality of life for residents including wheelchair users and users with baby buggies.”

Reply from Ms. C. Duff, Director of Services, Operations:

Engineers will assess that section and comment if suitable for public footpath and would be subject to funding been available.

Cllr. Declan Power spoke on the motion raised noting that as the estate had only one entrance, a grass path was being used by residents and those crossing the estate however a purpose built path would save time and improve the quality of life for those using. Members expressed support for the motion.

Minute No. 41/21

Notice of Motion

Proposed by: Cllr. Declan Power

Seconded by: Cllr. Kevin Callan

“Calling on Louth County Council to install a Bicycle repair and pump station including bicycle bays or racks for security at the car parks of Port Beach, Little Strand Beach in Clogherhead and Seapoint Beach Termonfeckin. This can be done on a piloted basis and if successful could be rolled out in other areas around the County. The public repair and pump station will be a one-stop-shop for cyclist repairing their bicycle and tyres in a convenient location or lock safely as they explore the area, grab a coffee or walk on the beach.”

Reply from Ms. C. Duff, Director of Services, Operations:

Basic Cycle parking stands are something that we will seek funding for, when opportunity arises, as they are a priority and would be a useful addition in any Louth County Council car park.

Cllr. Declan Power spoke on the motion raised, noting that the provision of such stations would have minimal financial output but would benefit many. Members expressed support for the motion.

Minute No. 42/21

Notice of Motion

Proposed by: Cllr. James Byrne

Seconded by: Cllr. Kevin Callan

“That Louth County Council devises a comprehensive tourism strategy specifically for Drogheda, Louth’s Destination Town, to support the Ancient Visitor Experience Development Plan for Louth.”

Reply from Mr. Frank Pentony, Director of Services, Planning, Infrastructure and Economic Development:

Currently tourism in Drogheda, as well as coming within the Louth Tourism Action Plan 2016-2021 also forms a vital element of the Boyne Valley strategy. A review of this strategy is expected to commence by the end of 2021. This review will involve consultation with the various stakeholders thus allowing projects to be proposed and considered for inclusion in the strategy. Fáilte Ireland clearly recognise the significance of the Boyne Valley as a tourism destination and Drogheda as the Gateway to the Boyne Valley and have demonstrated this through the setting up of a Boyne Valley Tourism Recovery taskforce.

Accordingly it is felt that engagement in the consultation and development of the Boyne Valley strategy would benefit Drogheda to a greater extent into the future.

Cllr. James Byrne spoke on the motion raised, suggesting that Drogheda should follow the example of Kilkenny in promoting tourism and should work with all stakeholders to put Drogheda on the tourism map. Many members expressed support for the motion.

Minute No. 43/21

Notice of Motion

Proposed by: Cllr. Paddy McQuillan

Seconded by: Cllr. Kevin Callan

That Louth County Council explore the possibility to installing a Dog Park/ Dog Run in Drogheda on council owned land.”

Reply from Ms. C. Duff, Director of Services, Operations:

The Council has no plans to progress a Dog Park/ Dog Run on council owned land.

The following are potential issues:

- Injuries to dogs or human from aggressive dogs
- Disease - very difficult to obtain proof of vaccination from dog owners.
- Maintenance - The Park may require high maintenance operation e.g. cleaning/disinfecting etc.
- Policing on restrictions for certain breeds re Control of Dogs Regulations Act 1998.

Cllr. Paddy McQuillan expressed disappointment with the response received on this motion and said that all he requested was that the possibility be explored. He named 9 dog parks in Fingal alone and asked why the council could not even consider the proposal in Drogheda the largest town in the County, he had relayed the response back to a small committee on the dog park who were insulted with the idea that their dogs were infected.

Several members indicated that not enough regard was given to the proposal and that it should be properly considered and a more informed response should issue to councillor proposals. This then extended to include other responses to proposals given to councillors.

Directors Paddy Donnelly and Frank Pentony responded and advised that all motions were given due regard and discussed as a standing item on Senior Management Team agenda weekly and refuted allegations made.

Minute No. 44/21

Notice of Motion

Proposed by: Cllr. Pio Smith

Seconded by: Cllr. Kevin Callan

“Calling on this Borough District to make a statement on the current status of the West Gate Vision, in particular to explain why it has taken until 2021 to appoint consultants to the project given that projects in Navan and Sligo were awarded funding at the same time as the WGV (2018)”

Reply from Mr. Frank Pentony, Director of Services, Planning, Infrastructure and Economic Development:

Following the Council submission of an application under the URDF programme in 2018, the DHPLG issued ‘approval in principle’ on 18/06/2019. Following completion and submission of Verification Tables on 26/08/2019, the Dept indicated that they would be in contact in due course. Despite several requests for an update on West Gate Vision, Long Walk and the appeal on St Nicholas Quarter it was not until 29/11/2019 that Dept indicated that there was no further letter of approval to issue in relation to the Project. This was unfortunately at variance with the advice offered between August and October 2019.

Work commenced on 11/12/2019 on the assembly of the brief for the appointment of consultants. Due to the advent on COVID and the first lockdown, the advice from the Office of Government Procurement (OGP) in March 2020 was a concern that there was insufficient competitiveness in the market on non-essential contract at that time. This knocked the timeline back somewhat and delayed the seeking of tenders.

The tender for the appointment of consultants was advertised in the Official Journal of the European Union (OJEU) on 02/07/2020 with a closing date of 04/08/2020. Surprisingly, only three tenders were received and the Suitability Assessment Questionnaire (SAQ) was completed on 02/10/2020. This process took longer than anticipated mainly due to the constitution of the consultants which consisted of multi discipline teams. However, as a result of this SAQ two of the three tenders received were eliminated, leaving only one tender under consideration.

The tender assessment of the successful consortium was completed on 19/10/2020 and sanction was sought from the Dept to appoint them subject to submission of the necessary documentation. A letter of Intent was also issued to the successful consultant on 20/10/2020 and documentation in relation to Tax Clearance, Insurances, Collateral Warranties and

Professional Indemnity was requested. Due to the constitution of the successful consultant comprising 13 distinct disciplines, the final documentation was not received and verified until 15/02/2021, despite our best efforts to obtain it earlier. The letter of acceptance was issued to Turleys on 26/02/2021.

Turleys are now on board and we meet them on a monthly basis, with 2 no. meetings with them to date.

Cllr. Pio Smith spoke on the motion raised, and while expressing dissatisfaction with the council response, advised that funding was ultimately a good news story. A request was made for better communication on projects from Council Officials to include timelines, and status updates. This was then echoed by other members. Frank Pentony responded, gave brief update, and advised that Aoife Lawler would be requested to update on Westgate Vision.

Minute No. 45/21

Notice of Question

Submitted by: Cllr. James Byrne

“Can Louth County Council provide members with an update on the work ongoing to identify a Visitor Experience for Drogheda as well as a timetable regarding same?”

Reply from Mr. Frank Pentony, Director of Services, Planning, Infrastructure and Economic Development:

As detailed in the Chief Executive’s Report for Economic Development, consumer testing on different concepts identified (as part of the Feasibility study to identify a Visitor Experience for Drogheda) is underway and is expected to be completed by the end of April.

As this project is financed by Fáilte Ireland the timetable is largely within their control. Further updates on this project will be given on a monthly basis through the Chief Executives Report.

The members noted the reply.

There being no other business, the meeting concluded.

The Minutes were confirmed at a meeting of the Council held on:

Date: _____

Mayor: _____

Meeting Administrator: _____