

**Minutes of the Corporate Policy Group Meeting held  
on Wednesday 23<sup>rd</sup> November 2016 in the Board Room, Áras an Chontae, Mullingar at 8.30am**

**Present**

Cllr Frank McDermott (Cathaoirleach)  
Cllr Ken Glynn  
Cllr Paul Hogan  
Cllr Tom Farrell  
Cllr Aengus O'Rourke

**In Attendance**

Mr. Pat Gallagher, Chief Executive  
Mr. Billy Coughlan, Meetings Administrator  
Ms. Martina Slevin, Assistant Staff Officer

**Minutes of Previous Meetings**

The minutes of previous meeting held on Wednesday 19<sup>th</sup> October 2016 at 8.30am were approved as proposed by Cllr. Aengus O'Rourke seconded by Cllr. Ken Glynn

**Matters arising:**

No matters arising.

**Update on Calendar of Official Openings / Sod Turnings**

The following event was noted.

- Chairman's Dinner – Monday 12<sup>th</sup> December, 2016.

**Schedule of Meetings 2017**

Billy Coughlan presented the proposed Schedule of Council and CPG Meetings for 2017. The schedule was approved to go forward for the November Agenda, with one change of date as follows:

**July Monthly Meeting to be rescheduled from 31<sup>st</sup> July 2017 to 24<sup>th</sup> July 2017, and the July CPG Meeting to be rescheduled from 26<sup>th</sup> July 2017 to 19<sup>th</sup> July 2017**

Further to above, Cllr Tom Farrell requested that the March Council meeting be held in Dún na Sí Moate, as previously discussed. It was agreed that Billy Coughlan will arrange to visit the premises, and discuss the logistics with Frank Kelly, of Dún na Sí, in terms of IT facilities, accommodation for public and media attendance etc, and revert to the CPG at the December Meeting.

It was further agreed to hold the July Council Meeting in Athlone Civic Centre.

**Department of Justice Programme**

The Chief Executive advised the Members that the Department of Justice and Equality have been in touch with Westmeath County Council and a number of other local authorities seeking assistance with the implementation of the resettlement programme in 2017, with a proposal that Westmeath County Council accepts a number of refugees. The Chief Executive advised that he wishes to appraise the Members in-committee with regard to the information received to date from the Department of Justice. In response to Cllr Glynn's query with regard to the impact on the Council's housing waiting list, and if the refugees are to be accommodated from the existing housing stock, the Chief Executive advised that these issues are to be clarified, but it has been made clear to the Department that extra resources will be required. In response to Cllr Aengus O'Rourke, the Chief Executive advised that Westmeath County Council has been requested to accommodate up to 30 families during the course of 2017. The Chief Executive also advised that it is proposed to house the refugees in Mullingar and Athlone as the three key priorities for resettlement are housing, education and health, and these are best provided in the two larger towns.

It was agreed to open the November Council Meeting, and then formally go into committee for whatever length of time is required to discuss the Refugee Resettlement Programme.

## **Motions**

**Cllr Michael O'Brien:** *That Westmeath County Council write to the Minister for Health calling on him to legalise cannabis oil for medicinal purposes.*

**The above motion was approved by the CPG to go forward for the November County Council Meeting Agenda.**

**Cllr. Andrew Duncan:** *Can Westmeath County Council outline its strategy in relation to the sourcing of a permanent home for the Civil Defence.*

The Chief Executive advised that a review is currently being undertaken of the current facilities at Cullion Depot with a view to accommodating the Civil Defence Department, along with other departments of the Council that are currently located in other offices in Cullion, and this has been confirmed to Civil Defence. While this review is pending, the necessary facilities required to deliver the Civil Defence service are available within Westmeath County Council. When complete the review will not only address the provision of facilities for Civil Defence but also integrate the most effective use of our existing facilities for all the existing primary users of the Cullion Depot including MMD, NRO and Water Services. In response to Members questions, the Chief Executive advised that it was intended to have the review completed in January 2017.

**The above motion was approved by the CPG to go forward for the November County Council Meeting Agenda.**

**Mullingar Municipal District Resolution** *“That Mullingar Municipal District resolves that Westmeath County Council hosts a Civic Reception to honour the Westmeath soldiers of A Company of the 35<sup>th</sup> Battalion of the United Nations Peace Keeping Forces that fought at Jadotville in The Congo in September 1961”.*

Billy Coughlan advised that the above resolution will go forward as a CPG Recommendation, and as it is a countywide event, the Cathaoirleach will officiate.

## **Council Agenda**

Mr. Billy Coughlan, Meetings Administrator, outlined the contents of the November Council Meeting Agenda, and the following items were highlighted.

### **Item 4 (ii): Disposal of Land/Property:**

**Proposed 3 year Lease of office space on ground floor of Market House, Mullingar to Mullingar Chamber of Commerce Ltd, in accordance with the terms of Section 183 Notice of the Local Government Act 2001 circulated within the specified period:**

In response to Cllr Paul Hogan, the Chief Executive advised that there is a good working relationship between Mullingar Chamber of Commerce and Westmeath County Council, and in view of their work in promoting and marketing Mullingar, it would be in order to provide them with office accommodation in a central location in town. He further advised that a cover letter to the Members will set out the terms and conditions of the lease.

### **Item 1: To approve submission to the OPW in respect of the Eastern River Basin Flood Risk Management Plan.**

The Chief Executive that this is a similar exercise to a submission in respect of the River Shannon, approved by the Members at the September monthly meeting.

### **To receive reports and recommendations from SPC Chairpersons.**

## **Tenants Handbook**

Billy Coughlan advised that the Tenants Handbook will be presented by the Chairman of the Housing SPC, supported by the Director of Housing.

### **To consider the Draft Cemetery Policy Document**

It was noted that the Chairman of the Environment SPC will introduce the above document, with background to be given by the Director of Services.

### **Civic Amenity Sites**

It was noted that the Chairman of the Environment SPC will read the following resolution of the Environment SPC.

*To continue the service provision as outlined within the Tender Documents which maintains the key provision of the direct control of the Gate fee with WCC in knowledge of the cost increase as outlined by DOS. The Environment Section to carry out a review of the service provision within 18 months of the commencement of the 3 year contract*

It was further noted that the Director of Services for Environment will brief the Members on the background to the above.

### **National Broadband Plan**

In response to Cllr Ken Glynn, Billy Coughlan advised that he will follow up with the Director of Service for Housing, with regard to a proposed presentation from the Housing SPC re National Broadband Plan.

### **CPG Recommendations**

1. Hosting of a Civic Reception to honour the Westmeath soldiers of A Company of the 35<sup>th</sup> Battalion of the United Nations Peace Keeping Forces that fought at Jadotville in The Congo in September 1961”.
2. Schedule of Council and CPG Meetings 2017

### **Assessment of upcoming Conferences**

The following upcoming conferences were considered by the CPG:

Date	Conf Length	Conference	Location	Conf Cost	Overnight Cost	Travel	Total Est Cost	Distance x return Mgr .5007
16 November 2016	1 day	ICSH Seminar - Partnership working for elected members and housing associations	Ashling Hotel, Dublin 8	€ 90.00	€ -	€ 93.33	€ 183.33	158km
19 November 2016	1 day	AILG - Training - Module 6 - Regional Assemblies and their role with Local Authorities and the Housing Bill 2016	Red Cow Hotel, Dublin	€ -	€ -	€ 93.33	€ 93.33	158km
25 November 2016	1 day	Nuclear Free Local Authorities - All Ireland Forum : Energy policy, renewable futures, Brexit and Sellafield - what Councils need to know	Council Chamber - Dublin City Hall	€ -	€ -	€ 93.33	€ 93.33	158km
25 to 27 November	3 days	Celtic Conferences: First Time Home Buyer Mortgage - Getting on the property ladder	Clonakilty Hotel, Clonakilty, Cork	€ 100.00	€ 250.00	€ 290.63	€ 640.63	492km
2nd to 4th December	3 days	Celtic Conferences: A Practical Guide to Budget 2017	Clonakilty Hotel, Clonakilty, Cork	€ 100.00	€ 250.00	€ 290.63	€ 640.63	492km

Date	Conf Length	Conference	Location	Conf Cost	Overnight Cost	Travel	Total Est Cost	Distance x return Mgr 5907
7 to 8 December	2 days	ACE: 2 day Microsoft powerpoint training for Councillors	Clonakilty Hotel, Clonakilty, Cork	€ 150.00	€ 125.00	€ 290.63	€ 565.63	492km
9 to 10 December	2 days	Esperanza Enterprises: Living with Dementia in Ireland	Connacht Hotel, Galway	€ 100.00	€ 125.00	€ 166.58	€ 391.58	282km
9 to 11 December	3 days	Celtic Conferences: BREXIT - The economic consequences for Ireland	Four Seasons Hotel, Carlingford, Co. Louth	€ 100.00	€ 375.00	€ 147.68	€ 622.68	250km
16 to 17 December	2 days	ACE: 2 day Microsoft Excel intermediate training for Councillors	Clonakilty Hotel, Clonakilty, Cork	€ 150.00	€ 125.00	€ 290.63	€ 565.63	492km
16 to 17 December	2 days	Esperanza Enterprises: Community Development achieving Social Inclusion, Reconciliation and Equality	Connacht Hotel, Galway	€ 100.00	€ 125.00	€ 166.57	€ 391.57	282km
13 to 14 January 2017	2 days	Esperanza Enterprises: Local Authorities and Waste Management	Connacht Hotel, Galway	€ 100.00	€ 125.00	€ 166.57	€ 391.57	282km
13 to 14 January 2017	2 days	Celtic Conferences: The Finance Act 2016	Carlingford, Co. Louth	€ 100.00	€ 125.00	€ 147.68	€ 372.68	250km
20 to 21 January 2017	2 days	Esperanza Enterprises: Supporting Safer Communities	Connacht Hotel, Galway	€ 100.00	€ 125.00	€ 166.57	€ 391.57	282km
15/16 Jan 2017		Celtic Conferences: Finance Act 2016	Details to be confirmed					

Following an assessment of the conference schedule, the following conference was approved for the Members of Westmeath County Council to attend:

16 to 17 December	2 days	Esperanza Enterprises: Community Development achieving Social Inclusion, Reconciliation and Equality	Connacht Hotel, Galway	€ 100.00	€ 125.00	€ 166.57	€ 391.57	282km
-------------------	--------	--	------------------------	----------	----------	----------	----------	-------

Billy Coughlan to advise the Members accordingly requesting they confirm if they wish to attend in order that their attendance may be approved by the full Council at the November Meeting.

Further to above, it was agreed that Billy Coughlan write to both Esperanza Enterprises and Celtic Conferences seeking more information on content and speakers for all future conferences notified to Westmeath County Council. It was also agreed that Esperanza and Celtic conferences listed on the above schedule for January 2017 be considered again at the December CPG Meeting, subject to the detail requested from the conference providers being available for that meeting.

### **Correspondence**

BC advised of the following item of correspondence received.

Letter of 26<sup>th</sup> October 2016 re Motion agreed at October Meeting of South Dublin County Council seeking support of all local authorities in calling on the Minister for Housing and the Minister for Finance to provide sustainable funding for local government - **noted by CPG**

### **AOB**

#### **Public Liability Insurance for Members**

The Chief Executive advised of Local Authority Elected Members Public Liability Scheme available to the Members from Irish Public Bodies Mutual Insurances. This insurance cover commences on 1<sup>st</sup> January 2017, and the premium charge per member is €73.50.

This scheme was discussed by the CPG, and it was agreed that it provides good cover, and that details should be forwarded to all the Members for their consideration. It was further noted that Westmeath County Council will negotiate the fee of €73.50 with Irish Public Bodies with a view to having the cost covered by the Council as part of the annual premium. As the names of those who wish to join the scheme are to be notified to Irish Public Bodies no later than 25<sup>th</sup> November 2016, Billy Coughlan to arrange to write to the Members today asking them to confirm their interest in availing of the scheme.

#### **Mullingar Integrated Arts Centre**

An Cathaoirleach, Cllr Frank McDermott advised that he had attended a meeting earlier in the week with representatives from Mullingar Arts Centre (John McGrath Chairman, and Malachy Stephens, Auditor) , accompanied by Cllr John Shaw, Jimmy Dalton, Head of Finance, and Rory McEntee, Legal Advisor, with the aim of preparing a new Memo and Articles of Association to be agreed by both parties. Cllr McDermott was of the view that the meeting was positive and constructive, and this group will meet again in a couple of weeks to progress matters.

**This concluded the business of the Meeting**

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Cllr Frank McDermott**  
**Cathaoirleach**

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Date**