

In the Chair:	Cllr. K. Bourke
Members Present:	Cllr. D. Dunne, Cllr. M. Fitzgerald, Cllr. I. Goldsboro, Cllr. K. O'Meara.
Apologies:	Mr. Liam Brett, Senior Engineer, Roads Directorate
<u>Attending from Carrick on Suir MD:</u>	Mr. B Beck, Director of Services; Ms. M O'Gorman, Meetings Administrator; Mr. D. Power, A/District Engineer; Ms. H. Cahill, Staff Officer;
Housing Directorate:	Mr. Shane Grogan, Administrative Officer; Ms. Helen Butler, A/Administrative Officer; Mr. Shaun Lonergan, Executive Engineer.

1.0. Welcome and Introduction

Item 1.1. Summons and Prayer:	The summons was taken as read
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2.0. Business prescribed by Statute, Standing Orders or Resolution of the Council

Item 2.1. Conflict of Interest Declaration	None to record
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3.0. Consideration of Minutes

Item 3.1. Minutes of the Monthly Meeting held on 31 October 2023.	The minutes of the monthly meeting held on the 31 October 2023 were adopted on the proposal of Cllr. K. O'Meara, seconded by Cllr. D. Dunne, and signed by the Cathaoirleach.
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4.0. Consideration of Reports and Recommendations

Item 4.1. Report of Housing Directorate:	<p>The Report of the Housing Directorate was circulated and taken as read.</p> <p>With Mr. Shane Grogan AO, Ms. Helen Butler A/AO and Mr. Shaun Lonergan EE in attendance from the Housing Directorate, the following matters were discussed and clarified;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">o The numbers of applicants seeking housing (352) in the Carrick on Suir District did not take account of (a) undeclared occupants in circumstances where tenants were in fear of having increased rent back-dated; or (b) of persons engaged in 'couch-surfing' in local authority houses.
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- The apparent absence of emergency' accommodation for homeless persons in Tipperary was a matter to be raised at impending emergency meeting of the Housing SPC. With recent events reported in mainstream media and activity on social media, concerns were expressed about the deplorable development where the most vulnerable people from outside the state were pitted against those perceived as "our own homeless".
- Persons in asylum centres who were now approved to remain in Ireland were considered to be contributing to the homelessness issue.
- Concerns expressed that there were not enough homeless officers to deal with the increasing demand, and that the waiting time for an appointment was wholly unacceptable for people in dire need of support. While Tipperary had avoided the prevalence of 'street homeless' to date, the situation required renewed focus as there was a crisis looming.
- The type of accommodation offered to families with children was considered inappropriate, particularly in rural areas, and specifically for those families having children with special needs. It was suggested that there should be a specific number of properties reserved for those situations.
- The 'turnaround' time for assessments to be carried out of homeless persons was discussed as a matter needing urgent improvement
- Discussion took place regarding the relatively low number of housing loans issued - 13 out of 39 valid applications received (33%) – and the main obstacles encountered by such applicants.
- In the context of numbers of tenant purchase applications, it was considered preferable to secure funding to purchase additional units from the proceeds of sales, in particular, of older type housing stock.
- The timeframe for completing tenant purchase transactions was also considered.
- Funding secured for Fethard Day Care was warmly welcomed.
- The anomaly was discussed of cases where persons living in a local authority dwelling declared for rent for a long number of years, were unable to have their occupancy reckoned for the purposes of the tenant purchase scheme on being appointed to the tenancy in succession to their deceased parent(s).

The Cathaoirleach advised that this matter would best be addressed by means of notice of motion to the Plenary Council.

- The acquisition of 22 'turnkey' houses at Carrickbeg was warmly welcomed as was the delivery of new housing stock in Carrick on Suir in recent years; however, the information contained in the housing report mentioned that 9 units would come onstream in Q.3 of this year, but omitted to give a breakdown of the type of units involved.
- Consideration should be given to providing modular homes rather than relying solely on purchasing/constructing traditionally-constructed houses.
- The €30,000 maximum housing grant available for housing adaptation grants was entirely inadequate and effectively excluded many applicants from providing for their medical needs with such a significant shortfall to meet from their own resources. At a minimum, the provision of a bathroom extension ranged from €48,000 - €50,000. It was suggested that Tipperary County Council needed to pursue this matter further with the Housing Minister.
- Grant applicants should be encouraged to install 'lifts' rather than constructing extensions.
- Consideration should be given to replacing aluminium windows, currently excluded from the scheme.
- Several of the councillors commended the staff of the grants section as exceptionally helpful.
- Case raised of a Carrick on Suir couple and their small child, when presenting as homeless, were given an appointment with a homeless officer some 10 days hence; following representations made on their behalf, the waiting time was reduced to 6 days. This was considered wholly unacceptable, with the added complication of having no means of transport and having to travel to Thurles to have their case assessed.
- Similarly, a further example was highlighted of a homeless couple, having secured a property with a 'landlord ready to go', took 2 weeks to secure their deposit.
- Complaints were made of backlog in dealing with housing applications

In relation to applications for **local authority housing support**, Mr. Shane Grogan outlined the position in relation to the growing numbers seeking support. Providing context for the 352 applicants currently on the housing list in Carrick on Suir MD as compared with 354 in March, notwithstanding the significant number of new tenancies created in the interim, he informed that 1400 applications were received in the 10 months from January to October 2023 as compared with 1051 applications received for the 12-month period of 2022. He stated that he was not aware

of any backlog in processing housing applications and undertook to examine the process.

Addressing the issues raised in relation to **housing adaptation grants** for house adaptations, Mr. Grogan stated that the limit of €30,000 was the subject of ongoing feedback to the department, on account of a significant number of applicants' inability to draw down the grant approved. With new legislation to be commenced, it was anticipated that the Department's intention to raise the ceiling would be notified in Q.1 of 2024.

He also clarified that the most economically viable option was chosen when examining solutions to grant applicants' medical needs and account taken of the household composition in making determination on suitable accommodation. The over-arching principal was to keep a person in their own home. The issue of extending eligibility for replacement of aluminium windows was under review annually.

He informed that an additional €450,000 was allocated by the Department for **adaptations to local authority houses**, which was welcomed and also stated that he would feedback councillors' compliments to staff administering the grants.

Dealing with issues raised in relation to **tenant purchase applications**, he stated that Council staff worked closely with tenants to get them over the line – in much the same manner as grants staff operated – such that there were no apparent obstacles in the system. Any delays that might occur were often attributable to the applicants and in some instances, hold-ups were often down to finalising legalities.

Speaking to issues raised on **homelessness**, Ms. Helen Butler, clarified that the Council had access to 150 emergency beds across the county, block-booked via its winter planning process. With 5 staff servicing the area of homelessness across Tipperary she alluded to the knock-on effect of ongoing difficulties associated with recruitment. Operating under a target of 3 days for dealing with street homeless presentations, she accepted that the waiting times for homeless persons to obtain appointment with an assessment officer, was not satisfactory and she was trying to shorten that time. She intended to discuss the matter at the next Housing SPC in an effort to streamline those services. Concluding that there were 17 'Own Front Door' places available she noted that there was a waiting list for this service which was treated as a priority.

Mr. Shaun Lonergan, Housing Engineer, dealt with queries relating to the **housing construction** programme and clarified that following some unforeseen delays on-site at Carrickbeg, the 9 houses of the first phase (turnkey) would be delivered in Q.4_2023.

The initial 9 units comprised of

- 5 no. 2-bed bungalows and
- 4 no. 2-storey 3-beds.

The remaining units comprised of

- 2 no. 2-beds and
- 11 no. 2-storey dwellings of a mix between 2 and 3-beds.

**Item 4.2.
District Engineer's
Report.**

The District Engineer, Mr. D. Power, circulated the Schedule of Municipal District Works - November 2023. He provided update on a substantially-completed roads programme, outlined the position in relation to housing voids maintenance and updated on the commencement of phase 1 of the RRDF project in the current week. Arising from discussion of the above, Mr. Power responded to queries from the members as follows:

Cllr. M. Fitzgerald

- Queried whether provision of a pedestrian crossing to facilitate safe crossing to school at Cloneen village (R692) could be considered for NTA funding.
- Sought update in relation to drainage issue at Grangemockler
- Raised the issue of unacceptable condition of roads arising from works carried out by Irish Water contractors at Ballinard and Rathkenny, with a significant 'snag list' compiled from constituents' complaints.
- Requested that Drangan Village be considered for Clár-funded projects and that Ballinard be included in the 2024 road programme if no emergency funding can be sourced.
- Requested construction of footpath to replace gravelled section as far as O'Halloran's shop at Cloneen.

Cllr. I. Goldsboro

- Sought update on request for traffic calming measures at Máiréad's Cross and at Copper Cross, Coalbrook (rumble strips).

**Item 4.2. cont'd/
District Engineer's
Report.**

- Requested expedition of delivery of lights ordered for traffic calming at Killenaule noting that Gardaí were playing their part but that motorists were ignoring current signage.
- Urged correspondence with landowners in relation to maintenance of trees and hedging, in view of climate change and impending worsening of weather conditions. She cited Glengoole village as a case in point.

Cllr. K. O'Meara

- Sought update on application for low-cost safety scheme for Mullinahone
- Queried whether the delivery of 2024 road programme was at risk from inflationary costs.
- Queried whether suggestions for active Travel Schemes would be sought and timeframe for same.
- Requested that lights be turned on at top of Town Park, Fethard.
- Sought update on committed works for GAA club and drainage works at Killaghy, Mullinahone, respectively.

Cllr. D. Dunne

- Suggested that speed cushions installed at entrances to Aldi and estates off the N24 were particularly severe.
- Pedestrian Crossing at Parkside required examination
- Requested additional parking provision be investigated for Carrickbeg
- Requested provision of railings as a suitable safety feature at corner of Corpse Road and Lower Waterford Road.
- Reported ongoing issue with faulty public lights in vicinity of Town Hall, Carrick on Suir, notwithstanding the convenience of user-friendly app for reporting outages.
- Sought timeframe for delivery of new footbridge at Cláirín under Active Travel Scheme.
- Reported that lights were not operational on pedestrian crossings on the Pill Road and that roundabouts were not adequately defined
- Requested that homeowners be notified in relation to impending diversion at Connolly Park.

Cllr. K. Bourke

- Requested that railing provided at Pill Road under railway bridge be continued to the junction of Lower Ballylynch road at Carrick on Suir
- Stated that the build-out at Garda station side of N24 junction required re-examination of the road markings.

**Item 4.2. cont'd/
District Engineer's
Report**

- Requested establishment of an emergency protocol to address sewerage leakages on public footpaths – the requirement to report to Uisce Éireann resulted in unacceptable delays and the local authority should be authorised to deal with it immediately.

Mr. Denis Power, A/District Engineer responding to the issues raised by the councillors, stated that requests for projects would be forwarded to the Active Travel Team but flagged that it was anticipated that funding under this stream would be reduced somewhat in 2024. He confirmed that outstanding project such as Cláirín Bridge would roll over to the 2024 programme and he would request that consideration be given to provision of railings at Carrickbeg.

With flashing signage ordered for Máiréad's Cross he stated that he was examining all viable options for traffic calming given that the junction could not be altered. He confirmed that inspections were carried out in relation to condition of trees on roadsides and undertook to commence legal proceeding where necessary.

Mr. Power confirmed that he had referred the drainage issues at Grangemockler to the Roads Capital team for onward referral to TII. Addressing the issues of road reinstatement following contract works carried out by Uisce Éireann contractors, he agreed that it was vital that any damage would be recorded in order to recover costs appropriately. He undertook to see if extension to footpath at Cloneen could be accommodated and confirmed that issues raised in relation to the N24 (*road markings and railings*) would be referred to the design team to re-examine as requested.

The District Engineer noted that there was no response as yet to his application for low-cost safety scheme for Mullinahone but anticipated that a decision on this would be notified early in 2024. He expected that he would have a fair idea in the next few weeks when tenders were completed for 2024, whether inflation was likely to impact the 2024 road programme, noting that bitumen costs tended to fluctuate.

He concluded by stating that public lighting outages would be referred to the Roads Section for attention, and agreed that the Uisce Éireann protocol for reporting and repairing sewerage leaks was not fit for purpose; he undertook to make contact, with a view to finding a good way forward.

**Item 4.4.
District Administrator's
Report:**

The Meetings Administrator circulated report with the agenda and same was taken as read. It contained updates in relation to the following;

Carrick on Suir Regeneration Contract

With Phase 1 commenced in the current week (commencing 20 November 2023), she informed that residents and business persons in the vicinity of the works were notified by Glas Civil Engineering Ltd of its commencement with contract details circulated of the Contractor's Liaison person, Mr. Cian Ryan. The letter was circulated under item 6.1 below and duly noted.

The Director of Services, Mr. Brian Beck stated that the Council was anxious to maintain a positive relationship with business and residents for the duration of the contract and invited the Councillors to bring any issues to attention so that they could be addressed promptly.

The Cathaoirleach, Cllr. K. Bourke commended the Contractors, Glas Civil Engineering as approachable and very accommodating during the course of the N24 works which boded well for the current contract. Referring to Phase 3 of the RRDF that would include Chapel Street and William Street upgrades, he requested that a bollard (or alternative) would be installed to prevent cars turning east at the junction from mounting the footpath.

ECRD - Christmas Retail Grants Scheme 2023

Information on the distribution of Christmas Retail Grants 2023 by the Economic Community and Rural Development section was included; it was noted and welcomed by the members that €4,750 (10% of €46,000 fund) allocated to 8 groups within the Carrick on Suir Municipal District as follows;

Ballingarry Community Council <i>"Christmas Wonderland Festival"</i>	€700
Carrick on Suir Business Association <i>"Christmas in Carrick on Suir"</i>	€2,500
Cloneen Sports & Social Club <i>"Christmas Festival and Craft Fair"</i>	€250
Patrician Presentation Community Association <i>"Light Up Fethard Community Fair"</i>	€1,300

**Item 4.5.
General Municipal
Allocation 2023**

The Meetings Administrator circulated a report/recommendation in relation to the proposed allocation from remaining unspent GMA Community Grant monies to support applicant groups with costs associated with Christmas lighting plans for the members' consideration and resolution. (see item 4.6 hereunder)

**Item 4.6.
Assistance of Bodies
under Section 66 of the
Local Government Act,
2001**

Having considered the report and recommendation under item 4.5 above, it was proposed by Cllr. I. Goldsboro, seconded by Cllr. D. Dunne

AND RESOLVED

"In accordance with Section 66 of the Local Government Act 2001, and being of the opinion that it is desirable to so do, to promote the interests of the local community, and having regard to the recommendation from the District Administrator, that grants totalling €8,300 be and are hereby approved for payment in respect of costs associated with Christmas Lighting to the following recipients:

<i>Fethard & Killusty Muintir Council</i>	€900
<i>Killenaule Enhancement Group</i>	€900
<i>Ballynonty Community Field</i>	€900
<i>Cloneen Sports & Social Club</i>	€900
<i>Ballingarry Tidy Towns Committee</i>	€900
<i>Carrick on Suir Business Association [CoSBA]</i>	€2,000
<i>Mullinahone Community Council</i>	€900
<i>Glengoole Tidy Towns</i>	€900

5.0. Chief Executive's / Delegated Employee's Orders

Item 5.1.

The Meetings Administrator confirmed that there were no items for consideration under this heading.

6.0. Correspondence

Item 6.1.

A letter dated 13 November 2023 as circulated by GLAS Civil Engineering Ltd. to residents and businesses in the vicinity of Sean Healy Park, Castle Street, and Castle Park, informing of contact details of Contractor's representative, was duly noted.

7.0. Notices of Motion

Item 7.1.
Motion No. 2725 -
Cllr. K. Bourke

Motion no. 2725

Cllr. K. Bourke

"I'm asking all councillors in the Carrick Municipal District to support a letter requesting extra Garda to be stationed in Carrick-on-Suir town. This request is being made due to the severe reduction of Gardaí being stationed in Carrick on Suir. Numbers have dropped from 14 members to just 4 in a short few years. This letter should be sent to the Minister for Justice, Helen McEntee and Garda Commissioner, Drew Harris.

Introducing his motion, Cllr. K. Bourke outlined the background to same; where previously there were 14 personnel stationed in the town there were now 2 sergeants and 4 gardaí insitu. He described the likely impact on staffing in the event of one sergeant retiring - where in normal circumstances it required 1 sergeant to supervise 4 gardaí - therefore a sergeant retiring from Carrick on Suir would not be replaced. For a population centre of 6,000 and its hinterland, this was wholly inadequate and he urged his colleagues on the JPC to speak up on the matter in terms as forceful as possible. Having discussed his concerns with other public representatives, this situation appeared to be the new norm right across the country.

The motion was proposed by Cllr. D. Dunne, seconded by Cllr. M. Fitzgerald and unanimously agreed;

Speaking to the motion, Cllr. D. Dunne thanked the Cathaoirleach for putting it forward, noting that there were times when there were no Gardaí stationed in Carrick on Suir. He spoke of a recent traffic accident that took 45 minutes for gardaí to attend from Clonmel where in the interim, people on the periphery had to direct traffic themselves, while having no authority to so do. He suggested that the situation was reaching crisis point and he was whole-hearted in his support of the motion.

Cllr. M. Fitzgerald as seconder of the motion outlined the massive negative impact on safety and security arising from the reduction in manpower on villages such as Faugheen, Ahenny and others in the hinterland of Carrick on Suir whose residents were

8.0. Any Other Business

Item 8.1.

None.

This concluded the business of the meeting.

[15:19]



District Administrator.



Cathaoirleach.

23 November 2023

