

KILDARE COUNTY COUNCIL

Minutes of Meeting of Council

held at 2.00pm

Monday 26 June 2017

Áras Chill Dara, Devoy Park, Naas, Co Kildare

Members Present: Councillor I Keatley (Mayor), Councillors M Aspell, A Breen, A Breslin, K Byrne, B Caldwell, D Callaghan, M Coleman, R Cronin, I Cussen, M Dalton, S Doyle, T Durkan, D Fitzpatrick, B Hillis, C Kelly, P Kennedy, A Larkin, M Lynch, P McEvoy, J McGinley, F McLoughlin-Healy, M Miley, S Moore, T Murray, N O’Cearúil, S O’Neill, J Pender, R Power, S Power, T Redmond, M Stafford, M Wall, P Ward, B Weld and B Young

Apologies: Councillors F Brett, M McCabe, J Neville and D Scully

Also Present: Mr P Carey, Chief Executive, Messrs J Boland, T McDonnell, P Minnock, N Morrissey and Ms S Kavanagh (Directors of Services), Ms B Sweeney, A/Head of Finance, Ms M Mclvor (Meetings Administrator) and other officials.

01/0617

Vote of Sympathy

The Mayor welcomed the members to the meeting and extended his sympathy to the families of the late:

Pauline Coppinger, mother of John Coppinger, Senior Engineer, Transportation.

Una Minchin mother of Hilda Minchin Library Services and sister of Bernie Toner, Housing.

Lil Doyle of Kildare Civil Defence. Lil was the Commander of the Welfare Unit in Civil Defense and a long time volunteer. She was the wife of Anthony Doyle former Fire Services Station Officer in Naas and current Civil Defense volunteer. Her son Martin Doyle is also a volunteer with Civil Defense.

Liam Leigh, brother of Orla Leigh Hickey, Finance

The Mayor also extended his sympathies to the families of those killed and to those that were injured in the Grenfell Tower fire tragedy in London.

A minutes silence was observed.

02/0617

Adoption of minutes

The council considered the minutes of the monthly meeting of 29 May 2017 together with the progress report.

Resolved on the proposal of Councillor Hillis, seconded by Councillor Wall that the minutes of the monthly meeting of 29 May 2017 be adopted and the progress report noted.

Councillor McLoughlin Healy stated she wanted it noted that she was not happy with the late notice of the amendment to the May minutes ref 02/0517 which was circulated immediately before the meeting started and also wanted it clarified that audit committee reports are not available to members.

A discussion ensued in relation to the content of minutes with the Chief Executive Mr Peter Carey stating that in his view, minutes should only be a record of the decisions made. Councillor McLoughlin Healy stated she completely disagreed with the Chief Executives suggestion that the minutes be truncated as suggested as that is not what is stated in Standing Orders.

Councillor Cussen noted she had raised the issue of the format of the vacant house report by way of a motion in 2014 and asked whether the format of the vacant housing report had been referred to the Housing Strategic Policy Committee (SPC) at that time. Mr T McDonnell, Director of Service confirmed it had but that following a further motion from Councillor Lynch, the format of the vacant house report had been discussed at the Housing SPC and the format, as currently presented, was agreed.

03/0617

To receive a presentation from Community First Responders Ireland

Mr John Fitzgerald, County Chair Community First Responders (CFR) Ireland and Mr Des Kelly from the National Ambulance Service attended the meeting to give a presentation to the members on the Community First Responders Programme in Kildare. Mr Fitzgerald outlined the differences between a cardiac arrest and a heart attack and noted that if CPR is started and an AED used on a patient within 3 minutes of going into Cardiac Arrest, they have a 70% chance of surviving. He noted that 5,000 people die in Ireland each year from OHCA Cardiac Arrest. The process to follow if you think someone is experiencing cardiac arrest is to call 911, start CPR, use AES defibrillator and continue to do so until the Emergency Services arrive. Mr Kelly went onto outline how the National Ambulance Service supports the CFR programmes which are run locally by a committee who are completely voluntary, fundraise for everything themselves and who arrange community training. Mr Kelly confirmed that in Kildare, there are schemes in progress in Kildare Town, Newbridge, Ballitore, Naas and Monasterevan. Councillor Pender thanked Mr Fitzgerald and Mr Kelly for attending and asked how the council can assist the CFR programme. Mr Fitzgerald responded by asking the members to bring the message back into their communities and to emphasise the importance of making the 999 emergency call. In response to Councillor Caldwell's query on why there was no programme in the north of the county, Mr Fitzgerald stated the programme is community driven and there has to be someone locally to drive it. In relation to an enquiry regarding Eircodes, Mr Kelly confirmed the National Ambulance Service has approx. 90% of the codes but the remaining 10% can cause a difficulty and emphasized the need for everyone to know their own Eircode. The Mayor thanked Mr Fitzgerald and Mr Kelly for their informative presentation and wished them well in their work. The Chief Executive echoed the Mayor's sentiments.

04/0617

To note monthly management report

The members considered the monthly management report.

Resolved that the management report be noted

Councillor Young enquired regarding the reference to the second crossing of the River Liffey on page no 28 of the report and asked that it be discussed in detail at the next Celbridge-Leixlip

Municipal District meeting. Mr N Morrissey, Director of Service confirmed to the members that they were informed of this matter at the first opportunity and that this it is a very positive move from the Department of Transport.

05/0617

To consider nomination of Mr Ger Dune to fill external vacancy on the Housing, Strategic Policy Committee (SPC)

A report from Ms Mclvor, Senior Executive Officer Corporate Services stated that Mr Ramon O'Reilly has resigned from the Housing Strategic Policy Committee. Mr O'Reilly had been nominated by the trade union pillar. In light of this resignation the Irish Congress of Trade Unions (ICTU) has now nominated Mr Ger Dunne as their representative on this SPC.

Resolved on the proposal of Councillor Moore, seconded by Councillor Durkan and agreed by all members present, that Mr Ger Dunne be appointed to the Housing SPC.

06/0617

To consider the draft Annual Report 2016

The members considered the draft Annual Report 2016.

Councillor McLoughlin Healy pointed out there didn't appear to be any reference to Twinning of Local Authorities in the draft report as is required by section 75 (5) of the Local Government Act 2001.

Resolved on the proposal of Councillor McEvoy, seconded by Councillor Hillis and agreed by all members present that the draft Annual Report 2016 be adopted with an amendment to include information relation to Twinning of Local Authorities as is required by Section 75 (5) of the Local Government Act 2001.

07/0617

To note the 2016 Progress Report on the Corporate Plan 2015-2019

The members considered the 2016 Progress Report on the Corporate Plan 2015-2019
In response to a question from Councillor Cussen, the Mayor stated that the draft report had been before the Corporate Policy Group. Councillor Cussen referred to an item on page 3 relating to the Integrated Service Provider (ISP) in Kilcock and asked what was the update on this. Mr N Morrissey, Director of Service stated the Kilcock ISP is progressing very well with the community centre proposal going out to tender very soon.

Resolved by all members present that the report be noted.

08/0617

To note quarterly budgetary reports up to 31 March 2017

The members considered the quarterly budgetary reports up to 31 March 2017

Councillor Lynch enquired in relation to the 2% levy commission for Kildare County Council and whether this is self imposed or a national figure. Ms B Sweeney A/Head of Finance confirmed this is nationally imposed. Mr J Boland, Director of Service stated it is to cover the cost of administration and is a reasonable figure in this regard. He confirmed the money goes into an environmental fund to subvent certain environmental activities but does not include works to roads.

Resolved by all members present that the report be noted.

09/0617

Gnó an Mhéara/Mayor's Business

The Mayor thanked the Local Enterprise Office (LEO) for attending the recent Athy Show at which there was a record attendance this year. He noted they had run a very successful young entrepreneur competition and expressed his appreciation to the Ms Jacqui McNabb, Head of LEO and her staff for their continued work on new initiatives.

The Mayor confirmed he had attended the launch of the Derby at the Curragh Racecourse and it was very encouraging to see how the new development is taking place and wished everyone involved well during the development process.

The Mayor thanked the Library and Arts Service on the recent inaugural military conference and is hopeful that it will become an annual event.

The Mayor congratulated the Riverbank Arts Centre, Newbrige on their recent €1.5 million grant award and similarly congratulated the Moat Theatre, Naas on their recent grant award of €730,000.

The Mayor reminded the members of the Annual General Meeting taking place on Friday 30 June at 2pm and expressed his sincere thanks to the members, the officials and the staff for their co-operation and hard work over the 2016/2017 council term.

The Mayor also wished the Kildare Football team the best of luck in the Leinster Final on the 16 July.

10/0617

Comhfhreagras/Correspondence

The Meetings Administrator confirmed that 3 items of correspondence received since the May meeting were in response to letters written on foot of motions and were circulated to the members with the progress report. She also confirmed that Mr Bernard Higgins, Head of IS would be emailing the members shortly looking for their feedback regarding a new website. Councillor Lynch expressed his dissatisfaction with the response received from the Minister for Housing, Planning, Community and Local Government in relation to the revaluation of commercial rates as it makes no mention of any review. The Mayor stated it was his understanding that new legislation would come before the Dáil over the summer to change certain aspects of the revaluation system to allow local authorities more flexibility. Councillor Lynch asked that we write to the Ministers office again seeking clarity in relation to this new legislation being brought forward.

Councillor Young referred to the correspondence from the OPW in response to Councillor Durkans motion ref 22/0317 at the March meeting in relation to the current Catchment Flood Risk Assessment and Management Studies (CFRAMS) and a line in it which states "*The viewer of the draft Flood Maps accepts that the draft Flood Maps **are for consultation purposes only** and shall not be used or relied upon for any other purpose or decision making process*". Councillor Young asked that having regard to this comment in particular, we write to the OPW seeking clarification on what the commercial purpose of CFRAMS is.

11/0617

Conferences and training

The Meetings Administrator referred to the report dated 22 June 2017 circulated to the members.

Resolved that having regard to Section 142(5) of the Local Government Act 2001, as amended by Section 53(2) of the Local Government Reform Act 2014 the following retrospective approval is granted for the attendance of Councillor Murray at the AILG training for elected members Module 3 in the Crown Plaza Hotel, Dundalk on the 10 June.

12/0617

Grant Scheme for Kildare Sports Clubs

The following motion in the name of Councillor Wall was considered

That the council consider a grant scheme for Kildare Sports clubs, including the option to use Local Property Tax (LPT) funding as part of any such scheme, notwithstanding the very welcome reintroduction of the Sports Capital Grant, such a scheme would have terrific benefits for our population.

The motion was proposed by Councillor Wall and seconded by Councillor Breslin.

A report from Ms S Kavanagh, Director of Service advised that a proposal will need to be developed and referred to the Community and Culture Strategic Policy Committee for consideration and a framework developed regarding a grants scheme and that members will have to consider this when allocating both the 2018 budget and Local Property Tax (LPT). Councillor

Wall stated he wanted to highlight the difficulty smaller type clubs in Kildare encounter in gaining funding and a grant scheme such as that proposed in the motion would go a long way in supporting these smaller clubs. Councillor McEvoy supported the motion but asked that care is taken if providing public monies to private sporting clubs around how this can be managed. Councillor Ó'Cearúil supported the motion but expressed concern around sporting clubs becoming over reliant on LPT monies and the level of lobbying councillors might receive given the size of clubs. Councillor McLoughlin Healy asked that the matter be considered in the context of the recent launch of the Play in Kildare policy. Ms Kavanagh noted that LPT funding is an option to be considered.

Resolved on the proposal of Councillor Wall seconded by Councillor Breslin that a proposal be developed and referred to the Community and Culture Strategic Policy Committee for consideration and a framework developed regarding a grants scheme which will be considered having regard to the 2018 budget and LPT.

13/0617

Supports for Housing Provision

The following motion in the name of Councillor Ó Cearúil was considered

Given the national crisis in housing provision, it is agreed that Kildare County Council will ensure that it has the required specialist and technical supports in place to give the critical attention required to deliver and implement Rebuilding Ireland - Action Plan for Housing and Homelessness, in our council area.

The motion was proposed by Councillor Ó Cearúil and seconded by Councillor Miley.

A report from Mr T McDonnell, Director of Service advised that Rebuilding Ireland, the Action Plan on Housing and Homelessness, is a whole of government approach to addressing the deficit in housing availability. The overarching aim of this Action Plan is to ramp up delivery of housing from its current undersupply, across all tenures, to help individuals and families meet their housing needs, and to help those who are currently housed to remain in their homes or be provided with appropriate options of alternative accommodation, especially those families in emergency accommodation. There are 84 identified actions, of which the Local Government sector is involved (as joint owner or joint lead agency) in 32. The Rebuilding Ireland Action Plan is divided

into 5 strategic pillars, and actions (many of which are inter-related and inter-dependent) proposed under each of the five pillars as follows:

Pillar 1 – Address Homelessness

Pillar 2 – Accelerate Social Housing

Pillar 3 – Build More Homes

Pillar 4 – Improve the Rental Sector

Pillar 5 – Utilise Existing Housing

The main role of local authorities are in Pillars 2 and 5 and 21 of the 32 Local Authority joint led actions are identified in these 2 pillars. The council has a range of specialised support available and in addition, avails of specialist services from both statutory and non-statutory bodies as and when required, on a case by case basis.

Councillor Ó'Cearúil thanked the Director for the detailed report. Councillor Redmond asked the Director if he was satisfied the council has adequate staffing to deliver this plan. Councillor Lynch asked what additional resources the council is getting from the Government and Councillor McLoughlin Healy enquired with regard to Pillar 2 and how much housing is being delivered through the Affordable Housing Bodies (AHBs) and whether it is the intention to increase that. In response, Mr McDonnell confirmed we do have the staff to deliver this plan and stated he will clarify the additional resources received from Central Government to Councillor Lynch after the meeting.

In response to Councillor McLoughlin Healy's question, Mr T McDonnell confirmed that the significant majority of housing delivered under pillar 2 will be via AHBs and private landlords.

Resolved on the proposal of Councillor Ó Cearúil seconded by Councillor Miley that the report be noted.

14/0617

County Development Plan – Off-line Services

The following motion in the name of Councillor Brett was considered

That Chapter 17.13.6 of the County Development Plan 2017-2023 is varied to read as follows: The council supports the development of on-line and off-line service facilities in appropriate locations in accordance with the guidance set out in the Spatial Planning and National Roads Guidelines for Planning Authorities – Department of Environment, Community and Local Government (2012).

With Councillor Brett's written consent, the motion was proposed by Councillor R Power and seconded by Councillor Hillis.

A report from Mr P Minnock, Director of Service advised that Chapter 17.13.6 of the County Development Plan 2017 – 2023 (CDP) states:

(i) Motorway Service Areas

The council supports the development of on-line motorway service facilities in appropriate locations in accordance with the guidance set out in the Spatial Planning and National Roads Guidelines for Planning Authorities, DECLG (2012).

The council will consider proposals for off line service facilities at appropriate locations where on-line services are not planned and it is demonstrated that the proposal is:

- In accordance with national guidance on the provision of motorway service areas;
- Required to meet the needs of road users on the National Road Network;
- Would not unduly impact on the safety, capacity or efficiency of the road network; and
- Would not impact negatively on the vibrancy or vitality of nearby town or village centres.

Under the guidelines, facilities proposed for inclusion in all service areas should be of a type that avoids the attraction of short, local trips, a class of traffic that is inconsistent with the primary intended role for national roads and associated junctions in catering for strategic long-distance inter-urban and inter-regional traffic. Furthermore, to permit a service area to become a destination for local customers would be contrary to Government planning policy on retail and town centres as set out in Retail Planning Guidelines. Mr Minnock's report concluded that as the off-line service facility issue is addressed in the current CDP, it is not considered that a variation of the CDP is required to strengthen the policy.

Councillor R Power outlined the background to this motion and the requirement to strengthen our CDP to ensure the proposed Applegreen development outside Naas (near the big ball) has no barriers to development. Councillor Power indicated this issue had been raised during the course of the County Development Plan meetings. Councillor Lynch expressed his concern around discussing a singular site as whatever the members do will have countywide ramifications and as of now, the members do not know what those ramifications will be. Councillor Moore disagreed with the motion citing his view that this development will lead to the displacement of jobs from the town of Naas, Councillor Young and Councillor Cussen both disagreed with the motion on the basis of it being site specific also. Mr Minnock confirmed the County Development Plan is worded

adequately and as the applicant withdrew his appeal from An Bord Pleanala, the strength of the wording has not been tested. The Mayor noted the wording of Councillor Bretts motion was what has been agreed at the County Development Plan meeting. Mr Minnock stated that if the members wish, the matter can be addressed during the review of the Naas Local Area Plan. The Mayor asked the members if they would be agreeable to referring the motion to the Planning and Economic Development Strategic Policy Committee for consideration.

Resolved on the proposal of Councillor R Power seconded by Councillor Hillis that the motion be referred to the Planning and Economic Development Strategic Policy Committee for consideration.

15/0617

Recycling Campaign

The following motion in the name of Councillor Lynch was considered

That in conjunction with waste collectors in the county, this council devises and runs a recycling campaign advising households and small businesses as to the correct procedure for recycling; what items are recyclable, what is waste etc; and that an information pack or small sign is created that can be kept in the home or hung near the bin which can easily and accurately give people information on which products goes into what bin. Following this, as in other authorities, a breakdown of waste or recycling collected should be provided to the householder by the waste provider.

The motion was proposed by Councillor Lynch and seconded by Councillor Cronin.

A report from Mr J Boland, Director of Service advised that the council is open to promoting a renewed awareness campaign to further increase recycling by householders and small businesses and in this context, the Environment section will consult with Eastern Midlands Waste Region Office and the Irish Waste Management Association (IWMA) to support and develop current initiatives in the area. Councillor Lynch thanked Mr Boland for the report and stated the importance of making people aware how to recycle correctly. Councillor Stafford supported the motion and enquired with regard to the availability of brown bins and noted there should be consistency and incentivisation to roll out the brown bin service everywhere. Councillor Cronin asked whether information is circulated to the schools. Mr Boland stated the council is very pleased to progress this initiative and circulated a leaflet to the members titled "Waste Prevention & Recycling" - Tricks

and Tips and confirmed the information is circulated to all schools. Mr Boland confirmed the council will encourage operators to roll out the brown bin programme and also noted the item has been referred to the Local Enterprise Office who is running a Green conference in Quarter 3 of 2017. The Mayor congratulated Mr Boland and the team in Environment for the work being done in this area.

Resolved on the proposal of Councillor Lynch seconded by Councillor Cronin that the report be noted.

16/0617

St. Catherine's Park

The following motion in the name of Councillor Cussen was considered

That this council requests a report from Fingal County Council to Kildare council members (full council), in respect of the indicative road line in St. Catherine's Park in their County Development Plan (CDP). The report to contain details of actions required, with the relevant time-frame for same, to amend their CDP which has an indicative road line in the part of St. Catherine's Park, which is in Kildare.

The motion was proposed by Councillor Cussen and seconded by Councillor Redmond.

Councillor Cussen noted that Kildare County Council adopted its County Development Plan in February 2017 and Fingal County Council adopted theirs in March and outlined her concerns around an indicative road line in the Fingal Plan through St. Catherine's Park and the fact that Kildare's CDP contains no such road line. She called for support from the members on raising this as an issue with Fingal County Council. Councillor Young supported the motion and stated the Celbridge-Leixlip Municipal District will be making a submission in this regard.

Councillor Young proposed an amendment to the motion as follows:

That this council requests a report be presented by Fingal County Council to Kildare council members (full council), in respect of the indicative road line in St. Catherine's Park in their County Development Plan (CDP). The report to contain details of actions required, with the relevant time-frame for same, to amend their CDP which has an indicative road line in the part of St. Catherine's Park, which is in Kildare.

The amended motion was proposed by Councillor Young and seconded by Councillor Redmond. The Mayor sought a show of hands.

Resolved on the proposal of Councillor Young seconded by Councillor Redmond with the majority of the members in agreement that correspondence issues to Fingal County Council requesting a report be presented by Fingal County Council to Kildare council members (full council) in respect of the indicative road line in St Catherines Park in their County Development Plan.

17/0617

Section 5 Exempt Development Applications

The following motion in the name of Councillor Stafford was considered

That this council furnish a quarterly report to members in respect to applications for declarations of exempt development pursuant to Section 5 of the Planning and Development Act, 2000 which will detail the following:

- (i) the number of applications
- (ii) the number granted
- (iii) the number refused
- (iv) an indication of the type of application
- (v) the number of applications still unresolved from the previous quarter

The motion was proposed by Councillor Stafford and seconded by Councillor Durkan.

A report from Mr P Minnock, Director of Service advised that the Planning Department will provide a quarterly report on exempt development applications as requested by Councillor Stafford and if the members are in agreement, will include it in the management report to council commencing next month. Councillor McLoughlin Healy asked that the reasons for the applications being granted/refused be included in the report also. Mr Minnock clarified that if an application for exemption is within the planning code, it will be granted but if it is not, it will be refused.

Resolved on the proposal of Councillor Stafford seconded by Councillor Durkan that the report be noted.

18/0617

Town or County Twinning Associations

The following motion in the name of Councillor McLoughlin Healy was considered
Unless and until the council addresses its' failure to ask all Town or County Twinning Associations to provide evidence of good governance, accountability, transparency and fairness in the expenditure of council funds which, being tax-payers money of up to €100,000 +/-yearly, the Twinning Associations are likely to, and should be happy to provide, that the funds are reallocated to food banks and food share programmes around the county, including (but not limited to) Newbridge Food Share Programme, The Dining Room Project and St. Vincent De Paul, currently providing food parcels for more than one hundred and forty families in Newbridge alone a week, and up to one thousand families around the county. And that as part of the review of council protocol in relation to town twinning that the council consider specific criteria that must first be met by all proposed new Twinning Associations before requests for increased expenditure of public monies on the Twinning of towns or county are considered.

The motion was proposed by Councillor McLoughlin Healy and seconded by Councillor Pender.

A report from Ms S Kavanagh, Director of Service advised that the members agreed to allocate funding to Twinning in Budget 2017 and that Twinning Committees are required to provide a costed work programme for the year. On receipt of this paperwork, their grant is processed and receipts are then required to be submitted by a specified date later in the year. Having had a number of discussions at Municipal District level regarding Twinning it has been agreed that a Twinning Protocol and Procedure will be drafted and presented to the Protocol Committee for consideration at their October meeting.

Councillor McLoughlin Healy spoke of the difficulty she has had in sourcing information in relation to the governance and protocols applying to Twinning in the council and after 10 weeks of querying basic governance principles, she has serious concerns and strongly argued that the existing structure be formalised. Councillor McLoughlin Healy noted that the information contained on the website dates back to 2006 and unless and until the council is willing to publish the information it has on Twinning, the monies be reallocated to food-share organisations. Councillor Kennedy stated that Kildare has a proud culture of excellence in Twinning that includes student exchanges, language programmes, economic development & trade opportunities and the sharing of knowledge. Councillor Kennedy went on to state the motion was sensationalist and that

councillors who represent the council get a very limited allowance. He also stated that between €2,000 and €4,000 a year is given to voluntary committees who report financially as required. A lengthy debate followed amongst the members. Ms S Kavanagh, Director of Service stated it was regrettable that a lot of negative comments had been made and it was not true to say that the council was unwilling to publish reports as that is not the case. She also noted that comments made around failures and reallocation of budget is very premature.

Resolved on the proposal of Councillor McLoughlin Healy seconded by Councillor Pender that that a Twinning Protocol and Procedure be drafted and presented to the Protocol Committee for consideration at their October meeting.

19/0617

Wind Turbines

The following joint motion in the name of Councillor Keatley, Councillor Breen, Councillor McEvoy, and Councillor Moore was considered

Given that updated setback distances from wind turbines have been published, that the council complete the spatial analysis initiated with Maynooth University to prepare a variation of the energy policies in the County Kildare Development Plan 2017-2023.

The motion was proposed by Councillor Moore and seconded by Councillor Weld.

A report from Mr P Minnock, Director of Service advised that Objective WEO 1 of the County Development Plan 2017 – 2023 states as follows:

“WEO 1 - Prepare a Wind Energy Development Strategy and to publish it as a proposed variation of this plan following the completion of the review of the Department’s Wind Energy Development Guidelines.” Mr Minnock confirmed it remains an objective of the council to prepare a Wind Energy Development Strategy. As soon as the Department’s updated guidelines are received, the work undertaken to date on the spatial analysis will be revisited. The Minister has indicated that, in line with requirements under the EU Strategic Environmental Assessment Directive (the SEA Directive), an SEA will be undertaken on the proposed approach to the revised Guidelines. The review process will involve public consultation, and in a recent statement, the Minister said he envisaged new statutory guidelines to be finalised and issued to planning authorities in Quarter 1 2018.

As Chair of the Wind Energy Committee, the Mayor wished to extend his thanks to the Planning Department for taking the committee's concerns on board. Councillor Stafford acknowledged the work of the committee and asked how the noise decibels of the turbines are going to be measured and whether there is any work we can be doing now to address this. Mr Minnock stated that Maynooth University are ready to do the analysis work when the distances and levels are confirmed.

Resolved on the proposal of Councillor Moore and seconded by Councillor Weld that the report be noted.

20/0617

Provision of Emergency Accommodation

The following motion in the name of Councillor Young was considered

That the council resolves to amend our policy on the provision of emergency accommodation, especially where children are involved, such that rent arrears to third parties (private landlords), do not constitute grounds for Kildare County Council refusing to provide emergency accommodation for persons who are homeless.

The motion was proposed by Councillor Young and seconded by Councillor Pender

A report from Mr T McDonnell, Director of Service advised that when a person presents as homeless, Kildare County Council's Homelessness Services Team conducts an assessment to determine eligibility for homeless service provision under Section 2 of the Housing Act 1988. The assessment tool used to determine eligibility seeks to establish four principal criteria:

- A person's current living arrangements and whether this arrangement is to be categorised as homeless.
- The reasons for a person's presentation as homeless
- A risk assessment is carried out to establish if there are any significant risks associated with any accommodation options available to those presenting as homeless that are put forward by the assessing Housing Officer.
- The assessment finally seeks to establish a jurisdiction for a person's homelessness based on the responsibilities of each Local Authority according to Housing Act 1988 (Section 10).

If a person is deemed to be homeless according to this criteria, then placement in emergency accommodation is sought for the household. Every presentation is recorded on PASS and a

vehicle for reporting established, which may include opening an application for social housing support, referral to external services or liaison with other state agencies. If a person is not deemed to be homeless, according to the criteria set out above, then they are recorded on PASS and advised as regards their further options. This may include redirection to another Local Authority, referral to external services or liaison with other state agencies. Each presentation is assessed independently following the principles set out above. While accumulation of rent arrears may be a factor in some cases which would result in a determination that a person made themselves homeless as a result of their actions, for example if the person was in receipt of rent supplement but had failed to pay rent thereby accumulating arrears, it may not, in all cases, result in a refusal of emergency accommodation. Threshold also provide an advisory service and will work with other key services to make sure that assistance is available to people at risk of losing their home in the private rented sector. This Freephone service 1800 454 454 is provided on behalf of Kildare County Council and is available Monday to Friday from 9am to 9pm and the website address is www.threshold.ie.

Councillor Young asked that in relation to rent arrears cases, Kildare County Council replicates what Dublin City Council do in that they provide emergency accommodation to those who become homeless through rent arrears but they do not subsequently go to the top of the list. Mr McDonnell confirmed an independent assessment is carried out by professionally trained staff from Peter McVerry Trust, Simon and Threshold and the staff in the housing department have to make very tough decisions every day and outlined to the members that if this motion is passed, there will be no incentive for tenants to pay rent. The Mayor noted there is no policy on this issue thus the motion is looking to change something that does not exist. The Chief Executive stated the council has a very professional service in place with the staff dealing with hugely difficult and emotive cases on a daily basis and that he fully stands over the process. He also noted the assessment of homeless applications is an executive function and he is satisfied that an excellent job is being carried out in hugely difficult circumstances.

Resolved that the report be noted.

**Tairsceanna Láithreach (Nach feidhmeanna na Comhairle Contae iad)
Current Motions (Non-Kildare County Council Functions)**

21/0617

Cashless Banks

It was agreed to take item numbers 19 and 20 together

The following motion in the name of Councillor O' Neill was considered

In light of further withdrawal of banking services to cashless banks, I ask that this council writes to the Department of Finance urging them to expand the powers and remit of Credit Unions and Post Offices so that these institutions can provide the local services that the banks are taking away from our communities.

The motion was proposed by Councillor O' Neill and seconded by Councillor Redmond

The following motion in the name of Councillor Redmond was considered

That the members request that a letter be written to the Minister for Finance requesting that he takes action to intervene where banks in local towns are becoming cashless. This is becoming policy of the banks and will make the lives of local communities very difficult.

The motion was proposed by Councillor Redmond and seconded by Councillor Cussen.

Councillor O'Neill outlined how Bank of Ireland is moving towards a cashless model with 200 of their banks moving to this model by the end of the year. She outlined the negative impacts of this for older people, the resultant job losses in the banks and the impact it will have on service to retailers. She further stated that currently credit unions are very restricted in what they can offer but noted a review of credit unions is due to take place this year.

Councillor Redmond stated the bank in Monasterevan is completely cashless now and that it is not only Bank of Ireland that is moving to this model as AIB and Ulster Bank are too.

Resolved on the proposal of Councillor O'Neill seconded by Councillor Redmond that a letter issue to the Department of Finance requesting that a) ask the Department of Finance to expand the powers and remit of Credit Unions and Post Offices so that these institutions can provide the local services that the banks are taking away from our communities and b) action be taken to intervene where banks in local towns are becoming cashless.

The meeting concluded.

