### ****KILDARE COUNTY COUNCIL****

**Minutes of meeting of Full Council** **held at 3:00 p.m.**

**Monday 18 October in**

**Newbridge Town Hall**

Members Present: Councillor N Ó Cearúil (Cathaoirleach), Councillors VL Behan, A Breen, A Breslin, F Brett, B Caldwell, B Clear, M Coleman, A Connolly, N Connolly, Í Cussen, S Doyle, T Durkan, A Farrelly, A Feeney, C Galvin, P Hamilton, N Heavey, C Kelly, C Kenny, N Killeen, M Leigh, V Liston, P McEvoy, S Moore, J Neville, P O’Dwyer, T O’Dwyer, C Pender, R Power, E Sammon, M Stafford, P Ward, B Weld and B Wyse.

**Apologies:** Councillors B Dooley, K Duffy, D Fitzpatrick, I Keatley, F McLoughlin Healy.

Also Present: Ms S Kavanagh, Interim Chief Executive, Ms A Aspell, Mr J Boland, Mr E Ryan, Ms E Wright (Directors of Service), Ms M Higgins (A/Director of Service), Ms F Millane (A/Head of Finance), Ms C O’Grady (Meetings Administrator), Ms K Keane (Meetings Secretary) and other officials.

The Cathaoirleach welcomed everyone to the October meeting of full council reminding them of the protocols on speaking times and sought their co-operation in speaking with brevity to ensure an efficient use of the time available.

**01/1021**

Bereavements

The Cathaoirleach extended his sympathy to the family of the late:

Elizabeth (Beth) Meaney mother-in-law of Ceann Comhairle Sean O’Feargahil.

Rosemary O’Connor, mother of Jeanne Noelle O’Connor, Health & Safety

A minute’s silence was observed.

**02/1021**

**Declaration of Interests**

The Cathaoirleach sought declarations of interests from the members as required under Section 177 of the Local Government Act, as amended.

There were no declarations of pecuniary or beneficial interests declared as required under Section 177 of the Local Government Act 2001 (as amended).

**03/1021**

**Minutes and Progress Report**

The council considered the minutes of the monthly meeting held on the 27 September 2021 together with the progress report. The Meetings Administrator referred to the notice that had issued in relation to an amendment to these minutes under 14/0921 Conferences and Training. The provider of the course Councillor Stafford is attending is Kings Inns and not the Law Society of Ireland.

**Resolved** on the proposal of Councillor Sammon, seconded by Councillor Moore and agreed by the majority members present that the minutes of the monthly meeting on 27 September 2021, to include the amendment as outlined at 14/0921 be adopted.

The progress report was noted.

**04/1021**

**Chief Executive’s Monthly Management Report**

The members noted the Chief Executives monthly management report.

**05/1021**

**Section 183 Agreements**

The members considered the disposal of lands pursuant to Section 183 of the Local Government Act 2001 as amended at Blessington Road, Craddockstown, Naas (Statutory notice 06 October) and at Newhall, Jigginstown, Naas to the ESB (Statutory notice 06 October).

Councillor Hamilton noted he had spoken with the Director of Service in relation to the Craddockstown, Naas disposal given that the management of land was a significant issue for the council and the concern around precedent.

**Resolved** on the proposal of Councillor Seamie Moore, seconded by Councillor Fintan Brett and agreed by the members present that the disposal of 0.169 hectares of land at Blessington Road, Craddockstown, Naas be approved.

**Resolved** on the proposal of Councillor Carmel Kelly, seconded by Councillor Rob Power and agreed by the members present that the disposal of 0.00119 hectares of land at Newhall, Jigginstown, Naas, to the Electricity Supply Board be approved.

**06/1021**

**Section 141 Reports from Other Bodies**

The members considered reports from members appointed to Other Bodies, pursuant to Section 141 of the Local Government Act 2001 as amended. The following reports were received at the October meeting

* Athy Heritage Company Limited
* County Kildare Joint Policing Committee
* LAMA
* Leixlip Amenities Centre
* Monread Community Centre

The Cathaoirleach asked that the members direct any questions they had on these reports to the members appointed to the relevant bodies.

The reports were noted.

**07/1021**

**Gnó an Cathaoirleach/Cathaoirleachs Business**

The Cathaoirleach confirmed he had taken part in the online panel event on Women and Diversity in Local Government on the 13 October and thanked all those that had organised and participated in this event.

**08/1021**

**Comhfhreagras/Correspondence**

The Meetings Administrator confirmed three items of correspondence had been circulated with the Progress Report to the members, including one acknowledgement from the Minister for Health’s Office to a motion from councillors, one motion referral from another local authority and circular LG03/2021 Elected Members expenses and Public Registers. The Meetings Administrator advised of receipt of correspondence by the DOS Water and Environment from the Local Authorities Water Programme asking him to bring to the attention of the members the publication by the Minister for Housing, Local Government and Heritage of the Draft River Basin Management Plan 2022-2027. The consultation period runs to the 31st March ,2022 and it is available on the DHLGH website. The plan will be listed on the November agenda for council with a powerpoint presentation from Water and Environmental services directorate.

The correspondence was noted.

**09/1021**

**Conferences and Training**

The members considered the conference and training report that was circulated in advance of the meeting.

**Resolved** on the proposal of Councillor Carmel Kelly seconded by Councillor Evie Sammon and agreed by the members present that retrospective approval be gvien to Councillor Fintan Brett to attend the Government Decision on the Reform on Remuneration Payable to Local Authority Elected Members in the Sligo Park Hotel, Pearse Road, Sligo on Saturday the 02 October at a cost of €65, and approval be given for Councillor Noel Heavy to attend the LAMA Autumn Training Seminar on the 3rd and 4th of November in the Sligo Park Hotel, Pearse Road, Sligo, costs TBC,.

**10/1021**

**Chambers Ireland Sustainable Development Goals Toolkit for Business**

The following recommendation from the September meeting of Clane-Maynooth Municipal District Committee was considered by the members.

That the council examine the Chambers Ireland Sustainable Development Goals Toolkit for Business, as collaborators with the County Kildare Chamber, for opportunities to engage with businesses on Climate Action, in particular, under the headings of Active Travel and Public Realm projects, including site visits to engage with businesses that have supported and embraced sustainable transport initiatives. ([Weblink](https://www.chambers.ie/wp-content/uploads/2021/07/Chambers-Ireland-SDG-Toolkit-for-Business-2021.pdf)) (report attached).

The committee referred motion was proposed by Councillor Padraig McEvoy and seconded by Councillor Rob Power.

A report from Ms E Wright, Director of Service Roads, Transportation and Public Safety stated that the Sustainable Transport Section will examine the document and investigate opportunities, with other relevant departments, in the context of the statutory public consultation for our Programme of Works.  
Councillor McEvoy stated that the motion recognised that that there were other bodies that needed to get involved and there was an opportunity to engage with the National Chambers Group on this matter. Ms Wright stated the council was very happy to engage with any other entities and to learn from other local authorities experience in this area. It was agreed that the members would liaise further with Dun Laoghaire-Rathdown County Council via the Cathaoirleachs office.

**Resolved** on the proposal of Councillor McEvoy, seconded by Councillor Power and agreed by the members present that the members would liaise further with Dun Laoghaire-Rathdown County Council via the Cathaoirleachs office.

The Cathaoirleach sought the members agreement to take items 11 and 13 on the agenda together. The members agreed.

**11/1021**

**LPT allocation to the Housing Adaptation Scheme**

The following recommendation from the October meeting of Clane-Maynooth Municipal District Committee was considered by the members.

That each Municipal District Committee be asked to contribute €20,000 from their LPT allocation to the Housing Adaptation Scheme and that the Council Executive agree to match the funding of €100,000 (report attached).

The motion was proposed by Councillor T Durkan and seconded by Councillor S Moore.

The following motion in the names of Councillors Nuala Killeen, Bill Clear and Aidan Farrellywas considered by the members.

That following on from motion 23 at the September Full Council meeting that members support the commitment to allocate a sum of €20,000 of LPT funds in each MD as a pilot for 2022; where the combined financial commitment of 100k from 5 MD's would match fund a 400k contribution by the Department of Housing Planning and Local government. The funds to be distributed in a weighted manner in line with the formal process for the utilisation of grants for all categories and allow a clearance of the waiting lists. That a strategy be put in place to maximise finding opportunities for this cohort in our communities that require adaptation grants.

The motion was proposed by Councillor Killeen, and seconded by Councillor Liston

A report from Ms A Aspell, Director of Service Housing and Corporate Services Department stated that Kildare County Council administers two schemes to facilitate housing adaptations for older people and people with a disability. Both schemes are funded by the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage (DHLGH) and the council. The following details funding in 2021:

* Housing Adaptation Grants (HAG) for privately owned homes: €3,162, 288 (includes 20% from KCC).
* Disabled Persons Grants (DPG) for council owned homes: €517,504 (includes 10% funding from KCC).

Applications for each grant type are assessed by the Housing Department. Housing Adaptation Grant applications require an assessment by an occupational therapist. Applicants are prioritised based on medical need (priorities defined below). Due to the availability of resources the council is currently only in a position to approve Disabled Persons Grants on council owned properties where applicants are categorised as Priority 1 and 2.

Details of DHLGH funding allocations for 2022 have not yet been advised to the council, an announcement is expected in Q1 2022. Based on the current allocation for 2021, the council will contribute €684,208 to the grants scheme in 2022.

While details of 2022 funding provision have not yet been confirmed, the DHLGH has indicated that a budget provision similar to 2021 can be expected for 2022. However, should the council be in a position to provide additional match funding the DHLGH may consider requests for additional funding during the course of 2022, subject to the availability of such funding at the time of the request.

An allocation of additional revenue budget funding to support the housing adaptation grant programme will require a reduction of funding in another revenue funding stream.  At this stage the Draft Budget is being prepared based on the overall level of resources available to the Council, combined with the requirement to meet statutory, contractual, legal and other obligations.  Reassigning funding from another service to HAGs will directly impact that service.

This is a matter for the members and can be considered in the context of the budget for 2022.  The allocation of Local Property Tax [LPT] funding is a matter for the elected members, having regard to the guidelines for the distribution of retained LPT funds as adopted by the members

Subject to a resolution being passed to support the motion as proposed, it would be helpful if the members could indicate how, or if, the funding is to be split between HAGs and DPGs. This will inform any request for additional funding from the DHLGH.

I support the efforts of the elected members to maximise funding for HAGs and DPGs, and every effort will be made by the Housing Department to process grant applications in 2022 in order to take advantage of any additional funding that the DHLGH can make available, having regard to the council’s ability to provide the local contribution necessary. As there is no capacity within the revenue budget for 2022 to fund additional staff resources, it will likely be necessary to move resources from other areas of the housing department to the grants section, which may, in turn, have an impact on other service areas.

Councillor Durkan noted the report and stated the committee referral was in order to allow each Municipal District Committee to consider the future funding of this item going forward. A discussion took place among the members and the following points were made:

* Procedures on how the council worked with the Department on this matter, and other issues were needed
* This was a staff resource issue also
* There was a need to be strategically planning for a higher allocation in 2022
* A better output was needed as Kildare County Council compared unfavourably in comparison to other authorities
* The budget should be discussed in the overall, not the singular, as it was pre-emptive of the overall budget discussions.
* Did the council apply for second round funding to the Department
* Shortfalls in grant funding was occurring due to the increase in build costs, which was outside of the council’s control. Concern that LPT was being used to address these shortfalls

Ms Aspell noted the members concerns and confirmed she was totally supportive of what they were trying to achieve. She reiterated that funding was allocated based on what the council anticipated they would get from the Department this year and having regard to what was received in the previous year. She confirmed that there was a staff resourcing issue but that there was no scope to assign additional staff from within the Department as this would have a knock-on effect in other areas. Ms Aspell also noted there was no capacity in the draft revenue budget for 2022 to seek additional staff resources but she undertook to discuss the matter further with the Senior Executive Officer in the Housing Department and report back to the members.

**Resolved** with the agreement of the members, that the report be noted, and the members be kept updated.

**12/1021**

**First Monday in February as a National Public Holiday**

The following motion in the names of Councillors Suzanne Doyle, Naoise Ó Cearúil, Veralouise Behan, Brian Dooley, Bernard Caldwell, Michael Coleman, Daragh Fitzpatrick, Paul Ward, Anne Connolly, Noel Heavey, Robert Power & Carmel Kelly was considered by the members.

That given the function that Kildare County Council played in coordinating Covid Emergency response for County Kildare that we call on Government to include the first Monday in February as a National Public Holiday, to both acknowledge the extraordinary losses and sacrifices made during the period of Covid and fittingly to honour Ireland’s female patron Saint, Brigid, whose message has a remarkable resonance for modern life, the importance of the delicate balance of nature and that justice is the cornerstone of peace.

The motion was proposed by Councillor Doyle and seconded by Councillor McEvoy.

A report from Ms C O’Grady, Meetings Administrator stated thatsubject to the approval of the members, correspondence could issue to the Government as requested.

Councillor Doyle stated she considered such a proposal would be a fitting gesture and would in some small way mark the immense loss and sacrifice that people had endured throughout the pandemic. She also noted St Brigids feast day, 1 February, was originally a pagan festival marking the beginning of spring thus making this date a public holiday would encompass all faiths. She also noted that it embodied the start of a new season and new beginnings, which would highlight the importance of nature and the need to respect it for future generations. Councillor Doyle stated Brigid was also the first woman to be accepted as a woman of Christianity, thus she embodied the message of strength and adaptability.

A discussion followed amongst the members and the following points were made:

* Whilst the motion had merit and was a matter of relevance to the people of Kildare, it did not relate to a council function.
* The Decade of Commemoration Committee had carried out research on St Brigid and her contribution to the county and connection to the Diaspora worldwide, and they would be reporting back to council in due course.
* A request that Kildare Failte consider the effects, positive and potentially negative, of such a request.
* The proposal supported the Gender and Diversity theme, and she could become known as the ‘Matron’ Saint of Ireland

**Resolved** on the proposal of Councillor Doyle, seconded by Councillor McEvoy and agreed by the members present that the motion be referred to the Department of the Taoiseach as requested.

**13/1021**

**Housing Allocation Policy**

The following motion in the names of Councillors Mark Leigh, Aoife Breslin and Ciara Galvinwas considered by the members.

That the council make the following change when reviewing their Housing Allocations Policy - that where a person/couple who have two children, a boy and a girl, either child being over the age of 6, they will be deemed to have a 3-bedroom need.

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

A report from Ms A Aspell, Director of Housing and Corporate Services stated that currently, the council assesses the bedroom requirement of a family based on the age of the children who form part of the application. Based on the provision of The Housing Act 1966 it is deemed that children of opposite sex under the age of 10 may share a bedroom; however, in order to ensure the creation of sustainable tenancies the council considers the age of children when making an allocation of a social property.  Subject to the members agreement the council is agreeable to exploring this matter further.

Councillor Leigh stated this issue came up regularly with constituents and asked if the possibility of building an extension to dwellings in such instances, could be considered. Following discussion, the members raised the following points:

* The Housing Act 1966 was outdated and needed to be reviewed
* There was an added cost to the council of reletting when children come of age
* The change requested would reduce the number of transfer requests, and the significant resources needed to manage same.

Ms Aspell acknowledged the valid points made by the members stating it was strange the legislation had not been reviewed before now. She stated the council was restricted in what it could do and assured the members that the allocations team took a very pragmatic approach when assessing applications of this nature. She noted that two thirds of the housing waiting list was for 1 and 2-bedroom units adding there was a significant cost to the council when tenants were transferred.

**Resolved** on the proposal of Councillor Leigh, seconded by Councillor Weld and agreed by the members present, the report was noted.

**15/1021**

**Affidavits Sworn Before Peace Commissioners**

The following motion in the names of Councillors Angela Feeney and Ann Breen was considered by the members.

That Kildare County Council calls on the Department of Housing to permit Affidavits sworn before Peace Commissioners to be acceptable. The present situation is that Affidavits from Commissioners of Oaths or Solicitors are only accepted, for the Housing Waiting List. This in many cases is causing additional hardship on applicants trying to access the housing list and accommodation.

Councillor Mark Stafford declared a conflict of interest as he is a practising solicitor and in accordance with Section 177 of the Local Government Act 2001 as amended, asked this his declaration be recorded on the Ethics Register and he left the room while the motion was being debated.

The motion was proposed by Councillor A Feeney and seconded by Councillor Noel Connolly.

A report from Ms A Aspell, Director of Service, Housing and Corporate Services stated that the application form for Social Housing support requires separated/divorced couples to provide a copy of their separation/divorce agreement. If there is no agreement in place, the applicant is required to provide a letter from their solicitor, or a legal affidavit signed by a practising solicitor. The council has no discretion to amend this requirement as the form is a national form provided by the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage (DHLGH). It is a matter for the members to decide if they wish to correspond with the DHLGH on this matter.

Councillor Feeney stated the objective of the joint motion was to make it a bit easier for applicants and reduce the cost. It would also give applicants extra choice on whom they could use for this purpose.  
**Resolved** on the proposal of Councillor Feeney, seconded by Councillor Noel Connolly and agreed by the members present, the report was noted and correspondence would issue to the Department of Housing as requested.

**16/1021**

**Wastewater Trade Effluent Licences**

The following motion in the names of Councillors Peggy O'Dwyer and Colm Kennywas considered by the members.

That Kildare County Council confirms what measures are in place to ensure that Waste Water Trade Effluent Licences are compliant with planning and registration.

The motion was proposed by Councillor P. O’Dwyer and seconded by Councillor N. Heavey.

A report from Mr J Boland,Director of Service Water Services, Environment and Climate Action stated that the introduction of the Water Services Act 2013, compliance regarding trade effluent licenses (Section 16 of the Water Pollution Act) is dealt with by Irish Water or by the EPA, depending on the nature of business and volume of discharge. Further information can be found at <https://www.water.ie/business/trade-effluent/about/>

Councillor Peggy O’Dwyer noted the contents of the report stating the enquiry related moreso to the business sector and the increase in pop-up carwashes, and the potential for pollution arising from same. She understood that the licensing authority for such activity had changed to Irish Water but sought further clarification on the processes involved.

Mr Boland stated that pop-up car washes also required planning permission and confirmed that the discharge licenses to sewers were a matter for Irish Water.

**Resolved** on the proposal of Councillor O’Dwyer, seconded by Councillor Heavey and agreed by the members present, the report was noted.

**17/1021**

**Climate Action Initiatives under Budget 2022**

The following motion in the names of Councillors Peter Hamilton and Vanessa Listonwas considered by the members.

That the council prepare a summary of climate action initiatives to be addressed under Budget 2022 including direct funding and council resources applied from the Kildare County Council budget, and funds supported by Government and EU initiatives.

The motion was proposed by Councillor Hamilton and seconded by Councillor Noel Connolly.

A report from Ms C O’Grady, Meetings Administrator stated that a summary of climate action initiatives will be collated post adoption of the budget for 2022 and will be circulated to the elected members before year end.

Councillor Hamilton acknowledged the report and stated that it was difficult to finalise the Budget without some clarifications on the scale of initiatives. He noted there had been huge improvements over the last year via sustainable transport projects and retrofitting programmes stating there would probably be some verbal indications sought at the budget meetings.

Ms Millane advised that the Directors of Services had been requested to provide information of this nature for the Budget book, which would be contained in the Budget book when circulated. **Resolved** on the proposal of Councillor Hamilton, seconded by Councillor Noel Connolly and agreed by the members present, the report was noted.

**18/1021**

**EPA Code of Practice for Domestic Waste Water Treatment Systems**

The following motion in the names of Councillors Tim Durkan and Brendan Wyse was considered by the members.

That an invitation is sent to the EPA requesting them to give an online briefing for Councillors and council staff on the new EPA code of practice for domestic waste water treatment systems which came into effect in June this year.

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

A report from Mr J Boland, Director of Water Services, Environment and Climate Action stated that subject to the approval of the members, an invitation can issue to the EPA as requested noting that a report on this matter had issued for the previous council meeting.  
**Resolved** on the proposal of Councillor Durkan seconded by Councillor Sammon and agreed by the members present that an invitation issue to the EPA as requested.

**19/1021**

**Shop Local Campaign**

The following motion in the names of Councillors Tracey O’Dwyer and Evie Sammon was considered by the members.

That the Local Enterprise Office (LEO) confirm if they have plans to launch a shop local campaign for County Kildare in the lead up to Christmas and confirm a launch date.

The motion was proposed by Councillor Tracey O’Dwyer and seconded by Councillor Power.

A report from Ms J McNabb, Head of Local Enterprise stated that the Local Enterprise Office will be launching a Christmas Retail Support Workshop 2021 in early November for all retailers to equip them with the necessary information to enhance their Christmas Visual Merchandising, to drive their online shop sales and to stimulate the retail market over the Christmas season.

Workshop attendees can also apply for grant aid from the Local Enterprise Office to assist with the implementation of the initiative.  The Local Enterprise Office continue to strongly promote the Look for Local Campaign and the Shop County Kildare online retail platform in all its communications with the business community.

Councillor T O’Dwyer welcomed the report and asked what the shop local campaign would look like this year and if there would be workshops, and if so to try and get them operational once Halloween was over.

Ms Higgins stated it was the council’s intention to highlight the importance of supporting the Christmas retail market and workshops were planned for early November. She stated that the Look Local – Shop Kildare campaigns would be reinforced for Christmas and that the online platforms would be opened regularly.

**Resolved** on the proposal of Councillor Tracey O’Dwyer, seconded by Councillor Power and agreed by the members present, the report was noted.

**20/1021**

**Environmental Services in Towns**

The following motion in the name of Councillor Seamie Moore was considered by the members.

That the council provide a comprehensive breakdown detailing on a Municipal District or a town wide basis, what section of the council is responsible for Environmental Services and where they will be provided, issue a programmed monthly and seasonal list of grass cutting, weeding treatments and cleaning services and indicate what measures will be introduced to ensure that the focus on new Pollinator and Bio-Diversity emphasis will not be used to neglect the provision of a high class environmental presentation of footpaths, pole bases and wall buttments in our town centres and sensitive areas like graveyards, cemeteries and playgrounds.

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

A report from Ms Higgins, A/Director of Service, Economic Development, Community and Culture stated that the Parks Section have reduced the use of glyphosate for the maintenance of areas such as grass margins, parks, open spaces and playgrounds. This has been done following on from previous representations from Councillors and the public to implement such an approach. This has been replaced with strimming which takes longer and is more expensive and does not kill plants which spraying did. Therefore, regrowth is quicker. Research is ongoing to seek further potential alternatives. An approach to reduce pesticide use, benefit pollinators, but at the same time achieve a ‘high class presentation’ is a contradiction and cannot be achieved. Societal re-education and acceptance of a more natural look to balance biodiversity, pollinator need, and enjoyment of public realm is growing. A programme of the locations and scheduling of strimming can be provided to the members for the areas being maintained by the Parks Section.

A report from Ms Wright, Director of Service, Roads, Transportation and Public Safety stated that Municipal District Offices no longer use glysophates for treating weeds.  A pesticide is used to treat Ragwort where necessary.

A report from Mr J Boland, Director of Service, Water Services, Environment and Climate Action stated that cemeteries within the county are generally well maintained through a combination of 5 full-time caretakers as well as significant community involvement (assisted by a grants scheme). Feedback from members of the public is generally very positive.

Councillor Moore acknowledged the reports but stated that Naas Town had been left in a disgraceful state during the summer months and that old cemeteries that had previously been maintained, were not maintained in 2021. He sought the details of cleaning schedules for streets and cemeteries across the county. A discussion ensued amongst the members with the following points made:

* Leadership from the council in the area of climate action measures and mitigation was hugely symbolic
* Moving away from any of the initiatives the council have advanced in this area would be very concerning
* Changes take time and it would be good to see members of the public coming out to assist the council in this body of work
* It was important to reemphasise the importance of the biodiversity crisis the world was in
* Peoples’ perception can be different in how they view things and the council had to be responsible in leading out in this area and communicate effectively on the new ways of doing things
* The council should consider a leaflet drop and continuing education across all its social platforms

Ms Higgins confirmed that the Heritage Officer and the Parks Department continued their work on raising awareness of biodiversity issues and providing education around the effects of pesticides etc. She noted they had been involved with the creation of ten biodiversity plans and had held workshops with all the community groups involved. She confirmed the council would continue to highlight and deliver information around the work it was doing and the changes that were needed to reach the targets the council had set around climate action and climate mitigation.

**Resolved** on the proposal of Councillor Moore, seconded by Councillor Sammon and agreed by the members present, the report was noted.

**21/1021**

**Children First Awareness Training**

The following motion in the name of Councillor Íde Cussen was considered by the members.

That Children First Awareness training be offered to the Elected Members.

The motion was proposed by Councillor Cussen and seconded by Councillor Noel Connolly.

A report from Ms Aspell, Director of Service Housing and Corporate Services stated that TUSLA (The Child and Family Agency) worked with the Department of Children and Youth Affairs (now the Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth) and HSE to develop a universal e-learning programme called ‘Introduction to Children First’. This programme has been  written to support people of all backgrounds and experience in recognising concerns about children and reporting such concerns if they arise. The programme is based on [*Children First: National Guidance for the Protection and Welfare of Children*](https://www.tusla.ie/uploads/content/Children_First_National_Guidance_2017.pdf) and the Children First Act 2015.

The programme takes approximately 1.5 hours to complete but it can be done in a number of sittings. The programme will allow you to log back in and resume where you left off. It covers topics including:

* + - Recognising and reporting child abuse;
    - The role of mandated persons;
    - The responsibilities of organisations working with children to safeguard children;
    - The role of designated liaison persons.

To find out more and to commence the programme please go to <https://www.tusla.ie/children-first/children-first-e-learning-programme/>. When you have completed the programme, you will receive a certificate of completion sent directly to your email address.

Councillor Cussen noted the report and noted that Councillor Chris Pender and former Councillor Joanne Pender had both raised this important issue previously. She asked if the matter could be looked at in a broader context by the Local Community and Culture SPC or by the Children and Young Peoples Services Committee (CYPSC), as councillors have become aware of distressing issues in the course of their representational duties. A discussion took place among the members with the following points raised:

* There was a gap in the training programme for councillors in this area
* The principle needs to be reinforced around – If in doubt, report it to Tusla/An Garda Siochana
* In-person training would be better as it gives the opportunity to learn through open discussion and information sharing
* Councillors represent young people also
* Training is required given the nature of a councillor’s visibility and their role
* Online courses can be excellent and should be sufficient for this purpose

The Chief Executive stated she understood the members concerns noting that the type of information they receive or become aware in the course of their public duty, could have an impact on their welfare and reminded them of the Employee Assistance Scheme that was also available to members and that details of this service were contained on the Members Information Portal. She confirmed that councillors were not designated as Special Officers under the Children’s First Act 2015, Tusla would direct them to the online training outlined in the report. She undertook to enquire if the CYPSC could facilitate a workshop and would revert to the members in this regard.

**Resolved** on the proposal of Councillor Cussen, seconded by Councillor Noel Connolly and agreed by the members present, the report was noted, and a request issue to the CYPSC if they were in a position to facilitate a workshop.

**22/1021**

**Kildare Streetscape Enhancement Measure 2021 Grant Funding Scheme**

The following motion in the name of Councillor Kevin Duffy was considered by the members.

That the council provide an update on the Kildare Streetscape Enhancement Measure 2021 grant funding scheme, including by eligible town the number of applications received, number of applications granted/decline, value of grants awarded and whether the full amount of the scheme has been allocated, and if not, what opportunities are being considered for the eligible towns to seek additional funding.

The Cathaoirleach confirmed that Councillor Duffy had given written consent to the Meetings Administrator for Councillor Tracey O’Dwyer to move his motion on his behalf, which was in accordance with Standing Orders.

The motion was proposed by Councillor Tracey O’Dwyer and seconded by Councillor Caldwell.

A report from Ms J McNabb, Head of Local Enterprise stated that The Streetscape Enhancement Scheme opened to applicants within the eligible towns on 26 August, 2021 and was promoted by the LEO from this date.   An initial closing date for receipt of fully completed applications of the 7 September 2021 was provided by the Department of Rural & Community Development.  However, this date for receipt of applications was subsequently extended to Friday 17 September 2021 which was still proving to be a challenging, and in some cases, unattainable deadline for prospective applicants.   Following consultations with the Department of Rural & Community Development, an extended deadline for completion of works to the 31 December 2021 was provided (original deadline was 31/10/2021) and this has been communicated to successful grantees to allow them to complete their projects.

The attached table sets out the number of applications received and approved by eligible town. We have sought clarity from the Department of Rural & Community Development to ascertain if funding that has not been allocated under the current scheme can be reallocated for a future scheme.

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Location | Number of Applications | Number of Applications Approved | Number of Applications Declined | Value of Grant Award |
| Monasterevin | 4 | 4 | 0 | 19,052.25 |
| Sallins | 3 | 3 | 0 | 15,200 |
| Rathangan | 2 | 2 | 0 | 896.06 |
| Ballitore | 1 | 1 | 0 | 4,000 |
| Kilcock | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Castledermot | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Total | 10 | 10 | 0 | €39,148.31 |

Councillor Tracey O’Dwyer confirmed Councillor Duffy had accepted the report.

**Resolved** on the proposal of Councillor Tracey O’Dwyer, seconded by Councillor Caldwell and agreed by the members present, the report was noted.

**23/1021**

**Representations by elected representatives and the public**

The following motion in the name of Councillor Noel Connolly was considered by the members.

That Kildare County Council implements ambitious targets for maximum response and resolution times to representations made by elected representatives and enquiries from the public, that it further commits to publishing its compliance with these targets in a general manner on a regular basis on its website, and should it have difficulty in reaching these targets that it write to the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage to seek additional resources to enable it to deliver an acceptable level of service.

The motion was proposed by Councillor Noel Connolly and seconded by Councillor I Cussen.

A report from Ms C O’Grady, Senior Executive Officer Corporate Services stated that the Dynamics CRM system contains the same Service Level Agreement as that used in the former Sugar CRM system, which is outlined below:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **SLA Name​** | **Duration​** |
| **Default Medium Priority​** | 10 working days​ |
| **Default High Priority​** | 3 working days​ |
| **Default Low Priority​** | 15 working days​ |

When cases are received, they are automatically assigned the medium priority by the Customer Service Team and, once assessed within the Section dealing with the case, where more local knowledge exists, the Section can determine whether to alter or leave unchanged the SLA status.

The Dynamics CRM system is designed to report on performance of each Section regarding these SLAs. SLAs are built into all cases and the system will warn staff (by email) when they are about to fail the SLA deadline and when a case is overdue. These alerts also issue to supervisors. In addition there is a staff Dashboard available to all users, to track performance.

In addition, each Department has in place one or more Dynamics CRM Liaison staff who must monitor and assign incoming cases each day and track expiring or overdue cases.

Regarding publication of performance data, it was intended that following the successful go live and bedding in of the new CRM that a Management level reporting dashboard would be developed. It was intended that this dashboard would be used to publish meaningful performance data presented in graphical formats, both for use of Senior and Management Team levels to manage their Departmental performance but also to publish data in public reports such as Annual Report and quarterly in CE Reports etc.

In July following the end of the Phase 1 stage (including review) of the CRM Project, the Project Team agreed specifications to develop the Management Reporting Dashboard using Microsoft Power BI. This work was scheduled to start in September 2021 on the basis that a data analytics specialist (graduate) was due to take up duty with the Council. Unfortunately due to the high demand in the market for data analysts we are having difficulties recruiting a graduate with these qualifications, although this has slowed our progress, the IT team have already started to create prototype reports around the area of SLA analysis which will be eventually available in the Members portal which is designed to report on representations made in the Portal or to the membersreps email address.

Councillor Noel Connolly noted the contents of the report but stated that in his view, the system was not fit for purpose and cited numerous different examples where the system had failed badly. He expressed his utter dissatisfaction and annoyance over the failures of the system and stated something radical needed to be done. He complimented the staff on their work but noted they were being let down badly by the system. A discussion ensued among the members with the following points made:

* Information sought on the numbers of cases being closed, and what were the triggers for cases to be closed.
* Was there an update on the CRM portal for members as this could alleviate some of the issues raised.

Ms O’Grady stated that due to the issues that arose around the use of the kildarecoco.ie email addresses by the members and Section 40 queries, the introduction of the CRM portal for members had been delayed. Once these issues were finalised and agreed on by the members, Corporate Services would roll out the CRM portal for members. She stated she was happy to liaise with Councillor Noel Connolly and the relevant departments on the specific cases he had referenced.

Councillor Noel Connolly thanked the members for their input and noted that the lack of staff was a recurring theme and one of the main issues for the council noting he had raised this very issue with the previous Chief Executive.

**Resolved** on the proposal of Councillor Noel Connolly, seconded by Councillor Cussen and agreed by the members present, the report was noted.

The Cathaoirleach noted that the next item on the agenda was a motion in the name of Councillor McLoughlin Healy. He stated that as Councillor McLoughlin Healy could not be in attendance and had not communicated a request that her motion be moved by any other member, in accordance with standing orders, the motion was not heard.

**25/1021**

**National Disability Authority**

The following motion in the name of Councillor Chris Pender was considered by the members.

That Kildare County Council implements the National Disability Authority ‘Code of Practice on Accessibility of Public Services and Information provided by Public Bodies’ and the NDA Accessibility Toolkit if it has not already done so.

The motion was proposed by Councillor Pender and seconded by Councillor Killeen.

A report from the Mr Michael Hurley, Health and Safety Officer stated that the Code relates, directly, to the matters outlined in sections 26, 27 and 28 of the Disability Act 2005. These sections of the Act impose significant statutory duties upon public bodies which came into effect from 31 December 2005. The council are in compliance with these duties and thus have implemented the Code of Practice. The council have also used and continue to use the NDA Accessibility Toolkit to help make our services, buildings, information, and website more accessible to customers with disabilities.

Councillor Pender accepted the report but noted that not all images contained on the council’s website had image descriptions and/or subtitles. He also noted that the recent recording of the panel event on Women and Diversity in Local Government did not have automatic captions.  
**Resolved** on the proposal of Councillor Pender, seconded by Councillor Killeen and agreed by the members present, the report was noted.

The meeting concluded.