



**Minutes of the Athy Municipal District Meeting
held at 10.00 am on Monday, 16 May 2022
on Microsoft Teams**

Members Present: Councillor I Keatley (Cathaoirleach), Councillors V Behan, A Breslin, B Dooley, M Leigh

Officials Present: Ms A Aspell (District Manager), Mr D O'Flaherty (District Engineer), Mr D Conlan (Senior Executive Engineer), Ms C Cashin (Community Worker), Ms M Higgins (A/Director of Services), Ms J McNabb (Head of Enterprise), Mr D Creighton (Senior Architect), Ms M Hunt (Senior Executive Officer), Ms A O'Malley (Administrative Officer), Mr G Hooban (Executive Engineer), Ms B Loughlin (Heritage Officer), Mr B McGrath (Meetings Administrator) and Ms M Richardson (Meetings Secretary).

AY01/0522

Declaration of Pecuniary Interests

Declaration of pecuniary or beneficial interests under Section 177 of the Local Government Act 2001, as amended.

There were no declarations of interest.

AY02/0522

Minutes and Progress report

The members considered the minutes of the monthly Athy Municipal District meeting held on Monday, 11 April 2022.



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Resolved on the proposal of Councillor Leigh, seconded by Councillor Breslin and agreed by the members that the minutes of the monthly Athy Municipal District meeting held on Monday, 11 April 2022 be adopted and the progress report be noted.

AY03/0522

Municipal District Road Works

The Municipality District engineer advised the members of the Municipality District works

National Transport Authority (NTA) – Active Travel Measure Updates

No update since last Athy Municipal District meeting. Project Team dealing with this.

Department of Transport – Climate Adaptation Projects

No projects completed in Athy Municipal District in 2021

Municipal District Road Improvement Works and Restoration Improvement Works

Surveying and preparatory works on all RI and RM for 2022, being carried out.

Grading of all RI & RM projects

Contractor on site carrying out overlays on the R417 Maganey to County Boundary

Margins along new road surface reinstated to new levels

Installed passing bays along L8012 – Kilrush

Prepare for junction realignments at L8089 – Bo Choill Rd

Local Improvement Schemes

Surveyed and awaiting return of tenders

Community Involvement Schemes

Surveyed and awaiting return of tenders

Signage Works

Continuing our update of signage in the Athy Municipal District



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Upgrading signage on restoration roads

Road Markings

Upgrading road junction markings at the present time

Drainage Works

A number of villages have had drainage systems cleaned

Jetting drainage lines on various roads

Cleaning gullies on a number of roads

Carrying out water cuts along roads

Road Patching

Carrying out patching along various sections

Street Sweeping

Street sweeping to areas

Bin collection

The members queried the new bin scheme and when it would be in place.

Mr D O'Flaherty advised that there were a dozen state of the art bins ready to be placed but he wanted members input into the locations of same. It was agreed to meet later in the week to discuss the possible locations of the bins.

AY04/0522

The Capital Programme 2022-2024

The members were informed that the Capital Programme had been agreed as part of the budget with €700 million spread countywide. Exchequer and EU funding would be required for the progression of the projects. The members welcomed the report as a very good news story for the Municipal District. The District Manager advised that she would follow up with individual queries offline.



AY05/0522

Kildare Age Friendly Presentation

The members received a presentation from the Kildare Age Friendly Co-Ordinator, Ms C Cashin.

The members raised the following points:

- They congratulated Ms Cashin on her presentation and the huge body of work being undertaken.
- They welcomed the digital initiatives to enable people with the use of technology.
- Regarding the June 15 meeting could people just attend on the day.
- Post Covid many older residents had not integrated back into society as they were still fearful. Was there anything the members could do to help and what sort of feedback was being received on the ground.

Ms Cashin advised that the public could just attend the June 15 meeting where they could note expressions of interest. Training would be provided for those interested in taking part and meetings would take place every two months. A recent online event and a subsequent in person event had been unsuccessful as it was felt that the older people simply were not ready. It was hoped to revisit this with smaller groups and through word of mouth. Garda and GAA led events were perceived to be safer. There was a possibility that something could be tailored for the elderly in the Athy Municipal District with some LPT funding.

AY06/0522

Taking in charge the Fairgreen housing estate, Timolin

The members considered the following motion in the name of Councillor Keatley.

That the council take in charge the Fairgreen housing estate, Timolin.

The motion was proposed by Councillor Keatley and seconded by Councillor Behan

A report was received from the Roads, Transportation and Public Safety Department informing the members that the current Developer, P&S Moore Developments Ltd. requested that the estate be Taken in Charge on 15/10/2021. However, the estate was served by a local Waste Water Treatment Plant (WWTP), which could not be Taken in



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Charge by Irish Water under the terms of the current Memorandum of Understanding between Irish Water and the Local Authorities. The remaining infrastructure (excluding the foul sewers and WWTP) could be Taken in Charge if it was brought up to a taking in Charge standard. Development Control were liaising with the developer regarding same. Councillor Keatley requested that he wanted to see these works completed by the developer and a message needed to be sent to them. He hoped that in 5 months time the estate would be on a Taking in Charge list or that enforcement proceedings would have commenced.

Resolved on the proposal of Councillor Keatley and seconded by Councillor Behan that the report be noted.

AY07/0522

Installation of a paved path from Emily Square

The members considered the following motion in the name of Councillor Behan.

That the council install a paved path from Emily Square, Athy to the pontoon on the Barrow quay.

The motion was proposed by Councillor Behan and seconded by Councillor Keatley.

A report was received from the Roads, Transportation and Public Safety Department informing the members that there were no plans to do works in the area. The benches had been added during Covid but a quick fix would not be appropriate as there were a number of other works to be done and this was part of an overall plan.

Public Realm had confirmed that works of this nature would be outside the area to which their project related.

Councillor Behan stated that there were picnic benches in concrete and a grass area lay in between this and the gangway. A footpath linking the two would increase accessibility for boat tourists.

The members raised the following points:

- All that was required was a few feet of pathway as the grass was very difficult for wheelchair users to cross.



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- Could a timeline be provided for the environmental works for Phase 2 of Emily Square.

Ms M Hunt advised that that Emily Square had been split into two phases and this area would fall under Phase 2.

Ms A O'Malley informed the members that she would check the timeframe and revert.

Resolved on the proposal of Councillor Behan and seconded by Councillor Keatley that the report be noted.

AY08/0522

Traffic island on the N9/N78

The members considered the following motion in the name of Councillor Leigh that the council light up or place reflective material on the traffic island on the N9/N78 junction at Crookstown to Athy Road or request that Transport Infrastructure Ireland undertake this task. The motion was proposed by Councillor Leigh and seconded by Councillor Keatley

A report was received from the Roads, Transportation and Public Safety Department informing the members that with the members agreement, a request to light up or install reflective material on the traffic island will issue to TII.

Resolved on the proposal of Councillor Leigh and seconded by Councillor Keatley that a request issue to Transport Infrastructure Ireland.

As items 9, 10 and 14 related to the same area the Cathaoirleach suggested the items be taken together. The members agreed.

AY09/0522

Item 9 Bollards at St John's Lane

The members considered the following motion in the name of Councillor Behan

That the council repair the surface and replace the bollards at St John's Lane, Green Hills, Athy.

The motion was proposed by Councillor Behan and seconded by Councillor Dooley.



Item 10 Age friendly and inclusive walk way

The members considered the following motion in the name of Councillor Brian Dooley
That the council design an age friendly and inclusive walk way from St John's Lane to Green Hills, Athy.

The motion was proposed by Councillor Dooley and seconded by Councillor Breslin

Item 14 Works St John's Lane

The members considered the following question in the name of Councillor Breslin.
Can the council confirm when the remainder of the works required at the entrance to St John's Lane will be completed following a motion raised at the January 2021 meeting that requested a detailed survey be carried out from St John's Lane to Green Hills Estate and upgrading work to the footpaths, public lighting and fencing along the route and within the estate, be carried out?

A report was received from the Roads, Transport and Public Safety Department informing the members that the area was not fit for purpose. It had been designed in a different era and needed a new age friendly design.

The members raised the following points:

- The area was an important part of the connectivity of the town.
- The gradient was far too steep and not age friendly
- Most land around the area was council owned.
- People struggled to get up and down the lane but it still had large usage

Mr D Conlan advised that would ask Mr Stephen Deegan that he investigate this..

Councillor Behan requested that the installation of a handrail be considered in the interim.

Resolved on the proposal of Councillor Behan and seconded by Councillor Dooley that the report be noted.

AY10/0522

Bye-law to make it illegal for unauthorised camping/caravanning



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The members considered the following motion in the name of Councillor Brian Dooley
That the council examine if they have the authority to introduce a bye-law to make it illegal for unauthorised camping/caravanning on public or council owned property within the Athy Municipal District and under what statutory provision this law could be introduced.

The motion was proposed by Councillor Dooley and seconded by Councillor Keatley

A report was received from the Housing Department informing the members that the council had various legislative powers (Housing, Sanitary Services, Planning, Roads) to prohibit the parking of temporary dwellings within its functional area.

The power to create byelaws was contained in Section 30 of the Local Government (Sanitary Services) Act 1948 in respect of the use of temporary dwellings. This was a reserved function of the Members. Section 31 provided that the Council may by order prohibit the erection or retention of temporary dwellings on any land or water in the sanitary district if they were of opinion that such erection or retention would be prejudicial to public health or the amenities of the locality or would interfere to an unreasonable extent with traffic on any road.

In addition, pursuant to Section 205 of the Local Government Act 2001 any person who contravened a provision of a bye-law was guilty of an offence and was liable on summary conviction to a fine. Section 206 of the 2001 Act provided for fixed penalty notices as an alternative to a prosecution where there was a contravention of a bye-law and where the fixed penalty amount and the period for payment were specified in the bye-law. It should be noted that the introduction of a byelaw would not remove an unauthorised encampment, and the related follow up court action would be solely for breach of the byelaw offence.

Currently, the Housing Department issued abatement notices on owners/ occupiers of such dwellings under the 1948 Act (Section 32) where structures were causing nuisance, obstruction and creating a public health risk at a location. These notices requested the removal of the structure within a specified time period (48 hours/ 24 hours). The Council sought legal advice where non compliance with notices occurred and was guided on the appropriate follow up (including seeking court injunctive action to seek the removal of such



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structures) on a case by case basis. The existing process was considered the most effective mechanism to pursue incidents of unauthorised camping/ caravanning. The Council was considering appropriate environmental enhancement/preventative measures for illegal encampments at problematic locations to reduce the number of such incidents arising. Housing support services (incl. homeless and social work teams) were available to occupants of such structures (where required).

A second report was received from Roads, Transportation and Public Safety Department informing the members that where significant unauthorised development was being carried out on privately owned lands, a planning injunction could be sought against the owners and occupiers of the lands under Section 160 of the Planning and Development Act, 2000 (as amended) seeking the cessation of the unauthorised development. It should be noted that where a Section 160 Planning Injunction was sought, proceedings must be brought against both the owners and occupiers of the lands in question.

The members raised the following points:

- It was frustrating the some areas seemed to suffer more frequently and the cost of the clean up was significant on every occasion.
- Measures should be introduced to prevent reoccurrences.
- Although there was a delay in moving encampments the provisions Kildare County Council had in place were probably best practice and should be continued.

Resolved on the proposal of Councillor Dooley and seconded by Councillor Keatley that the report be noted.

AY11/0522

Lack of transport links with the Narraghmore/Calverstown areas

The members considered the following motion in the name of Councillor Ivan Keatley That the council engage with Local Link, Bus Eireann and the Department of Education to resolve the lack of transport links with the Narraghmore/Calverstown areas and St Kevin's Community College, Dunlavin.

The motion was proposed by Councillor Keatley and seconded by Councillor Dooley



A report was received from the Roads, Transport and Public Safety Department informing the members that Local Link had confirmed they have no remit in relation to the provision of School Transport. However with the agreement of the members, the Roads Department would write to Bus Éireann and the Department of Education requesting their input to increase the transport links to St Kevin's Community College, Dunlavin.

The members raised the following points:

- St Kevin's Community College, Dunlavin was now the main school for the area
- There were 30 children requiring a school bus in the Narraghmore area alone
- The nearest collection point for a school bus was three miles away
- Responsibility lay with Bus Éireann and the bus should be reinstated
- There was a significant number of children involved in the catchment area which would easily fill a school bus

Resolved on the proposal of Councillor Keatley, seconded by Councillor Dooley and agreed by the members that letters issue to Bus Éireann and the Department of Education requesting that the transport links to St Kevins Community College be increased.

AY12/0522

National Bicycle Week

The members considered the following motion in the name of Councillor Aoife Breslin That in recognition of National Bicycle Week and in the interest of improving road safety in Churchtown Village, the council erect 'Children on Bicycles' signs at Churchtown National School and install flashing amber lights at either side of the zebra crossing at the graveyard in Churchtown.

The motion was proposed by Councillor Breslin and seconded by Councillor Keatley

A report was received from the Roads, Transport and Public Safety Department informing the members that the Traffic Signs Manual set out the requirements for signage which could be used on or alongside our road network. There was no approved signage demonstrating 'Children on Bicycles', however 'Children at Play' signage was provided for



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in the Manual. With the National Bike Week taking place during 14-22 May the timeframe was too short to procure and install signage at all the rural schools in the Municipal District, not just Churchtown National School.

In relation to the flashing amber lights at the zebra crossing, the Municipal District Engineer would provide an update on this element of the motion at the meeting.

The members queried why this could not be done as children could not cycle to school on these dangerous roads. Rural schools needed to be included in plans the sustainable transport team had for the county.

Mr D O'Flaherty informed the members that this need to be looked at with a countywide approach and not taken in isolation. Signage was not the answer as location of signs needed investigation. A survey should be carried out to see how many children were cycling to school.

Resolved on the proposal of Councillor Breslin and seconded by Councillor Keatley that the report be noted.

AY13/0522

Car park signage around Athy

The members considered the following question in the name of Councillor Behan
Can the council confirm if it plans to update the car park signage around Athy to show free parking on Saturday and Sunday?

A report was received from the Roads, Transport and Public Safety Department informing the members that the signage referred to in Councillor Behan's question will be reviewed as part of the Parking Bye-Law review of Athy.

The report was noted.

AY14/0522

Barrow Quay Wall

The members considered the following question in the name of Councillor Behan



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Can the council confirm if it is responsible for the upkeep of the Barrow quay wall adjacent to Emily Square Athy?

A report was received from the Roads, Transport and Public Safety Department informing the members that the responsibility for the update of the Barrow Quay wall adjacent to Emily Square fell within the remit of Waterways Ireland.

The report was noted

AY15/0522

Plans to upgrade the Split Hill/Blackditch Road

The members considered the following question in the name of Councillor Mark Leigh

Can the council confirm if there are plans to upgrade the Split Hill/Blackditch Road from Nurney GAA to Martin's Pub in Kildoon this year?

A report was received from the Roads, Transport and Public Safety Department informing the members that these works were listed on the Athy Municipal District restoration improvement works for 2022. The works would commence in May/June 2022.

The report was noted

AY16/0522

Upgrade the road surface from Scoil Mhicil Naofa to Clonmullion Retirement Village

The members considered the following question in the name of Councillor Mark Leigh

Can the council confirm if there are plans to upgrade the road surface from Scoil Mhicil Naofa to Clonmullion Retirement Village in Athy this year?

A report was received from the Roads, Transport and Public Safety Department informing the members that the Municipal District Office had no plans at the present time to carry out these works. The road had suffered damage due to the ongoing construction works at the school.

Councillor Leigh advised he would submit a motion after the school works had been completed.

The report was noted



AY17/0522

Refurbishment of the footpaths on Duke Street

The members considered the following question in the name of Councillor Dooley
Can the council give a timeline on the refurbishment of the footpaths on Duke Street, Athy?

A report was received from the Roads, Transport and Public Safety Department informing the members that the Municipal District Office planned to meet with Transport Infrastructure Ireland in the near future to discuss funding for the refurbishment of the footpaths on Duke Street.

The report was noted

AY18/0522

Coneyboro Estate designated exit

The members considered the following question in the name of Councillor Dooley
Can the council confirm if the Coneyboro Estate in Athy will be able to use the designated exit at agreed times during the Tri Athy weekend?

A report was received from the Roads, Transport and Public Safety Department informing the members that Water Services would make the necessary arrangements on the ground in terms of preparing, securing and monitoring the area in question for the duration of the TriAthy event.

A letter of indemnity had been provided by IPB to Irish Water.

The report was noted.

AY19/0522

To consider the Chief Executive's Part 8 Report ref P82022-03 for development of 73 social housing units, an estate community building and associated works at Fortbarrington Road, Ardrew, Athy.

Mr Creighton outlined the proposal and recommended to the Cathaoirleach and members that the Part 8 Report ref P82022-03 for development of 73 social housing units, an estate



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community building and associated works at Fortbarrington Road, Ardrew, Athy. be adopted.

The members thanked the team for the number of presentations on the project which had kept them well informed on a badly needed development.

The District Manager thanked the members for their support and thanked Mr D Creighton and the team for bringing the project to this stage.

On the proposal of Councillor Breslin, seconded by Councillor Behan and agreed by the members that the Chief Executive's Report ref P82022-03 for development of 73 social housing units, an estate community building and associated works at Fortbarrington Road, Ardrew, Athy be adopted

Resolved on the proposal of Councillor Breslin, seconded by Councillor Behan and agreed by the members that the Chief Executive's Report ref P82022-03 for development of 73 social housing units, an estate community building and associated works at Fortbarrington Road, Ardrew, Athy be adopted.

AY20/0522

Start date for the review of the Causal Trading By-Laws

The members considered the following question in the name of Councillor Breslin

Can the council confirm a start date for the review of the Causal Trading By-Laws for the Athy Municipal District?

A report was received from the Corporate Services Department informing the members that Section 6 (1) of the Casual Trading Act 1995, as amended, (the Act) provided a statutory requirement on each local authority to make bye-laws in relation to the control, regulation, supervision and administration of casual trading in its functional area. The making of Casual Trading Bye-Laws was a reserved function of the Municipal District members in accordance with Article 31, Part 1, Schedule 3 of the Local Government Reform Act, 2014.

It was noted that, unlike other Districts, there were no Casual Trading Bye Laws in place in the Athy Municipal District. Therefore there were no such Bye Laws to review.



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If the members intended to commence a process, presumably with the intention of making bye laws, this would require a motion agreed at a Municipal District meeting.

However there were a number of legal and operational matters the members should be aware of.

The market that operated in Emily Square Athy on Tuesdays was permitted on the basis of a market right, bestowed by Royal Charter in 1515. This was a strong legal right and there was a significant history of legal challenges where elected members have sought to introduce bye laws to regulate such markets.

A similar right existed related to the market held every Thursday in Kildare Town, and the Council was aware that a number of the traders trading at the Kildare market also traded in Athy.

The making of a bye law to regulate trade in Kildare Town was before that District's members at their May meeting.

In addition, both Celbridge Leixlip and Naas Districts had ongoing reviews, with public consultation recently having closed for the former and with site inspections and assessments (as well as briefings with members) to be arranged for the latter.

The Council did not have a Casual Trading team but two staff for whom this area is a very small aspect of their role, and both persons manage teams that are presently carrying vacancies, whilst also trying to manage their substantive duties alongside reviews in three other Districts.

For these reasons, and the fact that making bye laws was a reserve function, a commitment could not be given at this point regarding when a process of making bye laws could commence, even if a motion was agreed.

However, pivotal to any decision to embark on a review would be an understanding of what the objectives of the District's members would be regarding Casual Trading, and especially regarding the Tuesday market in Athy. Given the basis for trading in Kildare Town was identical, it would be important to monitor the progression of this process in that District, especially as even if Bye Laws were made an appeal period must elapse.

To this end, a briefing with Athy members could be held in June and this may be of benefit to you in understanding the process and what direction the members wish to take.



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Councillor Breslin advised that she would resubmit the item as a motion at a later date due to the concern of existing traders in the Emily Square area regarding changes of trading practices.

The report was noted

AY21/0522

Community Heritage Grants

To consider the Community Heritage Grant Scheme 2022 allocation for the Athy Municipal District.

A total of 41 applications were received under the Community Heritage Grant Scheme 2022. The projects applied for cover a number of themes which are compatible with the County Heritage Plan i.e. gathering data, raising awareness, dissemination of information, tourism and the creation and conservation of heritage sites or items.

37 of the applications were deemed to be eligible for grant purposes. 4 applications that did not receive funding: 2 applications did not meet the criteria of the scheme and 2 provided bank details of a private individual for payment of grant which is not permitted.

The total value of the applications seeking funding under the 2022 Grant Scheme is €74,558. Please see attached recommended allocation for the Community Heritage Grant Scheme for 2022.

Table 1 Community Heritage Grant recommendations per MD

MD	No of Apps	Total
Athy	2	2,290
Celbridge	4	4,800
Kildare/Newbridge	16	19,080
Clane/Maynooth	5	6,350
Naas	7	6,330
County	3	3,400
Total	37	42,250

Table 2 Allocation to Athy MD

No	File Ref.	MD	Name of Group	Project Details	Allocated
1	22	Athy	Ballitore Tanyard Sub Committee	Ballitore Biodiversity for Kids Programme. A series of talks and workshops	€1,300
2	28	Athy	Churchtown & Castlemitchell Community Development Assoc.	Oral & written history	€990
Total					€2,290



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Table 3 Allocation to projects the cover the whole county or more than one MD

No	File ref	MD	Name of Group	Project Details	Allocated
1	1	County	Kildare Bat Groups	Identify new brown long eared roost. The group hope to identify new brown long eared roosts within the county through a social media campaign and check each site using a thermal scope, as well as at a dusk emergence count bat survey.	€1,200
2	27	County	Birdwatch Ireland Kildare branch	Thermal Imaging equipment	€1,200
3	35	County	North Kildare Beekeepers' Association	Beekeeping education for members	€1,000
Total					€3,400

Resolved on the proposal of Councillor Keatley, seconded b Councillor Behan and agreed by the members that the Community Heritage Grants be paid as presented.

AY22/0522

To consider the proposed grant allocations for Tidy Towns groups for 2022.

Tidy Towns Grants Allocation 2022							
	TT Group (9)	Population Category (from TT report)		Proposed Budget Allocation		Proposed LPT Allocation	Total
Athy MD	Athy	E (5,001 to 10,000)		€ 10,380		€ 6,470	€ 16,850
	Castledermot	C (1,001 to 2,500)		€ 1,641		€ 1,024	€ 2,665
	Kilmead	B (201 to 1,000)		€ 648		€ 404	€ 1,052
	Calverstown	B (201 to 1,000)		€ 648		€ 404	€ 1,052
	Ballitore	B (201 to 1,000)		€ 648		€ 404	€ 1,052
	Narraghmore	B (201 to 1,000)		€ 648		€ 404	€ 1,052
	Nurney	B (201 to 1,000)		€ 648		€ 404	€ 1,052
	Kilkea	A (up to 200)		€ 260		€ 243	€ 503
	Moone	A (up to 200)		€ 260		€ 243	€ 503
		Total			€ 15,781		€ 10,000

Councillor Keatley stated that he would discuss Timolin offline.



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Resolved on the proposal of Councillor Dooley, seconded by Councillor Breslin and agreed by the members that the Tidy Towns Grant Allocations be paid as presented.

AY23/0522

Water Mains Pipe Replacement

The members considered the following motion in the name of Councillor Leigh
That the council work in conjunction with Irish Water to replace the antiquated cast iron mains pipes in Woodstock Street and Clonmullion Estate, Athy.

The motion was proposed by Councillor Leigh and seconded by Councillor Breslin

A report was received from Water Services informing the members that this was a matter for Irish Water as the Council's full time leak detection unit now came under the ambit of Irish Water. Indeed, it was pleasing to note that leakage levels in this county were among the lowest nationally and the quality of water services infrastructure was generally good. There was no history of bursts in either of these areas to indicate problem with watermains and therefore did not meet with IW criteria for rehabilitation. Athy pressure was protected by PRV (Pressure Reduction valve) and this minimised leaks and watermain bursts.

Any further queries should be addressed to Irish water via the dedicated Irish Water Local Representatives email or phone line, the details of which were below;

Email: localrepsupport@water.ie

Ph: 0818 178178 or 01 7072854

Resolved on the proposal of Councillor Leigh and seconded by Councillor Breslin that the report be noted.

AY24/0522

Omission from Regional Aid Map

The members considered the following motion in the name of Councillor Aoife Breslin



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That this council writes to the Minister for Enterprise, Trade and Employment asking for the reasons why the Athy Municipal District was omitted from the Regional Aid Map, and what measures his Department are putting in place to create employment and investment in the municipal district.

The motion was proposed by Councillor Breslin and seconded by Councillor Behan

A report was received from the Local Enterprise Office informing the members that by way of information, the Regional Aid Map was decided by the European Commission and not by the Government. In negotiations with the Commission, the Government sought the inclusion of much more of the country and they had agreed to do so again at the mid-term review in 2023 when the data from the census were available. The regional aid map for every member state must be developed within coverage levels set by the Commission and criteria laid down in the European Commission's regional aid guidelines, issued in April 2021. Ireland's economy had shown strength and improvement since 2014, including Athy County Kildare. As a consequence, the European Commission initially proposed to reduce the overall coverage of Ireland's map, as a proportion of total population, to 25.6%. Following intensive negotiations with the Commission, this was increased to 35.9%. With a more limited population coverage, and the strict criteria set by the Commission, it was important that the optimal allocation was achieved. To achieve this, the Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment, working with stakeholders, including Enterprise Ireland and IDA Ireland, developed a multidimensional model that provided a depth of analysis within the Commission's set criteria. This was an objective and impartial approach, although final approval of the map, for Ireland and for all member states, rested with the European Commission. The Commission announced its decision on 22 March 2022.

It was important to note that areas can only be included on a regional aid map if they meet the Commission's strict criteria. Conformity to the criteria must be supported by socioeconomic data. The criteria must be met for contiguous areas at NUTS 2 or NUTS 3 level. To meet the Commission's criteria for inclusion on the regional aid map, an area needs to have a GDP per capita below or equal to the EU-27 average, an unemployment



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rate above or equal to 115% of the national average, be undergoing major structural change or in serious relative decline. The socioeconomic data available for Kildare indicates that the county does not meet these criteria.

Having regard to the above and with the agreement of the members, it was suggested that a letter as to the level of future measures be identified to support Athy might be more appropriate than the question of why Athy Municipal District was omitted from the Regional Aid Map.

The members raised the following points:

- Thanks were conveyed to Ms Mc Nabb for her reply and her suggestion
- There was a clear North/South divide in the county with the south being way behind
- A huge inequity existed in investment.
- Athy had lower college attendance rates and was not as vibrant economically as the rest of the county. Government measures of support were required.

Ms McNabb stated that there was an obvious inequality and Athy had been consumed by other areas. Socioeconomic data for Athy rather than Co Kildare as a whole needed to be used for constructive means of further support. Ms McNabb advised that there was an opportunity to reengage with the IDA and a letter should issue to the Department of Enterprise.

Resolved on the proposal of Councillor Breslin, seconded by Councillor Behan and agreed by the members that a letter issue to the Department of Enterprise.

AY25/0522

Sports Grants

The members considered the following question in the name of Councillor Keatley
Can the council provide application dates for the Athy Municipal District sports grants?

A report was received by Economic, Community and Culture Department informing the members that the Community Section was currently working through community, festival and residents' associations grants that were approved at April Municipal District meetings. Once all award letters have issued etc., work would commence on the various LPT



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payments and schemes advised recently. It was hoped to formally notify Athy Municipal District members that applications would be open for the sports grants scheme in the next week or so with a possible closing date of Friday 27 May. The exact closing date would be agreed with the members and it was hoped that assessments would take place, in consultation with the sports partnership team, in early June.

Councillor Keatley requested that the closing date be extended by 2-3 weeks as sports clubs are too busy at the moment.

The Meetings Administrator advised that he would pass on the request to Mr J Shannon. The report was noted.

The meeting concluded.