

**Minutes of the Budget 2018 Meeting of Clare County Council held in the Council Chamber, Áras Contae an Chláir, New Road, Ennis, Co. Clare on Friday, 10<sup>th</sup> November, 2017 at 3:00 p.m.**

**Present:**

Councillors J. Breen, J. Flynn, P. Daly, A. Norton, T. McNamara, M. Howard, P. Murphy, C. Colleran Molloy, J. Cooney, P. Hayes, M. Begley, T. O'Brien, P. Burke, A. O'Callaghan, C. Crowe, J. Crowe, G. Flynn, P.J. Ryan, P. McMahan, M. McKee, C. Curtin, R. Nagle, B. Slattery, I. Lynch, M. Hillery, P.J. Kelly, B. Chambers, G. Keating.

- Pat Dowling, Chief Executive.
- Carmel Greene, Meetings Administrator.
- Loretta McNamara, Staff Officer.
- Niall Barrett, Head of Finance.
- Anne Haugh, Director of Service.
- Liam Conneally, Director of Service.
- Leonard Cleary, A./Director of Service.
- Brian McCarthy, A./Director of Service;.
- Caroline O'Connor, Management Accountant.
- Noeleen Fitzgerald, Financial Accountant.
- Jason Murphy, Senior Executive Officer.

The Cathaoirleach, Cllr. T. McNamara presided.

At the outset, the Cathaoirleach called on the Chief Executive, Pat Dowling to give a brief overview of the Budget.

Mr. Dowling advised that this budget is a further milestone after the many challenging years where difficult decisions had to be made by both the elected members and the executive. There always has been and continues to be a need to find a balance between our responsibility as a service provider, a protector of the environment, a catalyst for economic development, an advocate for the disadvantaged and promoter of Clare. We are on a journey of self determination to tackle a number of legacy issues and to take our place and indeed provide leadership at a regional and national level. We seek to complete the Rates Harmonisation task and then and only then can we deal with the County Rate in order to allow business to grow and expand and to attract new business and more employment.

He referred to the decision made by the elected members in relation to the Local Property Tax and confirmed that our efforts to maximise government funding would continue across all areas, particularly in regard to our roads infrastructure and flood relief and coastal protection measures. The recent re-introduction of the LIS scheme hopefully signals additional resources in the physical infrastructural area.

Referring to the social and housing front Mr. Dowling referred to the bold targets set out across a number of areas including a multi-annual upgrade programme of €10m

being drawn down over the next 5 years, signing of LIHAF project in Clareen and the establishment of a Homeless Action Team.

Budget 2018 is the first specific Rural Directorate budget. Mr. Dowling was pleased to announce that this week he had received the backing of our parent Government Department to appoint Rural and Community Development Officers, one per Municipal District.

Mr. Dowling advised that a Senior Team with revised responsibilities will be in place in early 2018 with a focus on business review and delivery of services in new and innovative ways. He thanked all Council staff for their continued efforts in serving the people of the County. Pay restoration, recovery and recruitment is a feature of our finances in 2018 and beyond. He acknowledged the central role played by the elected members in protecting the interests of the local community and their dedication and hard work in all aspects of the Council's programme. He stated that the new Draft National Planning Framework will set down the future trajectory of the Nation and we must ensure the growth of our County and Region within this framework.

He concluded by thanking the Cathaoirleach for his continued support and the members of the Corporate Policy Group and all the Elected Members for all their advice and assistance surrounding the budgetary preparation, including the discussions at Municipal District level. Mr. Dowling acknowledged the work of the Finance Team under Niall Barrett and ably supported by Caroline O'Connor and staff in preparing the budget. He then recommended the Draft Budget to Council for preparation.

The Head of Finance, Niall Barrett, then addressed the meeting and outlined the main points of the Budget this year which included the further continuation of the harmonisation of the rates, the calculation of the base year adjustment and the impact on the rates for 2018.

#### **Division A. Housing and Building**

Cllr. G. Flynn, Chair of Strategic Policy Committee for Social Development addressed the meeting and provided a brief overview of activities for the Housing Division. He referred to the main issues contained in the Budget relevant to this area and under the remit of the Strategic Policy Committee for Social Development.

Niall Barrett dealt with a number of questions in relation to property tax and under expenditure in certain areas. Mr. Dowling said that we were back in the black. Niall Barrett advised that it has taken about 15 years to achieve this

#### **Division F Recreation and Amenity**

Cllr. G. Flynn, Chair of the Social Development Strategic Policy Committee addressed the meeting outlining the highlights of the current year and the plans for 2018 including Creative Ireland and advancement of the County Library project.

Liam Conneally, Director of Social Development and Niall Barrett, Director of Finance and Support Services answered queries raised by members. Mr. Dowling

advised that he had met with the C.E.O. of Fáilte Ireland during the week and there will be greater engagement with Fáilte Ireland to get the best for the County.

**Division B Road Transport and Safety**  
**Division C Water Services**  
**Division E Environmental Services**

Cllr. J. Cooney, Chair of Strategic Policy Committee for Physical Development addressed the meeting. He confirmed that the draft Budget has been prepared in the absence of information on 2018 Road Grant Allocations and, therefore, assumes similar funding levels as 2017. The re-introduction of funding for Local Improvement Schemes was welcomed. The budget for Public Lighting for 2018 reflects the proposal that allocations from T.I.I. will no longer include for National primary route lighting as payment will not be made through the local authorities in the future. 2018 will see the enhancement of Lahinch and Spanish Point beaches with the completion of new toilet facilities. Energy efficiency targets to be met by 2020 will require a significant focus on this area of work in 2018 and beyond and the Council will commence implementation of an ISO accredited Energy Management System early in the New Year.

A number of queries were raised by the members regarding this division which were all responded to by Anne Haugh, Director of Physical Development. In relation to remediation of sites with asbestos she confirmed that two internal investigations have taken place and engagement has taken place with the E.P.A., H.S.A. and H.S.E. and we are at an advanced stage as to what remedial work is to be carried out.

**Division D Development Management**

Cllr. R. Nagle, Chair of the Strategic Policy Committee for Economic Development addressed the meeting. He referred to the main issues contained in the Budget relevant to this area.

**Division G Agriculture, Education, Health & Welfare**  
**Division D Development Management**

Cllr. P. Hayes, Chair of the Strategic Policy Committee for Rural Development addressed the meeting and outlined activities proposed in this area including the Rural Development Forum, Social Inclusion, the Community Activation Programme and the roll out of the National Broadband Scheme. He stressed the importance of all the agencies who have signed up to the Rural Development strategy playing their part to deliver on the objectives of the strategy.

Mr. L. Cleary, A/Director of Services replied to the queries raised by the Members.

**Division H Miscellaneous Services**

## **Division J     Central Management Services**

Niall Barrett, Director of Finance and Support Services replied to queries in relation to rate harmonisation. A number of Councillors indicated that they would be voting against the General Annual Rate Harmonisation.

The Cathaoirleach reminded members that they needed to make a decision to either adopt or reject the Budget as presented or adjourn the discussion to a later date. The Cathaoirleach then called a vote on the proposal of Cllr. P. Hayes which was seconded by Cllr. J. Cooney to adopt the Budget. Cllr. J. Breen proposed that the budget would not be adopted and Cllr. J. Flynn seconded this.

Cllr. C. Crowe asked would there be a separate vote on the Budget and Rates Harmonisation. The Cathaoirleach confirmed that there would be.

The following proposal was read out by the Meetings Administrator and as proposed by Cllr. P. Hayes and seconded by Cllr. J. Cooney.

“That pursuant to Section 103 of the Local Government Act 2001 (substituted by Section 58 of the Local Government Reform Act 2014) the Draft Budget 2018 as presented by the Chief Executive is hereby adopted.”

The vote on this proposal resulted as follows:

**In favour:** Cllrs. T. McNamara, J. Cooney, P. Hayes, M. Begley, P. Burke, A. O’Callaghan, J. Crowe, G. Flynn, P.J. Ryan, P. McMahon, M. McKee, C. Curtin, B. Slattery, M. Hillery, P.J. Kelly, B. Chambers, G. Keating. (17)

**Against:** Cllrs. J. Breen, J. Flynn, P. Daly, M. Howard, P. Murphy, C. Colleran Molloy, C. Crowe, I. Lynch. (8)

**Abstentions:** Nil.

The Cathaoirleach declared the resolution carried.

The following proposal was read out by the Meetings Administrator and as proposed by Cllr. P. Hayes and seconded by Cllr. J. Cooney.

“That the Council hereby determine in accordance with the draft budget 2018 as presented by the Chief Executive, the General Annual Rate on Valuation for the County including the former Kilrush Town council and Ennis Town council of 72.99 set out in Table A and the Base Year Adjustments set out in Table C being a discount of zero in respect of both the former Kilrush Town Council area and the former Ennis Town Council area”

The vote on this proposal resulted as follows:

**In favour:** Cllrs. T. McNamara, J. Cooney, P. Hayes, M. Begley, P. Burke, A. O’Callaghan, J. Crowe, G. Flynn, P.J. Ryan, P. McMahon, M. McKee, C. Curtin, B. Slattery, M. Hillery, P.J. Kelly, B. Chambers, G. Keating. (17)

**Against:** Cllrs. J. Breen, J. Flynn, P. Daly, M. Howard, P. Murphy, C. Colleran Molloy, C. Crowe, I. Lynch. (8)

**Abstentions:** Nil.

The Cathaoirleach declared the resolution carried.

The following proposal in relation to the rates incentive scheme was read out by the Meetings Administrator and was proposed by Cllr. P. Hayes and seconded by Cllr. J. Cooney.

“That the rates payment incentive grant scheme for 2018 in respect of occupied properties be as follows in respect of the areas set out below:

Former Ennis Town Council Area	9% of the 2018 Rates Cost or €450 if lower
Former Kilrush Town Council Area	12% of the 2018 Rates Cost or €600 if lower
Former County Council Area	3% of the 2018 Rates Cost or €100 if lower

where the rates are paid on time; or where there are established payment plans (or new payment plans that have been agreed in writing with the Council on or before July 31st 2018) which provide for the clearance of all the rates due by December 2018 and where the rates outstanding are actually cleared in line with the payment plan.”

**There were no objections.**

The Cathaoirleach declared this resolution carried.

The Cathaoirleach thanked the members, Chief Executive, Directors of Services and Head of Finance and their staff for their co-operation in the preparation and adoption of the Budget for 2018. He also thanked members of the Corporate Policy Group and all members for their input into the Budget process.

The meeting then concluded at 5:35 p.m.

**Signed:** \_\_\_\_\_  
**Riarthóir Cruinnithe**

**Signed:** \_\_\_\_\_  
**Cathaoirleach**

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

**Minutes of the November Monthly Meeting of Clare County Council held in the Council Chamber, Áras Contae an Chláir, New Road, Ennis, Co. Clare on Monday, 13<sup>th</sup> November, 2017 at 3:45 p.m.**

**Present:**

Councillors J. Breen, J. Flynn, P. Daly, A. Norton, T. McNamara, M. Howard, P. Murphy, C. Colleran Molloy, J. Cooney, P. Hayes, M. Begley, T. O'Brien, P. Burke, A. O'Callaghan, C. Crowe, J. Crowe, G. Flynn, P.J. Ryan, P. McMahon, M. McKee, C. Curtin, R. Nagle, B. Slattery, I. Lynch, M. Hillery, P.J. Kelly, B. Chambers, G. Keating.

- Mr. Pat Dowling, Chief Executive.
- Ms. Carmel Greene, Meetings Administrator.
- Ms. Loretta McNamara, Staff Officer.
- Ms. Anne Haugh, Director of Service.
- Mr. Liam Conneally, Director of Service.
- Mr. Niall Barrett, Head of Finance.
- Mr. Leonard Cleary, A./Director of Service.
- Mr. Tom Tiernan, Senior Engineer.
- Mr. John Gannon, A./Senior Executive Engineer.
- Mr. Jason Murphy, Senior Executive Officer.

The Cathaoirleach, Cllr. Tom McNamara presided.

**Vote of sympathy.**

At the outset a vote of sympathy was expressed to the following:-

- The O'Loughlin family, Kilmaley on the death of Peadar.
- The Nagle family, Liscannor on the death of John, uncle of Cllr. R. Nagle.
- Ann Reynolds, Business Review Leader on the death of her father Patrick.
- Sean Lenihan, Senior Engineer, Water Services Department on the death of his brother Tom.
- The Noonan family, Caher on the death of Eimear.

**Item 1: Minutes of Council Meetings.**

Ar moladh Cllr. P.J. Ryan  
Cuidithe ag Cllr. B. Chambers agus glacadh leis

“That the Minutes of the October Meeting of Clare County Council held on 9<sup>th</sup> October, 2017 be adopted and signed.”

**Presentation from Matthew Thomas, C.E.O., Shannon Group plc at 3:00 p.m.**

As the members had further questions to ask of Mr. Matthew Thomas, it was proposed by Cllr. J. Crowe and seconded by Cllr. J. Crowe that the period allocated in order to deal with questions arising from presentation be extended. It was agreed by the Cathaoirleach and all the members to postpone the remainder of the business of the meeting for 15 minutes in order to deal with questions arising from presentation.

**Item 2: Matters Arising.**

The Cathaoirleach referred to the Retailers Excellence Award where Ennis was announced as the “Friendliest Town”. He also advised that Ennis is only one of three towns which has been adjudicated as being “Coach Friendly”. He thanked the efforts of Ennis Tidy Towns Committee, the Chief Executive and the elected members.

**Item 3: Minutes of Municipal District Meetings.**

Ar moladh Cllr. A. Norton  
Cuidithe ag Cllr. P. Daly agus glacadh leis

“That the Minutes of the Ennis Municipal District Meeting held on the 12<sup>th</sup> September, 2017 be noted.”

**Item 4: Minutes of S.P.C. Meetings.**

Ar moladh Cllr. C. Curtin  
Cuidithe ag Cllr. J. Breen agus glacadh leis

“That the minutes of the Physical Development S.P.C. meeting held on 29<sup>th</sup> May, 2017 be noted”.

**Item 5: Minutes of the Corporate Policy Group Meetings.**

The members noted the minutes of the meeting held on 2<sup>nd</sup> October, 2017 as presented.

**Item 6: Monthly Management Report.**

The monthly management report attached to the agenda included key activities in the principal service areas and was noted by the members.

The members acknowledged all the work involved in the preparation of the Monthly Management Report.

Cllr. M. Hillery noted that that the tenders for the watermain replacement between Mullagh and Miltown Malbay under the Rockmount Water Treatment Plant were currently being assessed and this project had to be a priority.

In relation to the Rural Water Programme for Block and Scheme Specific Grant Allocations which was published on the 20<sup>th</sup> September 2017, Cllr. C. Curtin felt that the deadline of 29<sup>th</sup> November, 2017 for the receipt of claims was not adequate.

Cllr. B. Slattery asked when the West Clare Councillors would be briefed in relation to the Doolin Pier and Doolin Village Masterplan and the submissions received. Brian McCarthy, A./Director of Services hoped that this briefing would take place prior to Christmas.

**Item 7: Overdraft facility for the twelve month period to 31<sup>st</sup> December, 2017.**

Report dated 6<sup>th</sup> November, 2017 from Niall Barrett, Head of Finance was circulated with the agenda. The report states that the Council requires a new facility to be in place for the period of twelve months to 31<sup>st</sup> December, 2018. It is proposed to maintain the overdraft facility of €15 million.

Ar moladh Cllr. B. Chambers  
Cuidithe ag Cllr. A. Norton agus glacadh leis

“That pursuant to the provisions of Section 106 of the Local Government Act, 2001 the Council hereby approves of borrowing up to a maximum of €15 million by way of overdraft facility from the Council’s Treasurer for the year ending 31<sup>st</sup> December, 2018.”

It was agreed to take Items 8 and 16 together.

**Item 8: Report on Clare County Council’s response to storm Ophelia.**

Report dated 8<sup>th</sup> November, 2017 from Anne Haugh, Director of Physical Development was circulated with the agenda. The report outlines details of Clare County Council’s response to Storm Ophelia under the headings Planning and preparation, Response, Communications and Interagency Engagement.

**Item 16. Extreme weather events.**

Ar moladh Cllr. P. McMahon  
Cuidithe ag Cllr. C. Crowe agus glacadh leis

“In view of the predicted increase in the severity and frequency of extreme weather events, that Clare County Council consider taking a co-ordinating role utilising local media, social media and local voluntary organisations to help restore normal road access and services as quickly as possible but only when the danger has passed.”

**Anne Haugh, Director of Service replied as follows:**

“The Major Emergency Management Framework designates the local authority as the lead agency in the co-ordination of response to severe weather events. While it is recognised that not all severe weather warnings/events will constitute major emergencies, the Framework encourages the activation of the formalised co-ordination procedures to manage the response although in most cases a major emergency will not require to be declared.



The activation of this co-ordinated response under the direction of Clare County Council as the lead agency has become a well rehearsed activity in recent years due to the frequency and regularity of severe weather events which have impacted on the county. Consequently our response personnel have developed significant expertise in the management of such events through the various stages of planning for, responding to and recovery from severe weather related incidents. Recent events have also involved significant multi-agency engagement which has been initiated and co-ordinated by the Council and this has resulted in the development of robust working relationships between senior decision makers in the principal response agencies of the Health Service Executive, Gardai and the local authority. Co-ordination of response however has also been fine tuned with each event as communication protocols between the Council and other service providers such as E.S.B., Coillte, Irish Water, T.I.I. etc. continue to be enhanced and formalised.

The co-ordination role of the Council as lead agency was put to the test most recently in the response to the essentially unprecedented red alert Storm Ophelia of 16<sup>th</sup> October last. A separate report outlining the response of Clare county Council to that event is included in the agenda for noting by the members.

The report highlights in particular the success of the communications element of the response which delivered constant, live feedback to the public via media, internet and social media on damage and disruption to services as they were reported on the Helpline and subsequently as recovery operations got underway and were completed. All media reports and links on social media and internet directed the public to the weather emergency website [www.clarecoconotices.ie](http://www.clarecoconotices.ie) which was kept constantly updated throughout the event. The live feed also relayed messages received through other service providers and responders such as Health Service Executive, Gardai, E.S.B. Networks, Irish Water, T.I.I., R.S.A., etc., as well as continuous weather updates from Met Eireann. While it is difficult to quantify exactly how many citizens were reached through all the various channels, the statistics for social media are available and are quite remarkable. A total of 140,000 were reached directly through the Council's Facebook page with the Council's Twitter account recording over 500,000 reached directly or as a result of other users re-tweeting. The Free SMS Text Alert system which carried public advisories and also linked to the weather emergency website currently has over 2800 subscribers, a figure which has increased significantly during and since the recent storm events.

A member of the Gardai was in attendance in the Crisis Management Centre in Aras Contae an Chláir to ensure that calls received from the Gardai from members of the public were captured and co-ordinated as part of the overall response.

The activation of the helpline in such events has proven to be of particular benefit as it significantly reduces the number of calls going through the "999" system for non-life threatening situations and allows for a more joined up response locally to individual incidents with all the information being captured within the one interface. The Emergency Helpline was in operation during Storm Ophelia from 10:00 a.m. on Monday morning until 7:00 p.m. that evening when the number of calls reduced to a level which no longer necessitated this response.

While outdoor response crews were stood down during the event for safety reasons, they remained on standby for call-out in the immediate aftermath. All Fire Station Retained Personnel were put on standby in their stations from noon and as the severity

of the storm abated towards late afternoon crews were mobilised to inspect all main routes in their areas and to clear fallen debris when located.

Most of the damage in Clare centred around fallen trees with response personnel dealing in total with up to 200. Approximately 10 public roads were blocked for a period by fallen trees and a small number of coastal roads in West Clare were impacted by shingle and other debris thrown in by wave action on the evening of the storm. In addition a total of 16 public lights were either knocked or badly damaged and there was some localised coastal flooding issues to be addressed.

Most roads which had been obstructed by fallen trees were cleared on the evening of the storm and the overall clean up in the county was 90% completed by the evening of the following day.

The utilisation of local voluntary organisations to assist in the response efforts is an issue which has been given due recognition in the Major Emergency Framework and more recently in further guidance documents at a national and regional level. While there is a very important contribution that may be made by local volunteers in times of crisis, this input needs to be managed carefully so as not to put any civilian at unnecessary risk. In the most recent event, the level of damage and the existing capacity of our own response personnel did not necessitate the engagement of volunteers.”

Tributes were paid by the elected members to the staff in the Council in managing the effects of the storm. The regular updates both from the National Co-ordination Group and the Council were very helpful, and the use of social media by Clare County Council came in for particular praise.

If possible Councillors felt that the goodwill of locals who wish to provide assistance to the local authority during such severe weather conditions should be used once they are not putting themselves at risk.

Cllr. C. Crowe referred to people who ignored the “Red Weather Warning” alert and thereby not only putting their safety at risk but also those who had to come to their rescue. He suggested that the Council should look at amending our Beach Bye-Laws to include fines for those who ignore “Red Weather Warning” alerts. Cllr. A. Norton supported this. It was agreed that this be referred to the relevant Strategic Policy Committee for consideration.

It was agreed to take Items 21 and 22 together.

#### **Item 21. Maintenance of roadside trees.**

Ar moladh Cllr. P. Murphy

“Who is responsible for maintenance of roadside trees (a lot are outside the ditch/boundary as well as being inside) and does Clare County Council communicate with landowners to advise them of trees that are at risk of falling?”

#### **Tom Tiernan, Senior Engineer replied as follows:**

“Property owners are responsible for maintenance of trees within their respective properties. Therefore, where trees are located in public areas or within the curtilage of a public road, the local authority is responsible. Where roadside trees are within

private property, alongside a public road or are part of the boundary structure between the road curtilage and private lands, the landowner is responsible for their maintenance.

Where the Council becomes aware of trees in private roadside properties which need attention because there is a potential for them to compromise the safe functionality of the road, the property owner is notified of same. The Council takes various measures in pursuit of its agenda to ensure that its hedgecutting policy (which covers requirements in relation to roadside trees) is complied with. The preference is to use a “carrot” rather than “stick” approach and in this regard the Council’s hedgecutting grant scheme has been paying dividends over the past no. of years. Where a more robust approach is required, the Council exerts its powers under Section 70 of the Roads Act 1993. The Council places public notices in local newspapers on an annual basis advising property owners of their responsibilities under Section 70 of the 1993 Act. Following severe wind storms such as occurred in mid-October, the Council is particularly vigilant regarding the possibility of roadside trees having been weakened and measures are taken as deemed appropriate where concerns in this regard emerge.”

## **Item 22. Tree felling.**

Ar moladh Cllr. J. Cooney  
Cuidithe ag Cllr. P. Burke agus glacadh leis

“That Clare County Council call on the Government to provide funding to assist local authorities, landowners and forestry owners to carry out tree felling and limbing of trees on all roads throughout the Country in the interest of road safety”.

One of the major results of Storm Ophelia was the number of fallen trees country wide. This resulted in deaths, electrical outages and blocked and damaged roads. Councillors supported Cllr. J. Cooney’s motion that Clare County Council call on the Government to provide funding to assist local authorities, landowners and forestry owners to carry out tree felling and limbing of trees on all roads throughout the County.

The Chief Executive concurred with the sentiments expressed. He outlined how all the agencies were brought together prior to Storm Ophelia and they worked well together. With climate change the issue of fallen trees is becoming more of an issue and the Council will need to put a programme in place to deal with this. He will make representations through the National Directorate for Fire & Emergency Management. It was proposed by Cllr. C. Curtin and agreed by the members that a letter of thanks should issue to Sean Hogan, National Director, Fire and Emergency Management.

**It was agreed to take Items 9 and 14 together.**

## **Item 9: Report on funding arrangements for local roads.**

Report dated 8<sup>th</sup> November, 2017 from Anne Haugh, Director of Physical Development was circulated with the agenda. The report gives details of funding arrangements for local roads.

#### **Item 14. Raising of a loan.**

Ar moladh Cllr. P.J. Kelly

Cuidithe ag Cllrs. C. Curtin, J. Flynn agus M. Begley agus glacadh leis

“That an update be provided on the application of resolution of the Council in March 2016 which provided for the raising of a loan of €1.6 million to address the then specified objective.”

#### **Anne Haugh, Director of Service replied as follows:**

“The Resolution of March 2016 proposed as follows:

‘That we the members of Comhairle Chontae an Chlair, mindful of the 1916 Proclamation Statement to cherish all the people of the nation equally, hereby propose to raise a loan of €1.6m. in order to assist in the provision of adequate roads for the many families who previously benefitted under the now abandoned local improvement scheme and community roads scheme’.

On foot of the adoption of the above resolution an application for loan approval was submitted to the then Department of Environment, Community and Local Government which subsequently reverted seeking further information related to the term of the loan, the interest rate, provision to repay the loan and the source of finance. It was specified that provision to service the loan within the current and future years budget or other source of funding to repay the loan should be demonstrated. As the resolution was passed subsequent to the adoption of the 2016 budget no such provision existed in the current year and the Department was advised that the matter would receive further consideration in the course of the Budget 2017 discussions.

Roads funding was a significant feature of the discussions around Budget 2017 and the outcome of those discussions resulted in a substantial addition to G.M.A. funding to the value of €880k which was to be applied at Municipal District level towards an agreed programme of works including road improvements. Accordingly the 2017 adopted Budget did not include a specific provision towards servicing the proposed loan of €1.6m.

In April 2017, a further supplementary allocation of €400k was made available through the Annual Financial Statement process to be utilised for secondary and tertiary roads and details of this programme to be delivered in each Municipal District were notified to the members in early July. An additional €100k was also made available at this time to be used specifically for local private roads and in July of this year discussions took place with the Corporate Policy Group which proposed the application of this sum towards a locally funded multi-annual programme to address a small number of Local Improvement Scheme type roads each year.

However, prior to developing this proposal further, notification was received from the Department of Rural and Community Development advising of the potential reinstatement of the Local Improvement Scheme and local authorities were invited to submit a schedule of roads which could be completed before year end, if funding was made available.

As you are aware, Clare County Council has since received an allocation of €482k which, together with the local contribution from applicants under the scheme and the

ringfenced sum of €100k above will enable the completion of 24 individual projects across the county in 2017.

While details of 2018 funding allocations for roads have not yet been advised, there is every reason to be optimistic that the Local Improvement Scheme will be continued next year and in anticipation of this it is proposed to advertise in the coming weeks seeking applications to compile a new Local Improvements Scheme priority list, from which eligible roads will be selected for future funding.

In the circumstances then whereby the re-instatement of the Local Improvement Scheme has in effect addressed the objective of the resolution adopted in March 2016, it is recommended that the members consider rescinding the resolution as adopted”.

The members agreed that the re-introduction of the funding for Local Improvement Schemes has been a great success and it needs to be enhanced.

Cllr. J. Flynn advised that while he co-signed the original motion the Council should defer it for the time being. Cllr. M. Begley feels that there is a risk if the Council were to provide our own funds that the Department might not provide funds to carry out this work. Cllr. P.J. Kelly said that the Council should hold back on drawing down loan and put the matter back on the agenda in three months time.

The Chief Executive advised that the Department had been contacted in relation to the Local Improvement Scheme and while no answer had yet been received he was relatively confident that the scheme would continue. He felt that it would be prudent if the Government was providing grant aid that the Council does not draw down the loan at this time.

It was agreed (by a show of hands) that the resolution passed by the Council at the March 2016 meeting be deferred. Some felt that three months may be too little time in which to get answer from the Department. The Chief Executive said that he would keep the elected members updated on this matter. It was confirmed that the motion was not being rescinded.

**Item 10: Presentation from Matthew Thomas, C.E.O., Shannon Group plc at 3:00 p.m.**

Mr. Matthew Thomas, Chief Executive of the Shannon Group made a presentation to Council and outlined the key functions of the four divisions that make up Shannon Group:

- Shannon Airport
- Shannon Heritage
- Shannon International Aviation Services Centre
- Shannon Commercial Properties

In relation to Shannon Airport Matthew Thomas advised that significant progress was made in 2017:-

- New airlines including Lufthansa, Norwegian and SAS
- New restaurants and shops to make the airport more attractive, introduced 60 local products.

- Spent €15m on runway resurfacing with no Government funding.
- New sponsorship deal with Munster Rugby
- Capturing the Wild Atlantic Way

He outlined how Shannon Airport was working within a very challenging environment with intense competition from Dublin Airport having 87% of the market share. The Regional Airports receive significant State support.

The National Planning Framework is an opportunity but the Government must be ambitious. The Airport is critical in companies' location and expansion decisions. Over 40% of US FDI companies are within the airport's catchment. Shannon Airport is the most accessible gateway to the Wild Atlantic Way.

There has been a large investment in new property, 500,000 square feet. In relation to Ennis Technology Park, Matthew Thomas advised that the office block consists of 42,000 square feet, with 75% occupancy. There is 26 acres of development land available but access to site needs to be improved.

In relation to Shannon Heritage there has been strong growth in recent years, visitor numbers have doubled in recent years, generating 253,000 hotel bed nights.

Mr. Thomas advised that further investment is required in such areas as developing tourist experience, security equipment at airport, road access development. He said that Shannon Group plc. was not looking for handouts just a level playing field.

The Councillors thanked Mr. Thomas for his presentation and he then took questions.

Cllr. P.J. Ryan referred to the lack of representation on the Board and promotion of Shannon Airport both in the U.S.A. and through travel agencies. Cllr. A. O'Callaghan acknowledged that a lot of work was being carried out in relation to Shannon Commercial Properties but was disappointed by the numbers going to Knappogue and Craggaunowen. He also referred to a flight that had been diverted and had dumped a lot of fuel. Cllr. P. Hayes referred to our market share going from 5.4% to 5.1%. He felt that outside investment was needed and wondered was independence a good idea as Shannon Airport was not being supported. Cllr. G. Flynn said he had not been a supporter for the autonomy of Shannon Airport. He was disappointed that there was no mention of Shannon Town in the presentation and felt that the selling off of non-performing assets was taking away from the viability of Shannon Town. Cllr. J. Crowe advised that Clare County Council has always supported Shannon Airport and that this presentation was very important as the Council needed to know what was happening. Shannon Airport is critical for the region and connectivity is vital. In relation to Shannon Commercial Properties Cllr. M. Begley asked what were their plans for Gillogue.

Mr. Thomas thanked the Councillors for inviting him to make presentation and a more regular update to Councillors should be formalised. He said that the market has grown over the last few years and their passenger numbers have grown by 25% but Dublin's growth is faster. Shannon Airport has done better than other regional airports. He felt that under Dublin Airport Authority the situation would be bleaker for Shannon Airport. In relation to the Draft National Planning Framework it was very Dublin centralised. Submission to the Draft National Planning Framework was made on Friday. Mr. Thomas said that briefing with Oireachtas Members was very important. He advised that he was not aware of the incident involving the dumping of fuel but would look into it. Tourism Ireland is responsible for marketing in America

but they do not appear to have targets. With regard to deal being signed for direct flights between China, he was not aware of this but would check this out.

**Item 11. National Housing Co-operative society.**

Ar moladh Cllr. C. Colleran Molloy  
Cuidithe ag Cllr. C. Crowe agus glacadh leis

“In the backdrop of our national housing emergency and the stresses experienced by so many at risk of homelessness due to mortgage distress, that Clare County Council call on An Taoiseach to support enactment by the Oireachtas of the National Housing Co-op Bill 2017 to provide for the establishment of an Industrial & Provident Society to be called the **National Housing Co-operative Society** with the mandate and powers to acquire, manage, rent or sell distressed mortgages so that the occupants of houses can move from the status of distressed mortgagor by means of "rent and mortgage" AND that this Clare County Council Motion once passed, be copied to all other local authorities encouraging their adoption of similar such motion.”

It was agreed that this was a very good motion and that the Government needed to take control rather than the private sector.

**Item 12. Speed limits.**

Ar moladh Cllr. J. Flynn  
Cuidithe ag Cllr. M. Howard agus glacadh leis

“In light of success in Dublin of reduction of speed limits to 30km/h in streets and housing estates that Clare County Council commit to completing a similar project by 2020 starting with housing estates.”

**Tom Tiernan, Senior Engineer replied as follows:**

“While it is acknowledged that the introduction of a 30 km/hr zone in Dublin city centre has had an impact, I would suggest that it isn’t appropriate to compare this with what might pertain as a result of a similar change in housing estates in Co. Clare. The traffic environment is totally different in Dublin from what it is in largely rural counties such as Clare. Also the degree to which enforcement can and does take place in Dublin bears no comparison with what can be achieved in this regard in this county.

In general terms, guidelines pertaining to setting of speed limits advise that for a particular speed limit to be successfully implemented, the driving environment needs to be such that it is compatible with and would be conducive to driving at or below the proposed speed limit and with little temptation to exceed it. Within the past two years, the Council conducted a pilot project which involved reduction of speed limits to 30 km/hr in more than 50 housing estates around the county – mostly in Shannon. This involved carrying out pre-installation speed surveys – to be followed a no. of months after installation by further similar surveys. The outcome was that the installation of 30 km/hr signage at the entrance to the estates in question made minimal difference in terms of the speeds which are adopted by everyday traffic at these locations – in fact, in some cases, the post installation survey showed a marginal increase in average speeds.

Therefore, the pilot would suggest that there is nothing to be gained in terms of speed limit reduction by introducing signage only where the driving environment isn't compatible with the proposed speed limit. For the desired outcome to evolve, some engineering works would invariably be required in addition to signage to make the environment compatible with the lower speed limit. The Department of Transport, being cognisant of the pilot carried out in Clare and of experiences elsewhere, this year invited Clare County Council and two other local authorities to implement pilot traffic calming schemes in housing estates with a view to determining the nature of works required in existing housing estates to facilitate the desired speed limit reduction. The pilot scheme designed and proposed by the Council has been approved and funded by the Department and is now under construction at Bóthar na Rinne in Shannon.

Given the foregoing, I would suggest that the most appropriate means of endeavouring to achieve genuine 30 km/hr speed limit zones in housing estates is to work with the Department with a view to development of a strategy that can be successful rather than plan to erect thousands of signs which ultimately will have little or no effect. Given the costs which are likely to evolve in achieving this, it is unlikely that such an objective can be successfully implemented by 2020."

Cllr. J. Flynn stated that he was not happy with response and feels that the Council needs to be more proactive.

Tom Tiernan, Senior Engineer advised that we were all in agreement in relation to 30 km/h speed limit but experience has shown that signage on its own does not make a difference. He hoped that the pilot scheme that is being introduced in Shannon will be successful.

Upon the request of Cllr. M. Begley Item No. 26 was brought forward.

**Item 26. Limerick Hinterland Fund.**

Ar moladh Cllr. M. Begley

"I wish to seek an update on the projects being funded under the Limerick Hinterland Fund and I call on Clare County Council to ask the Minister for Sport, Mr. Brendan Griffin, T.D., when he will announce the 2017 Sports Capital Programme allocations and if he proposes to increase the fund to meet the current application demands".

**Carmel Greene, Senior Executive Officer, Corporate Services replied as follows:**

"The report advised that the Limerick Hinterland Study was commissioned by Limerick City and County Council to examine the impact of Limerick regeneration on its hinterland. In response to its findings, the Department of the Environment, Community and Local Government advised the Council that a sum of €500,000 was being made available to Clare County Council and that this sum must be matched by the local authority.

In relation to County Clare, the relevant areas were Limerick City and suburbs, Parteen, Ennis Legal Town and its environs, Killaloe and Shannon Legal Town.

The Members agreed to apply this funding to the following:



Project	Approved sum	Update on project
Provision of playground facilities in the Westbury/ Parteen area	€185,000	<p>On the 16<sup>th</sup> May 2017, the Elected Members of Shannon Municipal District approved a preferred site for a playground in the Westbury / Parteen area, which was within Shanakyle All Weather Pitch.</p> <p>Planning permission was submitted on the 9<sup>th</sup> October 2017 and further Information has been requested on the planning application.</p>
Provision of playground and footpath in Meelick area	€105,000	<p>On the 11<sup>th</sup> July 2017, the Elected Members of Shannon Municipal District approved a preferred site for a playground in the Meelick area, which is within the grounds of Meelick Community Centre.</p> <p>Planning permission was submitted on the 7<sup>th</sup> September 2017. Further information was requested by the Planning department on the 1<sup>st</sup> November 2017.</p>
Development of amenity and recreation spaces in Limerick Environs area	€85,000	<p>The main element of this relates to the clean-up of a large quantity of dumped material and landscaping of green areas in the estate and this work is on-going. Footpath drop kerbs were also installed in a number of locations to cater for disabled access and some pavement overlay works undertaken. A tree planting programme for the estate has been developed but progress to date on implementation has been slow to be accommodated by this grant.</p>
Implementation of elements of the Shannon Green Infrastructure Plan	€85,000	<p>This scheme is for the installation of a small feature garden near Cluain Airne and the construction of a section of footpath / cycle track on Bothar na Rinne towards the estuary. Design has recently been completed and work will be commencing in mid November.</p>
Provision of Cycleways, Smart Travel Initiatives in Gillogue/ Garraun	€185,000	<p>A consultant was appointed and a draft design has been completed in relation to this proposed project. Consultation with relevant stakeholders is ongoing.</p>

<b>Project</b>	<b>Approved sum</b>	<b>Update on project</b>
Provision of a car park in Killaloe	€135,000	Progress on this project is dependent on outcome of a development which is the subject of an appeal on a planning permission to An Bord Pleanála.
Development of a park at Tobermurragh/Bane's Field Killaloe	€135,000	At the March meeting the proposed development of Tobermurragh and Bane Field, Killaloe as a Town Park was approved by the Council. Initial works relate to footpath improvements on New Road and landscaping to the park boundary. Once the Planning application by the Tennis Club is determined, the pedestrian improvements proposed which are dependent on alterations to the existing boundary wall can be progressed.
Extension of walking routes etween Killaloe and Ogonnelloe	€85,000	This project is completed.

Cllr. M. Begley while noting that one project has been completed he feels progress has been slow. He was particularly concerned in relation to progress on the provision of Cycleways, Smart Travel Initiatives in Gillogue/Garraun as it is causing problems for both cyclists and drivers. He asked the Chief Executive to give particular attention to this project.

He also asked that the Minister for Sport, Mr. Brendan Griffin be asked when the Sports Capital Programme allocations will be announced.

### **Item 13. Public lighting scheme.**

Ar moladh Cllr. P.J. Kelly  
Cuidithe ag Cllr. C. Curtin agus glacadh leis

“That financial provision be made in the Estimates for the re-introduction of a public lighting scheme for rural villages.”

#### **Tom Tiernan, Senior Engineer replied as follows:**

“Ultimately it is a matter for the Elected Members of the Council to decide whether there should be provision for the reintroduction of a public lighting scheme for rural villages in the 2018 budget. With respect to the spirit of the notice of motion, I would not be recommending that such a provision be made. While I agree, in principle, that there is a strong case for the provision of additional public lighting in some rural villages, the fact is that much enhanced funding provision is also required to a very significant degree for the existing public lighting infrastructure in the county and it is difficult to argue in favour of adding additional facilities when the existing

infrastructure is depreciating, not to mention the fact that a very large proportion of the lanterns across the county need to be replaced by LED technology to facilitate the efficiency required by 2020 carbon footprint requirements.

At present, it is estimated that it would cost between €7m and €10m to carry out the most urgent infrastructural remediation works across the county and to replace approximately two thirds of lanterns by LED Luminaires – the approximate proportion required to facilitate the aforementioned 2020 targets. While energy savings which would accrue from replacement of the lanterns would pay for a proportion of the foregoing sum over a no. of years, the fact is that a significant investment is required in relation to existing infrastructure and in this regard an additional investment of €1m per annum over and above current allocations would not be an exaggeration of what is required – at this stage, it remains unclear how this challenge can be met.

In such circumstances, I think it is very difficult to justify the concept of providing additional lights to a network which needs so much investment.”

It was agreed by the Members to discuss this further when the road grant allocations have been announced.

#### **Item 15. Road infrastructure.**

Ar moladh Cllr. P.J. Ryan  
Cuidithe ag Cllr. I. Lynch agus glacadh leis

“That this Council would draw up a medium to long-term plan for road infrastructure in this county with emphasis on roads leading to tourist attractions and potential industrial sites.”

#### **Tom Tiernan, Senior Engineer replied as follows:**

“Up until 2012 or so the “Specific Improvement” scheme of grants was in place and was part of the regular schedule of annual grants paid out by the Department of Transport, Tourism and Sport in support of the Non-National Road network. The main criteria around which decisions were made in terms of approval focussed on whether a road under consideration was or could be supportive of tourism, fisheries, forestry or agricultural development. The county benefited from grants to the tune of up to €4m annually when the Specific Improvement scheme of grants was delivering to its maximum during the boom era up to 2008 but it gradually reduced to less than €1m per annum for Clare when it was withdrawn approximately 5 years ago.

At present, there are no direct indications that S.I. grants will be restored but my understanding is that the Department of Transport, Tourism and Sport hasn’t ruled out the possibility that there could be a re-introduction of S.I. grants or similar over the next few years as the level of roads funding gradually improves. Therefore, I would concur with the spirit of this motion and I would agree that it would now be timely to examine the county’s priorities in this context and be in a position to vigorously pursue the kind of funding referred to above in the event that it becomes available in the foreseeable future. Furthermore, I would propose to pursue the issue with the Department once an appropriate list of projects has been identified and prioritised.”

Cllr. P.J. Ryan stated that the road from Ennis to Kilrush was very poor and while the county has very good tourist attractions our poor road infrastructure were making them difficult to reach.

Tom Tiernan, Senior Engineer confirmed that he agreed with the motion and the Council needed to prepare a list of projects to be completed should funding become available.

**Item 17. EU fines for waste water discharges.**

Ar moladh Cllr. I. Lynch  
Cuidithe ag Cllr. G. Keating agus glacadh leis

“That Clare County Council call on the Minister for Finance to immediately request that the EU convert the current fines payable by the Irish government, for failure to ensure waste water is adequately treated before discharge, in to a loan book to adequately finance the capital investment needed to complete the required infrastructure.”

**Item 18. Flood protection.**

Ar moladh Cllr. C. Crowe  
Cuidithe ag Cllr. C. Colleran Molloy agus glacadh leis

"That Clare County Council apply for short-term permits to import inert, clean materials (soil and stone) and use these materials to provide improved flood protection to communities."

**Tom Tiernan, Senior Engineer replied as follows:**

“While I concur with the spirit of this motion, it would be extremely difficult in practical terms to achieve what is suggested. The term “improved flood protection to communities” suggests permanent protection in areas which have been shown to be vulnerable to flooding and this would appear to contradict the term “short-term” permits. This, in turn, would suggest the development of flood relief schemes which, by their nature, have to be carefully planned, designed and implemented in accordance with an array of procedures which are to ensure that such developments don’t generate any compromise environmentally and don’t otherwise cause adverse impact while dealing with a particular flood vulnerability.

Apart from what has been done to date at various locations throughout the county, the Council is pursuing development of an array of flood relief schemes in locations which have been identified through CFRAMS as areas in need of further assessment (AFA) and in other locations where a positive cost benefit ratio can be achieved in the event that flood relief measures are put in place. Regrettably the procedures which must be followed in these situations can be time consuming. We are always prepared to pursue funding under the O.P.W. Minor Works Programme in relation to vulnerable locations once there is reasonable confidence that a positive benefit cost ratio can be established.

Outside of the foregoing, it is extremely difficult to determine in advance where a particular weather event might manifest itself most severely and, therefore, it is really only realistic to deal with any evolving situation by keeping in touch with weather models and by observing consequences on the ground with a view to responding in the most efficient way feasible depending on the nature of the impact. The Council's emergency response strategy very much focuses on such an approach and in this regard the Outdoor Staff, the Fire Service and the Civil Defence are available to provide support on the ground where and when required within reason and with the support of other bodies such as the Defence Forces where circumstances require it."

**Item 19. Age friendly parking spaces.**

Ar moladh Cllr. M. Howard  
Cuidithe ag Cllr. C. Crowe agus glacadh leis

"I request that Clare County Council follow the example of Cork County Council with the provision of "age-friendly" parking spaces."

**Tom Tiernan, Senior Engineer replied as follows:**

"As I understand it, the endeavours of Cork County Council have had a reasonably positive impact where implemented. Due to the fact that there is presently no means of legislating for or regulation of such facilities, there is no effective means of enforcement of what is required on foot of provision of these facilities. Their effectiveness is, therefore, dependent on the understanding of members of the general public and their willingness not to abuse the provision – it is effectively left to drivers to decide for themselves whether as a matter of conscience they deem themselves to be members of the community for whom the spaces are intended.

I would suggest that it would be appropriate to develop a policy around the concept suggested in this motion – for consideration by the relevant Strategic Policy Committee."

Cllr. M. Howard advised that Cork County Council has piloted this scheme in a number of locations and it has been very positive.

The Chief Executive advised that he is Chair of the Age Friendly Alliance and they are currently drawing up their Plan. He said that he would refer this matter to the Age Friendly Alliance.

**Item 20. Review of speed limits.**

Ar moladh Cllr. M. Hillery

"When will the review of the speed limits for Co. Clare be put before the Council?"

**Tom Tiernan, Senior Engineer replied as follows:**

“All of the statutory steps involved with the presently ongoing speed limit review have been taken with the exception of the final one which will involve formal consideration by the Council of the schedule of changes to speed limits which the final draft Speed Limit Scheme will articulate. Because of a number of issues centred around legal requirements, interpretation and the requirement to secure the formal consent of T.I.I. in relation to alteration of speed limits on National Routes, it has taken a little longer than originally anticipated to reach this final step. At this stage it is envisaged that the new scheme of Draft Speed Limit Bye-Laws will be placed before the Council for consideration at the December meeting.”

Cllr. M. Hillery said that he hoped to see this item on the December Agenda.

**Item 23. Illegal encampments.**

Ar moladh Cllr. C. Colleran Molloy

“That Clare County Council members be provided with the results of the countywide illegal encampments audit which was to be undertaken further to motion adopted in June 2017.”

**Liam Conneally, Director of Service replied as follows:**

“(i) The Social Development Directorate is currently finalising the recent Council Traveller Accommodation Audit report, which focused on the 10 No. Council-owned Traveller Accommodation (T.A.) sites throughout the County and in addition there was an overview conducted of a further 5 No. unauthorised encampments. The Audit scope for the Council-owned T.A. sites covered assessment of fire safety, condition of accommodation and site infrastructure, need for repair and maintenance works and assessment of cost estimates for works. The Audit was conducted jointly by staff from the Fire Service, Housing section, with support from electricians and plumbing and heating specialists.

In terms of the Audit findings, accommodation and site infrastructure on Council-owned T.A. sites were found generally to be in a reasonable condition. There were no significant issues found in relation to fire safety, and certain electrical repairs were carried out while the Audit team was on site. Detailed inspection reports for each site are currently being assessed and the detailed findings will be included in a final report to the Department of Housing, Planning and Local Government. The provisional cost estimate for repair, maintenance and upgrade works is just over €618,000 ex. V.A.T. broken down as follows:

<b>Area of Expenditure</b>	<b>Cost (€)</b>
Fire Safety/Electrical Installation	€42,000
Accommodation Units	€280,000
Infrastructure	€250,000

Plumbing/Heating	€46,000
Total Ex. V.A.T.	€618,000

(ii) Remedial works were carried out after one of the unauthorised encampments was vacated and the estimated cost of the remedial works for the particular site was €10,000. The other unauthorised encampments remain occupied.”

Liam Conneally, Director of Services answered questions raised by the elected members. As a result of the Audit it was found that less work was required than had been anticipated, therefore, this has not been provided for in the 2018 Budget.

**Item 24. Legal service providers.**

Ar moladh Cllr. C. Curtin

Cuidithe ag Cllr. P.J. Kelly agus glacadh leis

“That the Chief Executive advise the Council on the Professional Legal Attendances (No.) by Legal Service Providers acting for Clare County Council at the District, Circuit and High Court in 2016 and 2017 and in response that the Council adopt an appropriate reporting mechanism by the Executive to the elected members on the financial implications from same”.

**Niall Barrett, Head of Finance replied as follows:**

“Under the existing contract with Michael Houlihan and Partners, the attendance at court hearings is part of the professional service provided when such an attendance is required. Attendances are required in a variety of circumstances including in cases of litigation, enforcement, dance licence renewals and debt collection, etc. There can be a significant number of court attendances in any given year, and the type of attendance can vary from one hearing in a day in a particular court, to a single hearing taking place over many days, to a number of cases being heard in one day in a District Court.

The County Solicitor has advised that a report cannot be automatically generated from the systems available to him in order to list exactly the number of attendances by lawyers acting on behalf of Clare County Council in the period specified. The County Solicitor has advised it would be necessary to manually go through diaries and records of the firm’s solicitors in order to establish the dates on which there were court attendances on behalf of the Council; and the specify the number of cases dealt with on particular dates. Consequently and having regard to other commitments in progress, he advised he was unable to provide the information requested within the timeframe available.

In relation to reporting on financial implications of court attendances, the cost of time involved in such attendances are included as part of the cost payable for dealing with a particular file or case. As previously advised the costs of legal services paid will be reported to council on a six monthly basis as part of the management report to Council.”

Cllr. C. Curtin and the co-signees to this motion expressed disappointment that the County Solicitor was not able to provide more detailed information in relation to the number of attendances by lawyers acting on behalf of Clare County Council. Cllr. P.J. Kelly hoped that costs in this area could be brought down.

The Chief Executive noted their comments and the spirit in which they were expressed and advised that he would revert with a full reply to this motion.

At 6:30 p.m. it was proposed by Cllr. G. Keating and agreed by all members to extend the meeting for ten minutes to complete the business of the meeting.

**Item 25. Tourism Promotion.**

Ar moladh Cllr. G. Keating  
Cuidithe ag Cllr. J. Flynn agus glacadh leis

“That Clare County Council in view of the positive 2017 Clare tourism figures call on Fáilte Ireland to increase the level of funding provided to this County towards the promotion and provision of tourism related facilities”.

**Brian McCarthy, A./Director of Economic Development replied as follows:**

“County Clare has an abundance of tourism resources, including natural, cultural and man-made attractions, vibrant towns and villages and contrasting landscapes and seascapes all of which are easily accessible to both national and international visitors. As one of the leading tourist counties in Ireland, Clare attracts significant numbers of tourists from the domestic and overseas markets. There is however is significant potential for greater sustainable growth in both numbers and spend.

It is an objective of the Clare County Development Plan 2017-2023 to develop a strong year round high quality integrated tourism product and work in partnership with relevant agencies to develop and enhance new and existing tourist products, attractions and tourism infrastructure. This naturally requires significant and targeted investment.

It is considered however that building on the recent successes and announcements of the EDEN Award for Scattery Island; the completion of the Holy Island Sustainable Tourism and Visitor Management Plan; the inclusion of Clare Coastline on the ‘Cool Route’ and the continued success of the Loop Head Lighthouse and a range of other attractions county-wide, it is timely that Clare County Council advocates that Fáilte Ireland increases the level of funding provided to this County towards the promotion and provision of tourism related facilities.”

**Item 27. Shannon Airport.**

Ar moladh Cllr. P. Daly  
Cuidithe ag Cllrs. J. Crowe, P. McMahon agus J. Breen agus glacadh leis

“We call on the Government to put policies in place to ensure that Shannon Airport can compete in a level playing pitch with Dublin Airport to achieve regional balance development through the National Planning Framework.”



Both Cllrs. P. Daly and J. Crowe referred to the presentation given by Matthew Thomas, C.E.O. of the Shannon Group. Cathaoirleach T. McNamara referred to the invitation issued to Deputy Shane Ross, Minister for Transport, Tourism and Sport and the reply received, where he advised that he would not be able to attend a meeting of the Council.

It was agreed that this motion be sent to An Taoiseach.

**Item 28. Skilled employees.**

Ar moladh Cllr. J. Crowe  
Cuidithe ag Cllr. C. Curtin agus glacadh leis

“That Clare County Council calls on the Government to encourage our skilled and trained young people who had to emigrate during the recession to return home as there is a strong demand for these skilled employees given that our economy is improving. A special recruitment drive initiative similar to ‘The Gathering’ which proved so successful for the tourism industry should be introduced to target these workers to fill our skills gaps”.

It was agreed to write to the Department in relation to this matter.

**Item 29. Contributory pension entitlements.**

Ar moladh Cllr. G. Flynn  
Cuidithe ag Cllr. J. Flynn agus glacadh leis

“That Clare County Council call on the Minister for Social Protection to reverse the unfair and discriminatory policy of penalising home makers that took some time out to care for their family prior to 1994 and to address the Austerity measure that penalised approximately 35,000 people, mainly women, that was brought in by the Government on 6th April, 2012 concerning Contributory Pension Entitlements and if the motion is agreed that the request be sent to the Minister and also circulated to all other Councils”.

Cllr. G. Flynn understands that the Minister is bringing forward legislation in relation to this. It was agreed that this motion would be forwarded onto the Minister and circulated to all other Councils.

**Item 30. Comhfhreagras. Correspondence.**

Cllr. J. Flynn wished to know was there any update on the potential purchase of the former Our Lady’s Hospital Site at the Gort Road in Ennis. The Chief Executive advised that he had had a feasibility study carried out and that the advice to him at present is that financially it would be prohibitive.

**The following correspondence was circulated with the agenda:**

1. Correspondence dated 18<sup>th</sup> October, 2017 from An Taisce in relation to planning files in Clare.

2. Correspondence dated 27<sup>th</sup> October, 2017 from Department of Transport, Tourism and Sport in relation to Shannon International Airport.
3. Correspondence dated 12<sup>th</sup> October, 2017 from the O.P.W. in relation to a National Flood Insurance Scheme.
4. Correspondence dated 11<sup>th</sup> October, 2017 from the Department of Housing, Planning and Local Government in relation to the sustainability of the retained firefighter model.
5. Correspondence dated 12<sup>th</sup> October, 2017 from the Office of the Minister for Employment Affairs and Social Protection in relation to Personal Assistants for people with disabilities.
6. Correspondence dated 11<sup>th</sup> October, 2017 from the Department of Communications, Climate Action & Environment regarding post office network.
7. Correspondence dated 17<sup>th</sup> October, 2017 from An Garda Siochana regarding GoSafe prosecutions.
8. Correspondence dated 17<sup>th</sup> October, 2017 from Mike Hanrahan on behalf of Stocktons Wing members in relation to civic reception.
9. Report on National Water Resources Plan.
10. Resolution from Mayo County Council in relation to ragworth.
11. Resolution from Limerick City and County Council in relation to maintenance, repair and upkeep of all our rivers and streams.
12. Resolution from Monaghan County Council in relation to affordable childcare.
13. Resolution from Tipperary County Council calling on the Department of Transport, Tourism and Sport to reintroduce the Urban Road Minor Improvement Grant.
14. Resolution from Wexford County Council in relation to post office network.
15. Resolution from Sligo County Council in relation to Alzheimer Society of Ireland.
16. Conference entitled “The Fair Deal Scheme” taking place in the Clonakilty Hotel, Clonakilty, Co. Cork on 17<sup>th</sup> – 19<sup>th</sup> November, 2017.
17. Conference entitled “Audit Committees in the Irish Local Government System” taking place in the Four Seasons Hotel, Carlingford, Co. Louth on 1<sup>st</sup> – 3<sup>rd</sup> December, 2017.
18. Conference entitled “A Practical Guide to Budget 2018” taking place in The Clonakilty Hotel, Clonakilty, Co. Cork on 8<sup>th</sup> - 10<sup>th</sup> December, 2017.
19. Conference entitled “Excel Training for Councillors on Cashflow and Budget Spreadsheets” taking place in the Clonakilty Hotel, Clonakilty, Co. Cork on 13<sup>th</sup> & 14<sup>th</sup> December, 2017.
20. Conference entitled “ODCE/Office of the Director of Corporate Enforcement” taking place in the Clonakilty Hotel, Clonakilty, Co. Cork on 21<sup>st</sup> – 23<sup>rd</sup> December, 2017.

21. Policy Forum for Ireland Keynote Seminar entitled “Responding to Brexit – risks, opportunities and priorities for policy” taking place in Central Dublin on 8<sup>th</sup> February, 2018.

### **Conferences.**

#### **Reports on Seminars/Conferences attended.**

With regard to seminars/conferences attended, reports completed in accordance with Section 142 of the Local Government Act 2001 were made available at the meeting.

#### **AILG Training Seminar taking place in Killarney, Co. Kerry on 8<sup>th</sup> June, 2017.**

The Meetings Administrator informed the Members that the estimated average cost per Councillor attending this Conference was €338.20 including conference fee of €50.

It was agreed that Cllr. M. Hillery attend this Conference.

#### **AILG Training Seminar entitled “Welling for Councillors” taking place in Silver Spring Hotel, Cork on 23<sup>rd</sup> September, 2017.**

The Meetings Administrator informed the Members that the estimated average cost per Councillor attending this Conference was €296.03 including conference fee of €50.

It was agreed that Cllrs. P. Burke, T. McNamara and M. Howard attend this Conference.

#### **LAMA Autumn Seminar entitled “Waste Management – Better Energy” taking place in Hotel Minella, Coleville Road, Clonmel, Co. Tipperary on 29<sup>th</sup> – 30<sup>th</sup> September, 2017.**

The Meetings Administrator informed the Members that the estimated average cost per Councillor attending this Conference was €490.02 including conference fee of €160.

It was agreed that Cllrs. M. Howard and T. McNamara attend this Conference.

#### **AILG Autumn Training Seminar taking place in Sligo Park Hotel, Sligo on 12<sup>th</sup> & 13<sup>th</sup> October, 2017.**

The Meetings Administrator informed the Members that the estimated average cost per Councillor attending this Conference was €564.45 including conference fee of €125.

It was agreed that Cllrs. P. Burke, J. Cooney, M. Howard, T. McNamara, A. O’Callaghan, B. Slattery and P. Murphy attend this Conference.

#### **AILG Autumn Training Seminar taking place in Kilkenny on 26<sup>th</sup> October, 2017.**

The Meetings Administrator informed the Members that the estimated average cost per Councillor attending this Conference was €324.69 including conference fee of €50.

It was agreed that Cllrs. T. O'Brien, P.J. Kelly, J. Breen, P. Murphy, J. Cooney, P. McMahon, M. Hillery, P. Daly, J. Crowe, P. Burke, P.J. Ryan and M. Begley attend this Conference.

**Conference entitled “Rebuilding Ireland Action Plan for Housing and Homelessness” taking place in the Four Seasons Hotel, Carlingford, Co. Louth on 3<sup>rd</sup> – 5<sup>th</sup> November, 2017.**

The Meetings Administrator informed the Members that the estimated average cost per Councillor attending this Conference was €522.43 including conference fee of €100.

It was agreed that Cllr. M. Howard attend this Conference.

**AILG Autumn Training Seminar taking place in Dublin on 11<sup>th</sup> November, 2017.**

The Meetings Administrator informed the Members that the estimated average cost per Councillor attending this Conference was €577.35 including conference fee of €50.

It was agreed that Cllr. A. O'Callaghan attend this Conference.

**AILG Autumn Training Seminar taking place in Gorey, Co. Wexford on 14<sup>th</sup> November, 2017.**

The Meetings Administrator informed the Members that the estimated average cost per Councillor attending this Conference was €394.57 including conference fee of €50.

It was agreed that Cllrs. P.J. Kelly, C. Curtin, J. Cooney, P. Burke, B. Slattery and M. Begley attend this Conference.

**Seminar entitled “Farm Safety & Health – Protecting your life and livelihood” taking place in the Auburn Lodge Hotel, Gort Road, Ennis, Co. Clare on 17<sup>th</sup> November, 2017.**

The Meetings Administrator informed the Members that the estimated average cost per Councillor attending this Conference was €62.28.

It was agreed that Cllr. C. Curtin attend this Conference.

**AILG Autumn Training Seminar taking place in Dunboyne, Co. Meath on 18<sup>th</sup> November, 2017.**

The Meetings Administrator informed the Members that the estimated average cost per Councillor attending this Conference was €383.82 including conference fee of €50.

It was agreed that Cllrs. A. O'Callaghan, P. Murphy, T. McNamara, P.J. Ryan and J. Breen attend this Conference.

**Tourism for Conservation Seminar taking place in Ennistymon on 23<sup>rd</sup> November, 2017.**

The Meetings Administrator informed the Members that the estimated average cost per Councillor attending this Conference was €47.94.

It was agreed that Cllr. C. Curtin attend this Conference.

The meeting then concluded.

**Signed:** \_\_\_\_\_  
**Riarthóir Cruinnithe**

**Signed:** \_\_\_\_\_  
**Cathaoirleach**

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