

Note of the Corporate Policy Group Meeting held on the 18th September 2017

Present: Councillor Pdraig Fleming, (Chair),
Councillor Mary Sweeney,
Councillor James Kelly,
Councillor Seamus McDonald,
Councillor Paddy Bracken.

In Attendance: Mr. John Mulholland, Chief Executive,
Mr. Kieran Kehoe, Director of Services,
Mr. Michael Rainey, A/Director of Services,
Mr. Gerry Murphy, Head of Finance, and
Ms. Irene Delaney, Administrative Officer.

(1) (i) Minutes of Corporate Policy Group Meeting held on the 24th July 2017

The minutes of the Corporate Policy Group Meeting held on the 24th July 2017 were noted and agreed.

(ii) Minutes of Corporate Policy Group Meeting held on the 5th September 2017

The minutes of the Corporate Policy Group Meeting held on the 5th September 2017 were noted and agreed.

(2) Agenda for Monthly Meeting

The draft agenda for the September meeting scheduled for the 25th September 2017 was discussed and noted. The following issues in particular were noted:-

- Graiguecullen Local Area Plan 2012 – 2018 – Mr. Kieran Kehoe, Director of Services advised that the purpose of the extension was to allow Laois County Council together with all other relevant stakeholders adequate time and opportunity to realize the strategic objectives for the LAP in accordance with the proper planning and sustainable development of the Area.
- Proposed Land Disposals – Mr. Kieran Kehoe, Director of Services outlined the background to the proposed disposals at Oldtown and Trumera. Mr. Gerry Murphy, Head of Finance outlined the background to the proposed disposals of freehold interest and advised that same was necessary in order to facilitate the amalgamation of the annuity and shared ownership elements.
- Taking in Charge of Bellingham (Phase 1 – Area 2) and The Village, Ballylinan – noted - the Members enquired as to the number of estates in the county which are not yet taken in charge. Details to be checked further.
- Approval of overdraft accommodation – Mr. Gerry Murphy, Head of Finance advised that this is a matter which comes before the Members annually and outlined the details in relation to same.
- Development Contribution Scheme 2017 – 2023 – Mr. John Mulholland, Chief Executive briefed the meeting in relation to the Scheme. He referred to the provision which has been included in relation to incentivizing the delivery of housing in the private sector and the meeting was also advised that a reduction of €2/ m² in the commercial rate is also included in order to incentivize the commercial sector. A general discussion took place in relation to incentives

available for the rejuvenation of small towns etc. and the specific measures available were outlined. The importance of publicizing such measures was discussed and it was agreed that details of same would be included in a press release which will be issued following the meeting on Monday. In addition, the matter will be listed for the next Municipal Districts meetings together with details of relevant contact persons etc.

- Nomination of Members to the Board of Portarlinton Leisure Centre – it was noted that this item was deferred from the July meeting following a request from the Elected Members to establish if it was possible to increase the number of Elected Members on the Board from 3 to 4. Mr. Michael Rainey, A/Director of Services advised that the matter was considered by the Board at their last meeting and a formal decision in relation to same is currently awaited. In this regard, it was noted that this item may be deferred to the October meeting.

(3) Updates from Municipal Districts

Mr. John Mulholland, Chief Executive advised that this is a standing item on the Agenda. There are no items currently for noting.

(4) Requests for Receptions

'Cassels Report – Future of Third Level Education – it was noted Laois County Council has received a request from the Southern Region of the Union of Student's in Ireland (USI)) to make a presentation to the September meeting of Laois County Council. It was agreed to request a copy of the documentation for further consideration by the CPG at their next meeting.

(5) River Basin Management – Setting a date for the Local Authority

Agree date for Feedback and Engagement workshops with Elected Members and the Public - Mr. Michael Rainey, A/Director of Services outlined the background to this issue and it was agreed to list same for consideration by the Members at the September meeting.

(6) Ratification of Conferences/Training

The Members were circulated with details of forthcoming conferences and the list as circulated was approved. It was noted that details of the criteria applied when considering the classification of events as training or conferences was circulated to the CPG. A general discussion took place in relation to same and it was agreed to discuss the matter further with Mr. Donal Brennan, Director of Services following the next CPG meeting on 16th October, 2017.

(7) Economic and Tourism Development

(i) Marketing Strategy

Mr. Kieran Kehoe, Director of Services advised that the strategy is nearing completion. In relation to the Business Support Unit, works are progressing and arrangements will be made in the coming weeks for staff to commence of re-locating to the new offices. It is proposed to launch the Strategy in conjunction with the opening of the LEO Offices/Business Support Unit which is

proposed for mid October, circa 20th October 2017. It was also noted that details of the IDA's new representative for the Midland region are currently awaited.

(ii) Tourism Strategy

The meeting was advised that matters are progressing satisfactorily.

(iii) Slieve Bloom Mountain Bike Trail

Mr. John Mulholland, Chief Executive advised that he is meeting with representatives from Coillte on Friday 22nd September 2017 to discuss progress on the project.

A general discussion took place in relation to extensive range of festivals and events that were held during the Summer months and the large number of visitors to the County. It was also noted that Culture Night is scheduled to take place on Friday 22nd September 2017. Details of the recent success achieved by Abbeyleix in the Entente Florale competition were also noted and all associated with same were congratulated.

The possibility of producing a booklet/guide outlining all the tourist attractions for visitors to Laois was discussed and it was agreed to consider same further. Details of the specific Laois Heritage apps were outlined.

(8) Risk Management/Health and Safety

With regard to Health and Safety, Mr. Kieran Kehoe, Director of Services advised the meeting that there are no major incidents to report. It was also noted that the provision of training for staff in relation to dealing with violence and aggression is currently ongoing.

(9) (i) Budget 2017

Mr. Gerry Murphy, Head of Finance advised the meeting that there are no major issues to report at present.

(ii) Budget 2018

Mr. Gerry Murphy, Head of Finance advised that the dates for the Budget meetings have been agreed, i.e. 9th and 13th November, 2017. He advised that the LPT increases will be incorporated into the draft Budget. He requested the Members to forward details of any particular issues which may need to be addressed as soon as possible so that they be considered as part of the budgetary process.

(iii) Housing Loan Statistics

Details of statistics in relation to Housing Loans for the period April to June 2017 were circulated. The matter was discussed and any queries raised were responded to by Mr. Murphy. Details of the number of houses purchased under the Tenant Purchase Scheme were also requested.

(10) Fix Date for Next Meeting

It was agreed that the next meeting would be held on Monday, 16th October. 2017 at 10.30 am.

(11) Any other matters

The following additional items were raised:

- An update was also provided by Mr. John Mulholland, Chief Executive following his recent meeting with the Minister for Housing, Planning and Local Government. In relation to the availability of land for the provision of housing, it was noted that the Council are actively trying to acquire lands.
- Pride of Place - it was agreed to arrange for the presentation of Certificates to the participants in the recent Pride of Place competition at the Community Awards night. Dates for same to be confirmed by Mr. Michael Rainey, A/Director of Services.

This concluded the business of the meeting.

Signed:



**Irene Delaney,
Administrative Officer**