

**COMHAIRLE CHONTAE DHUN NA nGALL**

Oifig Riarthóir na gCruinnithe  
Aras an Chontae  
Leifear  
3 Nollaig, 2024

**FOGRA CRUINNITHE**

A Chara,

Beidh Cruinniú Speisialta den Comhairle Chontae Dhún na nGall ar siúl Dé Luain 9 Nollaig, 2024 ag **10.00rn. in Áras an Chontae, Leifear.** Tá Clár an chruinnithe leis seo. Seolfar nasc leictreonach chuig an chruinniú i gcomhfhreagras eile.

Mise, le meas



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**Pádraig Ó Laifearaigh**  
Riarthóir Cruinnithe

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**DONEGAL COUNTY COUNCIL**

Office of Meetings Administrator  
County House  
Lifford.  
3<sup>rd</sup> December, 2024

**TO EACH MEMBER OF DONEGAL COUNTY COUNCIL**

**NOTICE OF MEETING**

Dear Councillor,

A Special Meeting of Donegal County Council will be held on Monday 9<sup>th</sup> December 2024 at 10.00am in the County House, Lifford. The agenda for the meeting is attached. An online link to join the meeting will issue separately.

Yours sincerely



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**Patsy Lafferty**  
Meetings Administrator

## AGENDA

1. Housing Capital Update.
2. Turnkey Acquisitions.
3. Approved Housing Bodies.
4. Housing Grant Scheme.
5. *Taking of decision pursuant to the Planning and Development Act, 2000 (Part XI), and the Planning and Development Regulations, 2001*  
To approve the carrying out of works with regard to the construction of a single-storey rural SI dwelling including wastewater treatment and all associated site development works at Ballyliffin, Co Donegal.

**MINUTES OF SPECIAL MEETING OF DONEGAL COUNTY COUNCIL HELD IN  
THE COUNTY HOUSE, LIFFORD ON THE 9<sup>TH</sup> DECEMBER 2024**

C/430/24

**MEMBERS PRESENT**

Cllrs J Kavanagh, Leas-Cathaoirleach, L Blaney, F Bradley, P Canning, D Coyle, T Crossan, T S Devine, A Doherty, D M Kelly, M Mc Bride, M Mc Dermott, P Mc Garvey, P Mc Gowan, M Mc Mahon, G Mc Monagle, D Meehan, D Nic Mheanman,.

*Online:* Cllrs, J Beard, C Brogan, B Carr, M C Mac Giolla Easbuig, F Mc Brearty, M Mc Clafferty, D mc Gee, J Murray and M Scanlon..

C/431/24

**OFFICIALS IN ATTENDANCE**

Liam Ward, Deputy Chief Executive/ Director Community Development & Planning Services, Patsy Lafferty, Director of Housing, Corporate and Cultural Services, Meetings Administrator, John Gallagher, Senior Engineer, Housing Capital, Eamonn Brown, Divisional Manager, Housing & Corporate, Donal Walker, Senior Engineer, Housing Capital Claire Burke, Senior Executive Architect, Housing Design, Thomas Melly, Senior Staff Officer, Housing & Corporate, Róise Ní Laifearaigh, Rannóg na Gaeilge, Dónall Mac Giolla Choill, Tacaíocht do Sheirbhísí Aistriúcháin, Frances Friel, Communications Officer, Anne Marie Crawford, Staff Officer, Corporate Services.

C/432/24

**ADJOURNMENT OF THE MEETING**

The Leas Cathaoirleach welcomed members to the meeting. On the proposal of Cllr Mc Gowan, seconded by Cllr Crossan, it was resolved to adjourn the meeting for a fifteen minute recess as a mark of respect for the late Philomena Doherty, mother of Cllr Gary Doherty.

Members extended sympathy to Cllr Doherty, his sisters Lisa and Michelle and the extended family circle.

C/433/24

**TO APPROVE THE CARRYING OUT OF WORKS WITH REGARD TO THE CONSTRUCTION OF A SINGLE-STOREY RURAL SI DWELLING INCLUDING WASTEWATER TREATMENT AND ALL ASSOCIATED SITE DEVELOPMENT WORKS AT BALLYLIFFIN CO DONEGAL- REF SI 10029**

Members considered the report circulated with the agenda in relation to the above.

On the proposal of Cllr Mc Dermott, seconded by Cllr Crossan, the carrying out of works with regard to the construction of a single storey rural SI dwelling including wastewater treatment and all associated site development works at Ballyliffin, Co Donegal Ref SI 10029 was approved, in accordance with Part XI of the Planning & Development Act, 2000 (as amended) and Part 8 of the Planning & Development Regulations 2001(as amended).

C/434/24

**HOUSING CAPITAL UPDATE**

Mr John Gallagher, Senior Engineer, provided an update on the progress made from the 11<sup>th</sup> November to the 9<sup>th</sup> December 2024 on

the various Housing Capital projects county-wide. This included an update on turnkey acquisitions, developments in in-house design and construction including design and build options and the Letterkenny Flagship Projects and an overview of the land acquisition programme.

Members welcomed the presentation and a lengthy debate ensued with the following issues highlighted.

### *Issues*

- Update requested in relation to the Kilty site, and an indication provided as to when the houses will be allocated. Issues need to be sorted as a matter of urgency.
- Ballymacool residents need to be kept in the loop regarding developments on the site and consulted on a regular basis going forward. Commitment needed that water upgrade works will be progressed.
- Concern that it is only when a development goes forward for planning that the need for water/sewerage upgrade is flagged.
- Full update requested on the road plan for Meadowhill, Raphoe so that the existing residents can be updated.
- Members emails reading defective concrete blocks issues needed to be responded to and feedback provided in relation to the associated technical issues.
- Archaeological Assessment an issue as there was a belief that these were only required in respect of the Historical Towns identified in the County Development plan.
- Concern with regard to the Air to Water heating systems when the electricity supply is off for a prolonged period. Has implications for the elderly and young families.
- Query regarding the 56 units in Carndonagh and whether Uisce Éireann are still of the opinion that there are capacity issues here.
- Noted that the Approved Housing Bodies had not been listed as showing any interest in providing accommodation in Inishowen.
- High level of need in the Milford Electoral Area and proposed projects will only meet 18% of the overall housing need.
- Lack of water/sewerage facilities hindering social housing development in the Milford Electoral Area which is presently lagging in terms of housing provision.
- Need to upgrade Treatment Plants in the Milford area as there are problems when power outages occur.
- Increased emphasis on turnkey provision required.
- Consideration warranted in terms of lands within the control points at Churchill which could be utilised for housing delivery.
- Sites in smaller towns and villages need to be looked at in terms of turnkey provision.
- Need for swift engagement with contactors in terms of suitable sites.
- S.I policy needs a revamp and the overall process speeded up.

- Concern that Uisce Éireann are hampering development in Carndonagh through lack of service provision and that water is being pumped out of Inishowen thus reducing capacity and hindering development in the Peninsula.
- Issue identified with the new Housing Adaptation Grant form in that there is no provision for fossil fuel options.
- Issues with water supply in Gort na Greine and Glentain must be sorted urgently. Dedicated contact number needed for Uisce Éireann so that when problems arise, they can be sorted in a speedy manner.
- Development being held up in Ramelton where specific sites have been identified but water and sewerage capacity the stumbling block.
- Issues with the pump at Coolcholly Pumping Station – query as to whether the issue is with the pump or are the problems related to the existing mains connection.
- Greater momentum required in terms of buying houses in Housing Estates.
- Additional piece of land could be bought at Kilylastin to increase the number of units from 9 to 11.
- Identified the need to form a working group to look at the issues surrounding water services infrastructure and the utilisation of a traffic light system which would streamline development and explore options for improving communication in terms of the current infrastructural deficits.
- Workshop needed to explore water and sewerage issues and to explore all options going forward.

### *Questions*

- Who pays for utility upgrades, and can Donegal County Council apply for funding to cover same in respect of works at Ballymacool, Oldtown etc?
- What geotechnical examinations have been carried out on housing developments currently under construction?
- Is it proposed to do a geotechnical examination on the ground area for any new developments so that it can be established whether the ground is contaminated and ensure that all concerned are fully aware of the type of concrete that needs to be put in?
- What companies have been approved to oversee the engineers plan of work?
- What laboratories have been used to test the concrete blocks and the concrete used in the foundations for new developments?
- How many Clerks of Works are on each site on behalf of Donegal County Council and the Department of Housing?
- Will the Contractors appoint Clerks of Work to oversee the projects on behalf of the Council?
- What sump tests have been done on lorries coming into these sites to pour the foundations?

- What level of testing on blocks and the foundations has been carried out to date on all of these new developments?
- Has there been any interest confirmed regarding the Cloondara development in Carndonagh?
- Is the Council interested in the lands opposite the football pitch in Milford?
- What surveys/studies are being carried out prior to the purchase of sites and what level of liaison takes place with the various utility companies?
- What is being done to progress the buying of houses in Ballymacool by Donegal County Council and what discussions have taken place to date?
- Issues with the pump at Glenswilly Chapel and what is being done to get this moved on to the mains power supply?
- Will the Part 8s for Oldtown and Milford go live this side of Christmas?
- Concern regarding the water supply at Lough Colmcille and query as to whether the required upgrades will proceed and who is ultimately responsible?
- What is the situation with the Cluid houses in Letterkenny?
- When will the houses at Crana Crescent be allocated?
- Has the route for the slip road at Drumacrin in Bundoran been identified as there is a need to ensure that traffic congestion does not become a problem in this area?

Mr Patsy Lafferty, Director of Housing, Corporate & Cultural Services said that it was intended to organise a workshop with the Letterkenny/Milford MD in the next week to go through the detail in relation to Ballymacool.

Mr John Gallagher, Senior Engineer responding to a number of queries advised that a meeting would be arranged with the residents in Ballymacool and members would receive an update in early 2025 regarding the design of the scheme. He said that Uisce Éireann were well aware that upgrades were needed at Ballymacool and were working on the detail. When this becomes available, he said, that an application would be made to the Department to fund the recommended upgrades and allow development to proceed. It was noted that there were regular meetings with Uisce Éireann regarding Ballymacool and other projects. Every effort was made, he advised, to flag projects with Uisce Éireann as early as possible before acquiring land and same was purchased only where there were adequate mains water and wastewater connections. Members would, he added, be kept up to date with the progress on same.

He noted that there had been a number of questions in relation to pumping stations and water and sewerage issues which were within the remit of Uisce Éireann only. Contact details for the relevant personnel in Uisce Éireann should, he said, be available to members so that they are aware of who to contact when a situation arises.

In relation to the queries on the geo technical examinations, he said that site investigations and geological investigations of ground conditions were carried and fed into the design for all new projects.

Alluding to queries raised in relation to archaeological assessments in the Newtowncunningham and Tamney areas, he said that that there was acknowledgement that a measured response was needed but these had to be carried out where requested by the Department. Every effort wads made, he said, to do these in parallel with the site assessment process.

Cognisance was taken of the concerns raised by a number of members in relation to the air to water heating systems in social housing and the fact that these households were totally dependent on electricity. This was something, he advised, which could be looked at in the context of overall design issues.

It was noted that there were concerns in relation to the provision of social housing in the Milford Electoral Area and that it was intended to meet with the MD members early in the New Year to keep a focus on that area and to look also at the smaller rural areas in terms of land acquisition.

It was confirmed that capacity issues in Carndonagh had been raised at the recent meeting with Uisce Éireann and that these needed to be sorted before development could move forward.

Mr Gallagher said that studies and procedures were carried out with due diligence and that the aim was to frontload these at an early stage so that that a number of sites could be assessed in one lot prior to acquisition.

He advised that the Part 8 for Kilmacrennan would issue on the 12<sup>th</sup> December and that it was hoped to get the detail for Oldtown and Milford out before Christmas. Crana Crescent in Bunrana would, he confirmed, be complete in the next week to ten days.

Donegal County Council, he advised, were not responsible for the water issues in Gort na Greine but that contact details for the relevant personnel in Uisce Éireann would be circulated to members.

With regard to the slip road in Drumacrin, Bundoran, he noted that an indicative road alignment had been shown in the Development Plan and that it was also planned to look at land acquisition in that area also.

The issue with the pump at Coolcholly was a matter for Uisce Éireann, he confirmed.

Housing Capital, it was noted, were looking actively at houses in existing estates and the Regeneration Team were looking at derelict properties with the aim of moving these forward.

Issues at Killylastin, it was confirmed were in the process of being resolved.

Mr Gallagher informed the meeting that the Meadowhill, Raphoe project was onsite at the minute and was progressing well with the expected completion date being May 2025 and would be kept under ongoing review.

C/435/24

**UPDATE IN RELATION TO TURNKEY ACQUISITION AND APPROVED HOUSING BODIES**

Mr Donal Walker, Senior Engineer updated members in relation to the turnkey process and the status of the acquisition programme to date. An analysis of the proposals received since the initiation of the public procurement process in 2023 was presented and confirmation that this process would remain open until 2026.

Mr Eamonn Brown, Divisional manager, Housing & Corporate gave an overview of the role of the Approved Housing Bodies, Donegal County Council interaction with same, and the application of the Capital Advance Leasing Facility and the Capital Assistance Scheme. Members were then given details on the updated housing grant schemes, the key updates involved together with changes to the associated occupational therapist services assessments.

Concluding, he outlined, the fact that applications under the old scheme which had not yet been approved could be rescinded and a new application made. Applications approved but where the works had yet to commence could be rescinded also, he added, and a new application made. There was no provision however, he noted for applications that had been approved and works commenced.

Cllr Mc Brearty welcomed the updates on turnkeys, AHBs, Housing Grant Schemes and on a point of clarification said that there needed to be proper debate on the final two presentations as members had specific issues which warranted further debate. He alluded to the fact that the three grants were now included on the one application form and that the €75k ceiling was restrictive in specific circumstances. Inflation, the cost of living, the defective concrete block issue were all having an impact, he added. Extensions to Council Houses were now defective, he added, given the absence of proper building control.

The Leas-Cathaoirleach noting the time asked that questions in relation to the last two presentations be forwarded by email.



Mr Liam Ward, Deputy Chief Executive, said that the Director of Housing, Corporate & Cultural Services had indicated that he would be happy to discuss the issues outlined at a future special meeting.

This concluded the business of the meeting.

Cathaoirleach: \_\_\_\_\_

Dated: \_\_\_\_\_