**Minutes of Special Meeting of Cavan County Council, Members of European Parliament and Oireachtas Members held on 27 July 2016 in the Council Chamber**

Councillor F. Curtin, Cathaoirleach Presiding

Present: Councillors M. Argue, W. Bennett, C. Brady, D. Brady, P. Brady, N. Connell,

J.P. Feeley, E. Greenan, C. Kelly, P. McDonald, P. McVitty, P. O’Reilly,

S. O’Reilly, S.P.O’Reilly, P. Smith, S. Smith, V. Smith.

MEP’s M. Carthy, L. Flanagan, M. Harkin, M. McGuinness.

Deputies M. Kenny, B. Smith, N. Smyth

Senators R. Gallagher, J. O’Reilly, D. Wilson.

In Attendance: T. Ryan, Chief Executive

 D. Maguire, Head of Finance

 J. McLoughlin, Director of Service

 E. Doyle, Director of Service

 E. McGinn, Meetings Administrator

Apologies were received from Minister Heather Humphreys, Deputy Caoimhghín O’Caoláin, Councillors P. Brady, E. Greenan and S. Smith.

**1. Impact of Brexit on County Cavan**

**2. That Cavan County Council, noting the outcome of the Brexit referendum, calls on the Irish Government to work with the Northern Executive to ensure that the democratic wishes of the people of the North of Ireland to remain within the EU is respected and to ensure that an island wide solution is found that ensures that the interests of communities, workers and employers North and South, as well as the achievements of the Peace Process are safeguarded.**

**3. That the Council call on the Cross-Border Bodies to look at regulations that impact on those living in border communities.**

Councillor Fergal Curtin, Cathaoirleach welcomed all to the specially convened meeting of Cavan County Council to discuss one of the greatest challenges facing the region and county. Councillor Curtin thanked the Members of the European Parliament and Oireachtas Members for accepting his invitation to attend the meeting. Councillor Curtin noted that item No. 2 on the agenda was a motion placed by Councillor E. Greenan who due to work commitments was in America and Councillor P. McDonald agreed to read Councillor Greenan’s speech. After a lengthy discussion on Brexit with participation from MEPs, Oireachtas Members and Councillors the following were the main points taken from the discussion:-

* Sterling – value of sterling has already dropped by 10% against the euro and dollar. Irish firms are at a loss when exporting to Britain.
* Trade – Ireland’s trading relationship with Britain is most important as 51% of its farming exports go to the UK. The farming sector in the South which is already very vulnerable to market prices, is not a risk of further pricing issues on their export as their produce is now 10% more expensive to UK customers. The members noted that while there are issues that will affect Ireland the Country and County Cavan need to look at the strengths, weaknesses and opportunities that are there for us. The members stated that now is the time for Irish Companies to start creating even stronger links with their UK counterparts. They noted that Irish companies can become the sales platform for UK goods into the continent. They stated that the IDA now has a huge chance to entice UK companies into Ireland and regionalise them. The members noted that the fact Ireland is an English speaking country and a member of the EU will also leave it attractive for Foreign Investors.
* The North/South Peace Process – The EU has been a key element in supporting the Peace Process through support for economic development and community building projects. The development of peace in the north and the bringing together of the communities north and south of the border must continue.
* Free movement of people, goods and services – Important that we recognise that Northern Ireland voted to remain in the EU with 56% of voters voting to stay in the EU. As a result of Brexit will people living in one jurisdiction be able to continue to work or go to college in the other? Will there be a return of customs posts and the ensuing delays and inconvenience? Will people be able to access public services in either jurisdiction? It was noted that the British Prime Minister has indicated that there will be some changes in terms of the border but not a return to a border as it once was but the meaning of this is not defined. The free movement of goods, people and services is vital for the development of our economy in both jurisdictions.
* Taxes/Welfare – Irish workers in the UK will lose their right to British in-work benefit such as tax credits. Irish residents who have an English pension will be at a loss due to the value of sterling.

All members noted that the Taoiseach had done great work in trying to establish an All-Ireland Forum but were disappointed that First Minister Arlene Foster and her party believed that such a forum was not required. The members stressed that it was important that all political parties work together for the good of the Country.

It was noted by the MEP’s that article 50 says any member state may decide to withdraw from the Union in accordance with its own constitutional requirements. It specifies that a leaver should notify the European Council of its intention, negotiate a deal on its withdrawal and establish legal grounds for a future relationship with the EU. The members stated that on the European side the agreement needs a qualified majority of member states and consent of the European Parliament. They noted that article 50 gives negotiators two years from the date of article 50 notification to conclude new arrangements. From an Irish prospective the MEPs stated that they will work to reform the EU but it needs the views of the citizens.

**4. Proposals to remove Trauma Care Services from Cavan General Hospital.**

Councillor J.P. Feeley stated that the proposal to downgrade Accident & Emergency Services at Cavan General hospital is not acceptable and asked all public representatives in the County and the Region to act together to prevent any move by the HSE to downgrade these services at Cavan General Hospital. He stated that the publication in the Sunday Business Post of details of the Trauma Steering Group formed at the direction of the then Minister for Health, Minister Leo Varadkar proposed to remove Trauma Care from nine hospitals in Ireland has caused great concern amongst staff and the wider community across the region who rely on Cavan General Hospital. He stated that hospitals who would have these services permanently axed would mean they would no longer treat patients who have been in car crashes or has serious falls and major head injuries. He stated if Cavan General Hospital loses its Trauma Care then there will be no trauma centre available from Sligo in the West to Drogheda in the East and as far south as Tullamore. He stated that it should be noted that dating back to the days of the old North Eastern Health Board it was recognized that the spending per capita in the region is the lowest in the Country and there is no evidence that this has changed in recent years. He stated that it seems that the Trauma Steering Group are punishing centres like Cavan for historic under-investment rather than demanding proper investment in the future. He noted that any change in trauma services would put a further strain on the already pressurised ambulance network.

Councillor P. McDonald stated that a HSE forum meeting took place during the week where Councillor P. Brady was assured that there were no plans in place to downgrade trauma services at Cavan General Hospital.

Councillor S.P. O’Reilly asked the Oireachtas Minister to write to Deputy Peadar Tóibín informing him that they were in favour of maintaining the services at St. Mary’s Hospital, Navan as this hospital serves many people in the East of Cavan.

In reply the members of the Oireachtas informed the meeting that they had placed Parliamentary Questions to the Minister for Health, Simon Harris who assured them that to date he had seen no report from the Trauma Steering Group which was established under the previous Minister for Health, Leo Varadkar. Minister Harris stated that there are no plans in place to remove accident and emergency services from Cavan General Hospital. All members in turn complimented the staff of Cavan General Hospital and the great asset it is to County Cavan.

**5. Correspondence between Cavan County Council and National Roads Authority (now Transport Infrastructure Ireland) in relation to safety issues at Lisgrey.**

Councillor P. O’Reilly acknowledged the correspondence between the National Roads Authority/Transport Infrastructure Ireland but stated that not all correspondence was in place. He asked where the correspondence went with the statistics in relation to the number of road fatalities on this stretch of road.

 Mr. Tommy Ryan, Chief Executive stated that it is important to note that neither Cavan County Council or Transport Infrastructure Ireland work in isolation. He stated that Cavan County Council interact daily with Transport Infrastructure Ireland. He stated that a business case is made for all projects. He stated that the Director of Services and Road Design work in partnership with Transport Infrastructure Ireland. He noted that national levies are set by the Department of Transport. He stated that in 2015/16, 2.9m has been allocated or is about to be allocated to Virginia. He noted that if there was not regular correspondence between the TII and Cavan County Council then no funding would be received.

 Councillor P. Smith supported the motion. He asked that the Council speak with the TII and make sure their spec sheets are correct in relation to this stretch of road.

 Councillor S.P. O’Reilly supported the motion. He stated that people living on this stretch of road are only looking for safety measures to be put in place and the TII cannot do this. He stated that TII are showing disrespect to public representatives and it should be demanded that they attend a meeting with the Ballyjamesduff Municipal District elected representatives.

 Mr. Joe McLoughlin, Director of Services stated that the Council are on a constant basis making representations to the NRA/TII. Mr. McLoughlin advised the meeting as he did at the meeting on 11th July that the Council had on the 23rd June received notification from TII that the N3 Cornaslieve to North of Virginia will receive consideration as part of the 2017 pavement construction programme. He stated that as part of this programme the Council will consider advancing proposals for the possible realignment of this road. He stated that on the basis that a satisfactory design is submitted he would be hopeful of funding for that stretch. He stated that in relation to speed limits a proposal will be brought to the members before the end of the year for local and regional roads. He stated that speed limits on national roads can only be changed with written consent from TII. He stated that in relation to the statistics with regard to fatalities on this stretch of road they would have been submitted to TII when Road Design was making the submission.

 Councillor F. Curtin stated that the Council would wait and see what September/October brings when the application is ready for submission.

**6. To approve Municipal Districts Discretionary Allocation Scheme as circulated at**

 **meeting.**

It was:

Proposed by Councillor J.P. Feeley

 Seconded by Councillor S.P. O’Reilly

 And

 Resolved:

“that the Municipal Districts Discretionary Allocation Scheme be hereby approved”.

 The meeting concluded at 1.30p.m.

Chairman: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

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