

# **MINUTES OF PROCEEDINGS AT SPECIAL MEETING OF LIMERICK CITY AND COUNTY COUNCIL HELD IN THE COUNCIL CHAMBER, DOORADOYLE, LIMERICK, ON WEDNESDAY, 18<sup>TH</sup> MARCH, 2015, AT 9.30 A.M.**

## **PRESENT IN THE CHAIR:**

Councillor K. Sheahan, Mayor.

## **MEMBERS PRESENT:**

Councillors Browne, Butler, Clifford, Collins (J), Collins (M), Donegan, Foley, Galvin, Gilligan, Gleeson, Hourigan, Hurley, Keary, Keller, Lynch, McCreesh, Mitchell, O'Brien, Ó Ceallaigh, O'Dea, O'Donnell, O'Donoghue, O'Hanlon, Prendiville, Quinlivan, Ryan, Scanlan, Secas, Sheahan (J), Sheahan (M), Sheehy, Teefy.

Apologies for their inability to attend the Meeting were received from Councillors Byrne, Daly and Leddin.

## **OFFICIALS IN ATTENDANCE:**

Chief Executive (Mr. C. Murray), Deputy Chief Executive (Mr. P. Dowling), Director, Environment and Water (Mr. K. Lehane), Head of Finance, Motor Tax and ICT (Mr. T. Gilligan), Director, Home and Social Development (Ms. C. Curley), Meetings Administrator (Mr. E. Griffin), Administrative Officer, Corporate Services (Ms. T. Knox), Senior Executive Officer, Environment and Water (Mr. G. Dillon).

The Mayor stated that the Special Meeting had been convened to discuss the issue of the new bin waiver scheme before it was brought into effect, following receipt of a Requisition signed by a number of Members as follows:

***“Under Standing Orders, Sections 15 and 16, we the undersigned request a Special Meeting of Limerick City and County Council to discuss the issue of the new bin waiver scheme before it is brought into effect.”***

**Signed: Councillors Gilligan, Scanlan, Prendiville, Keller, Loftus.**

The Chief Executive addressed the Meeting and said that the proposed new Refuse Collection Subsidy Scheme had been designed to make the best possible use of the €540,000 that had been allocated as part of the budget process. He stated that the views of the Members had been taken into account when drafting up the scheme and that the objective was to focus on those with the greatest need and the most vulnerable. He stressed the importance of adopting a unified scheme in line with the budget adopted by the Members. He cautioned the Members that the longer the two schemes continued, the higher the risk of running out of funding.

The Mayor then invited the Director of Environment and Water to present an overview of the proposed Refuse Collection Subsidy Scheme for 2015.

The Director addressed the Meeting and outlined the background to the Schemes which had operated in each Authority. He explained that the County Scheme had operated through a voucher system whereby the householder was given a voucher for €150.00 to procure their own service. He explained that any balance due on the service provided was paid for by the householder. In comparison, under the City Scheme, he advised that a single contractor was engaged to operate the service. He added that the City Scheme provided 26 lifts for pensioners and 18 lifts for others. He indicated that, from a waste prevention perspective, the City Scheme did not encourage waste minimisation and, furthermore, it did not allow for choice on behalf of the householder.

The Director proceeded to deliver a PowerPoint presentation under the following headings:

- Details of County and City Schemes.
- Policy Background.
- Eligibility.
- Resolution of Council.
- New Scheme.
- Proposal 2015/Voucher Scheme.
- Transitional Arrangements.
- Process and Operation of New Scheme.
- Budget.
- Proposal.

At the conclusion of the Presentation, a large number of Members contributed to the discussion and submitted the following questions:

- How much would it cost to roll out the existing City Scheme throughout the whole Authority.
- Could the existing scheme in the City be put to tender with service providers covering the whole Authority.

The Director responded to queries raised by the Members and provided further detail in relation to the transitional arrangements. He confirmed that the existing service provider, in the City, would continue to provide a service until the end of April. He added that both householders and the service provider would be notified of these arrangements.

He outlined the benefits of the voucher scheme which, he said, included the following:

- No closing date - would operate on a calendar year basis.
- Promotion of competition between providers.
- Freedom of choice for householders in relation to their service provider.
- Householders would have the power to select the service that most suited their needs.
- The scheme helped to promote minimisation of waste.

In conclusion, the Director stated that under the proposed new scheme, there would be 5,100 eligible households. This figure was broken down further as follows:

- Category 1: Pensioners - 2,700 at €115.00 per annum.
- Category 2: Disability, Invalidity, One Parent Families, Deserted Wives – 2,400 at €85.00 per annum.

He advised that the City Scheme was out of contract and could not be continued indefinitely without going through a tender process.

Clarification was sought by the Members in relation to the legality of certain aspects of the current operation of the Refuse Waiver Scheme as follows:

- Payment of subsidy to householders.
- Possibility of operating different schemes within combined local authority area.
- Application of different qualifying criteria in different areas of local authority.
- Continuation of current payment to a contractor having regard to procurement.

On the proposal of Councillor Sheahan (J), seconded by Councillor Gilligan, it was agreed that the current Refuse Collection Schemes that operated in the City and County of Limerick for the year 2014 would be maintained for 2015.

The Chief Executive stated that he would have to obtain legal advice on the matters raised.

Prior to the conclusion of the Meeting and with the permission of the Mayor, a Vote of sympathy was extended to Ger Dillon, member of staff, on the death of his brother, Joe Dillon.

Signed:

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**Mayor**

Date:

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