

MINUTES OF PROCEEDINGS AT SPECIAL MEETING OF LIMERICK CITY AND COUNTY COUNCIL HELD IN COUNCIL CHAMBER DOORADOYLE AND ONLINE, ON THURSDAY 2nd NOVEMBER, 2023, AT 3.30PM TO DISCUSS BOIL WATER NOTICES.

PRESENT IN THE CHAIR:

Councillor G. Mitchell, Mayor.

MEMBERS PRESENT:

Councillors Benson, Butler, Carey, Collins (B), Collins (M), Collopy, Donegan, Egan, Foley, Galvin, Hartigan, Keary, Kiely, Kilcoyne, McSweeney, Murphy, Novak Uí Chonchúir, O'Brien, O'Donoghue, O'Donovan, O'Sullivan, Pond, Ruddle, Ryan (E), Scanlon, Secas, Sheahan (J), Sheahan (K), Sheahan (M), Sheehan (C), Slattery, Talukder, Teskey.

Apologies were received from Cllr Ryan (M) and Cllr Teefy.

OFFICIALS IN ATTENDANCE:

Deputy Chief Executive and Director, Support Services (Mr S. Coughlan), Director, Regeneration, Sports and Recreation (Mr. J. Delaney), Director, Transportation and Mobility (Mr. B. Kennedy), Chief Officer LCDC Rural and Community Development Department (Mr. S. O'Connor), A/Director of Services, National & Regional Shared Services, (Ms. S. Reidy), Meetings Administrator (Ms. L. Flannery), Administrative Officer, Corporate Services & Governance (Mr. M. Leahy).

Apologies were received from Dr. Pat Daly, Chief Executive.

The Mayor welcomed everyone to the Special Meeting and he stated that he had been asked to call the Special Meeting following a request from Cllrs Sheahan (K), Collins (B), Keary, O'Brien, O'Donoghue, and Teskey to discuss the issue set out in the Agenda as follows:

"I will move at the next meeting that due to the number of boil water notices in Limerick City and County Council, a full update including a schedule of works and timeline to alleviate the problem with a view to ending boil water notices and to also request Uisce Éireann attend this meeting."

In proposing the Motion, Cllr Teskey thanked the Mayor for agreeing to call this Special Meeting to discuss the issue of boil water notices being issued by Uisce Éireann.

He outlined how the boil water notice issued by Uisce Éireann was affecting approximately 7,000 consumers served by the Foynes/Shannon Estuary Public Water Supply.

Uisce Éireann had introduced the boil water notice in May 2023 following the detection of cryptosporidium in the water supply. The area affected stretches from Kildimo to Foynes and includes the towns of Askeaton, Pallaskenry, Shanagolden, Ballyhahill, Loghill, Ballysteen and surrounding areas.

He outlined how Uisce Éireann had also advised at that time that it was progressing with plans to install an ultraviolet reactor at the Shannon Estuary Water Treatment Plant. This reactor would render any cryptosporidium in the water inactive but as it was a large piece of equipment, that it required a significant amount of accommodation works in advance of its installation.

Since then, however, he stated that the Elected Members and the general public had received very little information from Uisce Éireann regarding the timelines as to when these works would be completed and the boil water removed. The Motion was seconded by Councillor Sheahan (K).

Members agreed that the protection of public health was the priority, but also agreed that the time delay in getting the ultraviolet treatment system in place and operational was unacceptable. They called on Uisce Éireann to prioritise and complete these works as soon as possible. They also expressed frustration at the lack of engagement and information communicated to them by Uisce Éireann.

The Members also referred to the confusion of the public in relation to the delays with the boil water notice. Elected Members were constantly being contacted by the public for updates, even though Limerick City and County Council no longer had any role to play in this area any more. Members referred in particular to vulnerable customers affected by the boil water notice and the importance that Uisce Éireann be aware of their needs. The Members also expressed disappointment that Uisce Éireann had been unable to attend this Special Meeting to discuss the issues being raised by the Members and to clarify the facts of the situation.

The A/Director of Services, National & Regional Shared Services confirmed that the Service Level Agreement (SLA) that was in place between the local authority and Uisce Éireann had finished in July 2023 and that all staff were now fully under the control of Uisce Éireann. Limerick City and County Council therefore no longer has any direction or control over these staff and that a Master Co-Operation Agreement was now in place with Uisce Éireann

instead. She agreed to arrange for the circulation to the Elected Members of the link on the Uisce Éireann website to register vulnerable customer's details.

She also confirmed that Uisce Éireann had indicated that they would be inviting the Members from the Adare-Rathkeale Municipal District to the Foynes Shannon Estuary Water Treatment Plant in the coming weeks, to receive a briefing on the works being carried out to rectify the issues that have given rise to the Boil Water Notice currently in place.

Members welcomed this invitation and requested that this Briefing be held at the Water Treatment Plant as soon as possible, so that clarification can be received on the timelines for completing the required works and the removal of the boil water notice.

This concluded the Meeting.

Signed: _____
Mayor

Date: _____