

CORRESPONDENCE

January 2024 Council Meeting

- E-Mail received on 27th November, 2023, from the Office of the Minister for Health in reply to resolution adopted by the Council '*calling on the Minister for Health and the Minister for Mental Health and Older People to provide the necessary funding to the National Treatment Purchase Fund (NTPF) to stop further nursing home closures and bring fees payable in line with the reality of nursing home care costs; and also bringing into effect a Fair Deal pricing mechanism reflecting the reality of residents' care needs.*'
- Letters received on 12th December, 2023, from the Meetings Administrator, Clare County Council, outlining 3 resolutions adopted by the Council in relation to the following: (i) current Policy on Part V; (ii) current Model of Policing; and (iii) 2022-2025 Multi-Annual Rural Water Programme.
- E-Mail received on 15th December, 2023, from the Office of the Minister for Housing, Local Government and Heritage in reply to resolution adopted by the Council "*calling on the Minister to introduce support measures for persons building houses whereby there are charges to group water schemes and for private wells in line with his support measures for waiving Section 48 development contributions and the refunding of Uisce Éireann water and waste water connection charges. This is in the interest of fairness for those persons where Uisce Éireann connections are not available.*"
- Letter received on 18th December, 2023, from the Office of the Taoiseach in reply to resolution adopted by the Council "*calling on the Government to review GDPR (General Data Protection Regulation) rules regarding housing and giving out information to us as Councillors/Directors of this Council.*"
- Email received on 18th December, 2023, from the Office of the Minister for Housing, Local Government and Heritage in reply to resolution adopted by the Council "*calling on Uisce Éireann to implement a notification system similar to the ESB when planned disruptions are taking place, and that the Government do likewise.*"
- Email received on 21st December, 2023, from the Office of the Minister for Finance in reply to resolution adopted by the Council "*calling on the Revenue Commissioners to grant a tax rebate to people who contribute to have public roads repaired under the Community*

Involvement Grant Scheme and the Local Improvement Scheme," – a copy of the resolution having been forwarded to the Department of Finance.

- Email received on 21st December, 2023, from the Office of the Minister for Rural and Community Development in reply to resolution adopted by the Council "*calling on the Government to consider implementing a grant for security lighting for the elderly living outside the towns and villages that are not publicly lit.*"
- Letter sent by the Meetings Administrator, Offaly County Council, to the Minister for the Environment, Climate and Communications, outlining resolution adopted by Offaly County Council calling on the Government to ensure that State lands, where renewable energy projects have been developed, cannot be sold – a copy of the resolution having been sent to all Local Authorities.

From: Ministers Office
Sent: Monday 27 November 2023 10:15
To: Customer Services
Subject: [EXTERNAL]HEA-MO-06717-2023

HEA-MO-06717-2023

27th November 2023

Dear Ms. Flannery,

On behalf of the Minister for Health, Stephen Donnelly TD, I want to thank you for your correspondence dated 27 September regarding continued supports for the nursing home sector, the contents of which have been noted and passed on to officials within the Department of Health for their consideration.

The Nursing Homes Support Scheme - (NHSS) or Fair Deal - was designed to protect and support vulnerable older people, to ensure equal access to nursing home care based on what they could afford. This gives certainty to people and their families.

Government funding for Fair Deal is to support vulnerable older people at a time in their lives where full-time care is essential.

In 2019, the NHSS budget was €985.8m. Year-on-year the budget has increased: in 2023 in her role as Minister for Mental Health and Older People, Mary Butler TD, secured a funding increase of €40 million for the NHSS, and for 2024 a further increase of €35.6 million. A further €10 million has been secured to assist nursing homes to comply with Health Information and Quality Authority (HIQA) regulations.

Overall, €1.4 billion of the total Health Budget was allocated last year to support over 22,700 people under Fair Deal. This will increase to nearly €1.5 billion for 2023, and the Minister is cognisant that the budget must support all residents under the NHSS for the full calendar year.

This additional funding is allowing an increase in rates by the National Treatment Purchase Fund (NTPF) of 5-6% on average per Negotiation of Deeds.

It is also recognised that the duration of contracts have shortened and that this increase in funding will go toward continuing to help nursing homes with inflationary costs in 2024.

The provision of free PPE and oxygen to private and voluntary nursing homes also continues, and has cost over €77 million to date.

In the weeks prior to Budget 2024 Minister Butler held a roundtable discussion with private nursing home provider representative groups where the issue of continued support for the sector was on the agenda. Minister Butler has pledged to continue to engage with them going forward.

It should also be noted that the Department of Health and the Minister have regular interaction with the National Treatment Purchase Fund (NTPF) and have met them to discuss ways to support the sector, where necessary and appropriate, to complement the normal process of negotiating rate increases when contracts are renewed.

The NTPF are the body designated, under Section 40 of the Nursing Homes Support Scheme Act 2009, to negotiate with persons carrying on the business of a nursing home, for the purposes of reaching an agreement on the maximum prices to be charged for nursing home care, and are based on the NTPF's cost criteria. These criteria include costs reasonably incurred by the nursing home, local market prices, historic prices and overall budgetary capacity.

The NTPF carries out this role independently under the Nursing Homes Support Scheme Act 2009. The NTPF has statutory independence, and there is no role for Ministers or the Department of Health in these negotiations which are conducted and agreed between individual nursing home providers and the NTPF.

The Department of Health published a review of the NTPF pricing system in June 2021 and continues to work on bringing forward the recommendations that emerged from this review. A steering group has been established to oversee the delivery of the recommendations; this group has met on a regular basis since publication of the review.

There is no other mechanism for funding from the public purse for nursing home residents outside of the Nursing Homes Support Scheme. It is imperative that private and voluntary providers continue to engage in the process as set out in the Nursing Homes Support Scheme Act 2009.

A short-term extension to the Temporary Inflation Payment Scheme (TIPS), introduced last year to help with increased energy costs due to inflation, is currently under review.

I hope this information is useful to you.

Yours sincerely,

Fiona Conroy

Private Secretary to the Minister for Health

12th December, 2023.

Our Ref: December23 - 28/AR/AC



Dear Meeting Administrator,

At the December meeting of the Council the members passed the following resolution and agreed that this request should issue to the Minister for Housing, Local Government and Heritage and be circulated to Oireachtas Members and other Local Authorities:

“I am calling on the Housing Minister Darragh O’Brien to review the Part V obligations placed on private housing developers and especially the social element and focus the obligation on the development of affordable housing and housing for people with disabilities. The current policy is a barrier to the development of private housing and especially for people in lower income categories that are struggling to secure their own home. Local authorities are best placed to deliver social housing and need to be properly resourced.”

Yours sincerely,

Ann Reynolds
Ann Reynolds,
Senior Executive Officer,
Corporate Services Department,
Finance and Support Services Directorate.



COMHAIRLE
CONTAE AN CHLÁIR | CLARE
COUNTY COUNCIL



12th December, 2023.

Our Ref: December23 - 26/AR/AC

Dear Meeting Administrator,

At the December meeting of the Council the members passed the following resolution and agreed that this request should issue to the Minister for Justice, Helen McEntee, Garda Commissioner, Drew Harris and be circulated to Oireachtas Members and other Local Authorities:

“We are calling on the Minister for Justice, Helen McEntee and the Garda Commissioner, Drew Harris to revisit the current model of policing as it is not fit for purpose and is based on reactionary policing and in the current times the public feel very vulnerable both in rural communities and urban communities throughout Clare and find the lack of adequate numbers of Gardai on the ground is having a negative impact on their lives.”

Yours sincerely,

Ann Reynolds
Ann Reynolds,
Senior Executive Officer,
Corporate Services Department,
Finance and Support Services Directorate.

An Roinn Seirbhísí Corparáideach
Stiúrthóireacht Airgeadais agus Seirbhísí Tacaíochta
Áras Contae an Chláir, Bóthar Nua, Inis, Co. an Chláir, V95 DXP2

Corporate Services Department
Finance and Support Services Directorate
Áras Contae an Chláir, New Road, Ennis, Co. Clare, V95 DXP2



COMHAIRLE
CONTAE AN CHLÁIR | CLARE
COUNTY COUNCIL

12th December, 2023.

Our Ref: December23 - 20/AR/AC



Dear Meeting Administrator,

At the December meeting of the Council the members passed the following resolution and agreed that this request should issue to the Minister for Housing, Local Government and Heritage and be circulated to Oireachtas Members and other Local Authorities:

“Clare County Council calls on the Minister for Housing, Local Government & Heritage to publish the 2022-2025 Multi Annual Rural Water Programme without further delay. We are now at the end of year 2 of a 4-year programme and still we have no clarity for the many active group water schemes awaiting funding. Request that the motion be circulated to Clare Oireachtas members & all County Councils.”

Yours sincerely,

Ann Reynolds

Ann Reynolds,
Senior Executive Officer,
Corporate Services Department,
Finance and Support Services Directorate.

An Roinn Seirbhísí Corparáideach
Stiúrthóireacht Airgeadais agus Seirbhisi Tacafochta
Áras Contae an Chláir, Bóthar Nua, Inis, Co. an Chláir, V95 DXP2

Corporate Services Department
Finance and Support Services Directorate
Áras Contae an Chláir, New Road, Ennis, Co. Clare, V95 DXP2

From: Minister O'Brien Office
Sent: Friday, December 15, 2023 11:38 AM
To: Customer Services
Subject: [EXTERNAL]HPLG-MOBO-02776-2023

Oifig an Aire

Office of the Minister

15th December 2023

RE: HPLG-MOBO-02776-2023

Dear Ms. Flannery,

Thank you for correspondence in relation to waiver of development contributions.

On 25 April 2023, as part of a suite of measures to help reduce housing construction costs and incentivise increased housing supply, the Government introduced a temporary time-limited arrangement to waive the local authority “section 48” development contribution and a refund scheme for water and wastewater connection charges payable to Uisce Éireann.

Group water schemes are community-owned and community-run organisations. I can confirm that charges set by Group Water Scheme and paid by their members do not fall within the scope of the refund scheme approved by Government.

Yours sincerely,

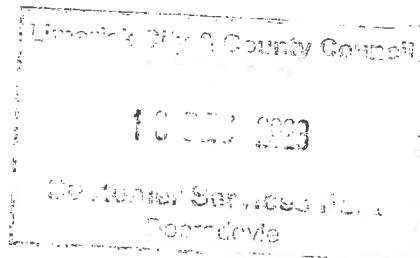
Niamh Redmond
Private Secretary



13 December 2023

Ms Laura Flannery
Meetings Administrator
Limerick City & County Council
Corporate Headquarters
Merchants Quay
Limerick
V94 EH90

Reference Number: DOT-TV-15912-2023



Dear Ms Flannery

I wish to acknowledge receipt of your letter to the Taoiseach, Leo Varadkar, T.D., dated 8th December 2023.

Yours sincerely


Sarah Garry
Assistant Private Secretary to the Taoiseach

Telephone: 01 619 4021
Email: taoiseach@taoiseach.gov.ie

From: Minister O'Brien Office
Sent: Monday, December 18, 2023 3:55 PM
To: Customer Services
Subject: [EXTERNAL]HPLG-MOBO-04686-2023

18th December 2023

Ref: HPLG-MOBO-04686-2023

Dear Ms. Flannery,

Thank you for your email to Mr. Darragh O'Brien, T.D., Minister for Housing, Local Government and Heritage, in connection with your query.

Your correspondence is currently receiving attention and a further reply will issue as soon as possible.

Yours sincerely,

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Niamh Redmond
Private Secretary

From: Ministers Office
Sent: Thursday, December 21, 2023 8:31 AM
To: Customer Services
Subject: [EXTERNAL]FIN-MO-04714-2023

Our Ref: FIN-MO-04714-2023

Ms Laura Flannery
Meetings Administrator
Limerick City and County Council

Dear Ms. Flannery,

The Minister for Finance, Mr Michael McGrath TD, has asked me to respond to your correspondence of 27th September 2023 regarding your suggestion to provide an income tax relief for people who contribute to repairing public roads.

Proposals for new tax expenditure measures are assessed in accordance with the Department of Finance's Tax Expenditure Guidelines. These guidelines make clear that it is important that any policy proposal which involves tax expenditures should only occur in limited circumstances where there is a market failure. In particular, they provide that a tax-based incentive should only be considered where it would be more efficient than a direct expenditure intervention.

From a social equity point of view, where individuals live in the State and benefit from the public infrastructure and services provided by the State, then, as a matter of equity, they should contribute to the State by being subject to personal income tax, in accordance with their means.

There are many requests for the introduction of new tax reliefs and the extension of existing ones. In considering these, it is important to be mindful of the public finances and the many demands on the Exchequer and to have regard to budgetary constraints and the equitable treatment of all tax-payers. Tax reliefs, no matter how worthwhile in themselves, reduce the tax base and make general reform of the tax system that much more difficult.

While the Minister for Finance does not currently have any plans to provide for a tax relief along the lines suggested, I trust that the above clarifies the situation and, on behalf of the Minister, I thank you for your correspondence.

Yours sincerely

Niamh Kavanagh

Private Secretary to the Minister for Finance

From: Ministers Office
Sent: Thursday, December 21, 2023 4:09 PM
To: Customer Services
Subject: [EXTERNAL]DRCD-MO-00881-2023

Ms. Laura Flannery

Meetings Administrator

Limerick City and County Council

Corporate Headquarters,Â

Merchants Quay

Limerick

V94 EH90

Our Ref: DRCD-MO-00881-2023

Dear Ms Flannery,Â

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Thank you for your correspondence to the Minister for Rural and Community Development, Heather Humphreys, T.D. suggesting a grant for security lighting for elderly people living outside the towns and villages which are not publicly lit. Â Â

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The Town and Village Renewal Scheme (TVRS) was launched in 2016 and is one of a number of measures designated to rejuvenate rural towns and villages throughout Ireland. Since its launch, over â,~156 million has been allocated to more than 1,700 projects supporting towns and villages the length and breadth of the country. Â

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The 2023 TVRS was launched on 21 July 2023 with an overall fund of â,~15 million, which is designed to support the revitalisation of rural Ireland through a renewed focus on town centre economic and social recovery and regeneration.Â Â

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Each year, the priorities and focus of the scheme are reviewed to ensure that funding is targeted effectively to support vibrant and attractive communities and encourage people back to living in our rural towns and villages. This year's scheme has a renewed focus on town centre economic and social vibrancy and supports projects that brings vacant and derelict buildings and sites back into use as multi-purpose spaces through refurbishment and renovation and also the enhancement of heritage assets (e.g. local museums/tourism attractions focused on historical aspects of the area, heritage sites/buildings, etc.) located in towns and villages, including energy efficiency measures.Â Â

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TVRS does not currently offer a specific provision for security lighting but has in the past funded projects to improve public realm, including lighting in rural towns and villages. This scheme is for community led and community focused projects therefore I suggest that interested parties should engage with their relevant Local Authorities with a view to applying to further iterations of the scheme or other relevant schemes. Â

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The closing date for receipt of applications into the Department under the 2023 TVRS was Friday 10th November 2023, and the assessment process has now commenced.Â Minister Humphreys hopesÂ to announce details of the successful projects in quarter 1 of 2024. Â

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I would encourage you to keep an eye on DRCD schemes as they are announced in 2024 to assess if other schemes in this Department may allow for the works as described.Â

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Yours sincerely,

Áoifeamonn Mc Cormack

Áoifeamonn Mc Cormack

Programme Manager to Heather Humphreys T.D.

Minister for Rural and Community Development



Mr. Eamon Ryan T.D.
Minister for the Department of Environment, Climate and Communications
Government Buildings
29-31 Adelaide Road
Dublin 2
D02X285

20th December 2023

RE: Offaly County Council

Dear Minister

At the December meeting of Offaly County Council, the members resolved, that in light of the fact that 12% of the land in Co Offaly is under the ownership of semi state companies such as Bord na Móna, they call on the government to ensure that State Lands where renewable energy projects have been developed cannot be sold.

They further requested that any state lands to be considered for sale must receive the approval of the Government.

The members would welcome your comments on this resolution.

Yours sincerely

Mr. Gerard Bruton
Meeting Administrator

