
COMHAIRLE CHONTAE NA GAILLIMHE

GALWAY COUNTY COUNCIL

Ceantar Bardasach Bhaile Átha an Rí

Municipal District of Athenry

Minutes of the Meeting of the Municipal District of Athenry held in Aras an Chontae, on Tuesday 10th September 2024.

I LATHAIR:

BAILL: Cllr. P. Feeney (Cathaoirleach)
Cllr. J. Charity
Cllr. A. Dolan
Cllr L.O'Hara
Cllr. D. Collins
Cllr C. Keane

OIFIGIGH: Mr. L. Hanrahan, DoS
Mr. T. Prendergast, SE
Ms. P. Higgins, S.E.E.
Mr E. Gallagher, SEE
Mr. P. Gavin, E.E.
Mr. K. Coyne, SEO
Ms. M. Jordan, A.O.
Ms G. Cooley, ASO

Apologies Cllr. T. Grealish

To confirm Minutes of the Meeting of the Municipal District of Athenry held in Aras an Chontae, on Tuesday 9th July 2024.

On the PROPOSAL of Cllr Keane, SECONDED by Cllr Dolan the minutes of the Athenry MD meeting held on the 9th July were approved.

Matters arising

In reply to a query from Cllr O'Hara on a vacant site at Athenry Mr. Hanrahan said that the Office of Public Works are working on finalizing the legal documentation on the site.

**Declaration of Road to be a Public Road – Section 11 of the Roads Act 1993
(report attached).**

The Cathaoirleach read the report as follows;

Description:

Cluain Glas, Athenry, Co. Galway

Section A-B:

Road pavement and footpath commencing at junction A with the L-3107-0, in the townland of Caheroyn and extending northwest for a distance of 74m ending at point B, all in the townland of Caheroyn.

Electoral Area: *Athenry/Oranmore.*

On the PROPOSAL of Cllr Dolan SECONDED by Cllr Collins the Members AGREED the declaration of Roads to be Public Roads under Section 11 of the Roads Act 1993 as outlined in the report.

The Cathaoirleach read the report as follows;

Description:

Ard Esker, Ballydavid South, Athenry, Co. Galway

1. Section A-B-C-D-E-F:

Road pavement and footpath commencing at junction A with the R-347-304, in the townland of Ballydavid South and extending north east for a distance of 285m ending at point F, all in the townland of Ballydavid South.

2. Section B-M:

Road pavement and footpath commencing at junction B, in the townland of Ballydavid South and extending South East for a distance of 71m ending at point M, all in the townland of Ballydavid South.

3. Section C-N:

Road pavement and footpath commencing at junction C, in the townland of Ballydavid South and extending North for a distance of 54m ending at point N, all in the townland of Ballydavid South.

4. Section D-I-J:

Road pavement and footpath commencing at junction D, in the townland of Ballydavid South

and extending South East for a distance of 79m ending at point J, all in the townland of Ballydavid South.

5. Section I-K:

Road pavement and footpath commencing at junction I, in the townland of Ballydavid South and extending North East for a distance of 69m ending at point K, all in the townland of Ballydavid South.

6. Section E-K-L:

Road pavement and footpath commencing at junction E, in the townland of Ballydavid South and extending South East for a distance of 73m ending at point L, all in the townland of Ballydavid South.

7. Section G-F-H:

Road pavement and footpath commencing at junction G, in the townland of Ballydavid South and extending North West for a distance of 80m ending at point H, all in the townland of Ballydavid South.

Electoral Area: Athenry/Oranmore

On the PROPOSAL of Cllr O'Hara SECONDED by Cllr Dolan the Members AGREED the declaration of Roads to be Public Roads under Section 11 of the Roads Act 1993 as outlined in the report.

The Cathaoirleach thanked all involved.

Presentation on Active Travel

Ms Higgins gave a presentation on Active Travel. She said that there are four engineers working on Active Travel in GCC and one administrative support staff member. The staffing is fully funded by the National Transport Authority (NTA).

She said that a key NTA target objective is to deliver 1,000km of new walking and cycling infrastructure by the end of 2025 together to achieve a 50% reduction in carbon emissions by 2030. It is intended to work towards this objective by the reallocation of part of the existing road space to walking and cycling infrastructure.

Under the NTA Cycle Connects initiative, approx. 3,500km of safe bike corridors has been identified nationally. Galway County is part of this initiative. Additional details of these can be found online.

<https://www.nationaltransport.ie/planning-and-investment/transport-investment/active-travel-investment-programme/cycleconnects-irelands-cycle-network-active-travel/>

NTA funded Active Travel projects must be strategic, and plan led and compatible with the County Development and Local Area Plans.

On a local level the Athenry Local Area Plan and Local Transport Plan have been adopted. Other plans include An Taisce Safe Routes to School plans. Ms Higgins said that the NTA project delivery process must be followed, and she outlined the phases.

The allocated budget for Active Travel for Galway County Council for 2025 is €3M which includes €500,000 for Bus Stop Enhancement Programme (BESP) works.

She also outlined the Athenry/Oranmore MD 2024 Active Travel Programme and the 5 schools in the MD that are included for Safe Routes To School (Round 1). Meetings have taken place with principals and the Road Area Offices of GCC. An Taisce SRTS team will be announcing SRTS Round 3 shortly.

Ms Higgins said that the Athenry Active Travel Design Scheme, from Church Street to the Tuam Road via Station Road, has been tendered and tender submissions will be assessed shortly.

Details of the (i) Oranmore Village to the Train Station Active Travel project on the Coast Rd. and the (ii) Pedestrian Crossing on the Old Limerick Rd at Lidl were shared and more information will be distributed to elected members in due course. The Pedestrian Crossing project in Oranmore is currently going through an approval process to ensure compliance to existing design standards and it is intended to go to tender for construction.

She outlined the Safe Routes To School project where three schools in Oranmore have been selected. There will be a public consultation as part of the project delivery process.

If members want to propose an Active Travel Scheme project, it will be assessed against specific criteria to determine its eligibility.

In reply to a query by the Cathaoirleach Ms Higgins said that GCC will be engaging with design consultants on the design of the New Line Junction at Athenry as part of the Athenry Active Travel Design Scheme (Church St. to Tuam Rd).

The members acknowledged the great work done and highlighted that the Safe Routes To School that have been selected are urban schools. There is a requirement to include rural schools in the next round of the scheme.

Ms Higgins said that the selection process is managed by An Taisce. The application process to this scheme is currently closed and any new applications will need to apply to An Taisce when the scheme is re-opened. Any requests for bicycle parking for schools should be sent to An Taisce. It was acknowledged that Rural Towns and Villages are in need of Active Travel measures, also experienced in other counties, and GCC will continue to negotiate for rural areas with the NTA Active Travel team.

In reply to a query from Cllr Charity on the provision of bus shelters on the N84 Ms Higgins said that the programme has gone to tender and includes Headford and Clonboo.

In reply to a query from Cllr Dolan on the spending of the €2.5M allocation, Ms Higgins said that forecasted spending in 2025 is likely to be in the region of 70% of the overall allocation.

Cllr Collins said that he met with the Principal from the Educate Together School in Claregalway in relation to the traffic problems at the school and he said that he will advise them to apply for funding.

National Speed Limit Review – Local Roads

Mr Gallagher gave a presentation on the National Speed Limit Review on Local Roads. He explained that as part of Ireland's Government Road Safety Strategy (2021 – 2030) – *Our Journey Towards Vision Zero*, a working group was established to examine and review the framework for the setting of speed limits on Irish roads. The resulting report "Speed Limit Review", with recommendations, arising from this review was published in September 2023. The report contained principal recommendations relating to three different road categories: **Urban and Built-up Areas:** Recommendation that a default speed limit of 30km/h for built up and urban areas be introduced.

National Secondary Roads : Recommendation that the default Speed Limit on National Secondary Roads be reduced from 100 km/h to 80 km/h to align with the Safe System principles and to reduce the severity of head on collisions.

Local Roads : Recommendation the default Speed Limit on Local Roads be reduced from 80 km/h to 60 km/h to align with the use of the network and the Safe System principles.

Implementation Guidelines

These priority actions are being progressed through necessary legislation and supporting Statutory Guidelines.

The Department of Transport have indicated an intention to implement the changes to a timeline that will see commencement dates for the new default speed limits as follows:

End of November 2024: Implementation of 60km/h for Rural Local Roads **First half of 2025:** Implementation for National Secondary Roads 80km/h and Urban Speed Limits 30km/h

Galway County Council developed a plan to ensure that all required changes can be made to meet the projected timelines as set out above. The first step involves an assessment of all local roads (total length 5,315km) that will default to 60kph, to ascertain if there are sections where retention of the existing 80kph speed limit might be more appropriate. Such changes would be made by way of Special Speed Limit Bye Law, in accordance with the Road Traffic Act, where the change was consistent with the "Guidelines for Setting and Managing Speed Limits in Ireland".

Mr Prendergast said that there was only four stretches of local road in county Galway that meet the Department of Transport criteria to remain at the 80km/h speed limit. These include two in the Ballinasloe area (12.8km of the Ballyforan to Mountbellew road and 7.5km of the Ballygar to Creggs Road) and two in Athenry (1.15km of Athenry Outer Ring Road and 650 metres of the Athenry Ring Road at Presentation College). He said that the

Council would now be preparing byelaws, which if approved by the elected members would designate the four exempted roads as 80km/h.

It is also the intention to bring forward supplementary draft byelaws for a select number of schools on National Roads which have been reclassified as Regional Roads. At the same time the list of housing estates to benefit from a 30kph special speed limit will also be updated. The prescribed statutory steps, including public consultation and engagement with An Gardaí Síochána will be followed and these supplementary Bye Laws will come before full plenary for council for consideration.

It was also confirmed that the county wide review, which has been paused in order to affect these nationally mandated changes to the speed limit regime, will recommence in the second half of 2025 once all the default changes have been implemented and the statutory guidelines have been updated.

Significant additional Speed Limit Signage will be required as part of the implementation of the default 60kph limit on Local Roads and the cost is projected to be approximately €1M. The Department has indicated that it will provide this funding to GCC.

Following discussions from the Members the new speed limits were welcomed by the Members.

Mr Prendergast said that meeting the deadline for Government by end of November will default all Local Road speed limits from 80 to 60. The new limits can be reviewed in mid-2025. If there is dissatisfaction with elements members and the public can make submissions, then.

Nomination from Athenry Municipal District to the Public Art Working Group for Claregalway,

Mr Hanrahan said that a representative is required to sit on the Steering Group for the Public Art Working Group for Claregalway.

On the proposal of Cllr Dolan, seconded by Cllr Charity, it was agreed that Cllr Collins would take up the position on the Public Art Working Group for Claregalway.

Local Economic and Community Plan (LECP).

Mr Coyne gave an update on the Local Economic and Community Plan (GLECP) which aims to address the economic and community needs of Galway County for the six-year period from 2024 to 2030. The process is carried out in accordance with the "Local Economic and Community Plan Guidelines 2021. Galway County Council is currently at stage 2 of the guidelines which is public consultation. Mr Coyne said that he was requesting sign off on the revised socio-economic statement and the HLGs so that stage 3 can commence. He explained that the socio-economic draft vision and draft high-level goals are available to view by the public at a dedicated website set up for this process www.galwaycounty/ecp.com He said that

to move forward to stage 3 approval is required to revise the socio-economic statement update which will include the revised HLGs explanation of consultation process and the key findings from the consultation. He said that there will be consultation with members on stage 3. He said that Members will get opportunities if they are on LCDC. The Final adoption will be by end of 2024. Mr Coyne said that he was looking for feedback on the high-level goals. It was agreed that this item would be put on a special meeting of the Athenry MD on the 15th of October 24.

Municipal District Director's Business & Correspondence.

Mr Hanrahan said that the Budget meeting for the Athenry MD will be held on the 15th of October and the LECP can be discussed on this date.

Mr Hanrahan thanked Caroline McDonagh for organising the presentation to Cormac Monaghan who won first prize in the National Enterprise Scheme, and acknowledged his achievements and the support of his teachers and the staff of the LEO office. The Cathaoirleach congratulated Cormac and the members also concurred on complimenting him on his success.

Mr Hanrahan gave an update on the Town Team. There is no elected representative on town teams, decisions regarding the approval of the town masterplan and various part 8s will come to the MD for approval. For example in Gort, the town master plan has been completed by the Town Team, approved by the MD and part 8s from the Town masterplan (public realm plans etc) will be prepared as Part 8s. There will be Part 8 projects in Athenry, and these are being prepared by Ms Fox, Town Regeneration Officer.

He said that there will be a preplanning I.T. mapping system up and running shortly. By using the pre planning system it guarantees a report but doesn't produce a pre planning meeting. He highlighted to the Members that they still need to send an e-mail seeking the pre planning meeting. He said that the system is working well, and he encouraged the planning agents to use the system.

Cathaoirleach's Business.

Cllr O Hara said that the private bus service from Athenry to Galway has been discontinued. He said that it is important to have a replacement service put in place by the NTA.

Cllr O'Hara made the following proposal.

"I propose to write to the NTA asking the following questions,

- has a contingency been put in place for bus access to galway city given the announcement by Farrell's to cease the daytime bus route?*
- Do Farrells have exclusive rights to the route or can the NTA appoint a new operator to take over the route?*
- Is it possible for the NTA to provide a public service on this route with a fixed timetable?*
- When will the review of the corridor be complete as it is needed as a matter of urgency?*

Many thanks, and we await your reply, "

On the Proposal of Cllr O Hara seconded by Cllr Dolan it was agreed to write to the NTA.

Cllr Collins asked if there is some mechanism whereby the Athenry MD could have a special meeting with NTA. Mr Hanrahan said that this topic was raised at the CPG meeting and the metrology of NTA is up for discussion. Cllr Dolan said that he will put a proposal to the CPG.

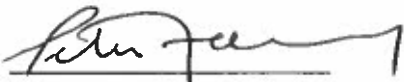
Any other business (AOB).

In response to a query from the Cathaoirleach on derelict buildings in Athenry Mr Hanrahan said that the Housing unit has a vacancy and dereliction CPO team. They are targeting the number of derelict buildings in towns.

Cllr O Hara said that it is disappointing that the derelict sites order is not being enforced. He said that there are very few properties on the register. These buildings are revenue opportunities and there should be more focus on this area.

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Approved by:


CATHAOIRLEACH

Date: 11/11/24

**COMHAIRLE CHONTAE NA GAILLIMHE
GALWAY COUNTY COUNCIL**

**Ceantar Bardasach Bhaile Átha an Rí
Municipal District of Athenry**

**Minutes of the Budget Meeting of the Municipal District of Athenry held in
Aras an Chontae, on Tuesday, 15th October, 2024.**

I LATHAIR:

BAILL: Cllr. P. Feeney (Cathaoirleach)
Cllr. T. Grealish
Cllr. A. Dolan
Cllr. L. O'Hara
Cllr. D. Collins
Cllr. C. Keane

OIFIGIGH: Mr. L. Hanrahan, DoS
Ms. K. O'Connor, HoF,
Ms. A. Fenton, M.A.
Ms R. Lowe, S.E.
Ms. M. Duddy, A.O.
Ms. M. Jordan, A.O.

LEITHSCÉALTA: Cllr. J. Charity

To consider and adopt (with or without amendment) under Section 58 of the Local Government Reform Act, 2014, a Draft Budgetary Plan for the Municipal District of Athenry as prepared under the direction of the Chief Executive.

The Cathaoirleach welcomed everyone to the budget meeting for the Athenry MD.

Ms. O'Connor presented the budget as follows:

In accordance with Section 58 of the Local Government Reform Act 2014, Ms. O'Connor underlined to Members the draft budgetary plan for the Athenry Municipal District (MD) for 2025 showing an indicative expenditure of €4,697,510, an increase on the updated 2024 expenditure.

Members were notified that in June 2024 the 2025 Local Property Tax allocation for Galway County was €20,309,071. In preparing the draft budgetary plan Ms. O'Connor stated that the decision taken by the Council at the LPT meeting held on 23rd September 2024 to increase the

local property tax rate by 15% for five years has been included, resulting in an increase in the LPT of €2,370,963 for 2025.

Ms. O'Connor elaborated on the three main stages of the overall budgetary process being (i) decision on the Local Property Tax, (ii) consideration of the draft Municipal District Budgetary Plan and (iii) the consideration of the Draft overall Budget for Galway County Council. Stating that the overall process made more difficult as the full budgetary information is unavailable at the first two steps and information available in mid-September in advance of the LPT decision indicated a deficit gap between Income and Expenditure of €10.8m.

Further explaining the GMA allocation as the discretionary funding which is available to the municipal members for allocation in the draft plan Ms. O'Connor outlined that the D0905 GMA is a proportion of the local property tax allocation to each MD.

Ms. O'Connor described this a great opportunity for each MD to focus on larger scale projects and use this as leverage to raise match funding for projects. The funding will be allocated each year for the next five years to the revenue account. The unspent money at the end of each year will transfer to a capital account and accumulate year on year. Clarifying that a specific meeting will be held for members to bring forward a list of projects and work with the Mayor, Chairs and Director of Services to agree on projects through the injection of the LPT funds over the next five years and bring forward to be noted at Plenary.

Ms. O'Connor requested for members to consider by resolution the draft budgetary plan to adopt with or without amendment.

The Members made the following comments:

- The Members welcomed the increase of €390,000 on last year's budget.
- The Athenry MD has the largest volume of traffic but only gets 10 per cent of the budget.
- It was agreed at a plenary meeting that if any extra funding became available for the roads programme a percentage would be given to Oranmore MD.
- A query was raised on how LPT to be spent and distributed.
- Welcomed the increase in the code F0502 and requested a breakdown of the recipients of the funding for 2024.
- What options are available to Members in relation to the changes to expenditure between codes.
- A breakdown on the use of funding for street sweeping would be useful for Members.

Ms. Lowe responded to queries raised as follows:

- Ms. Lowe said that in code B0402 that roads funding was distributed pro rata basis on the km per municipal district and is updated each year.
- There was a motion passed at a previous Plenary meeting that 10% of additional funding would be allocated to roads within a 25km radius of Galway City.

- Athenry MD has benefited significantly from other Roads Grants in previous years with funding being available for the Dual Carriageway under the 'Former National Roads Scheme.'
- Code E0601 is an Environment Code, and the expenditure is by area office.
- A service plan can be put in place for the Athenry MD with input from the Athenry Members.

Ms O'Connor responded to queries raised as follows:

- The roads funding code B0301 is allocated on roads as a percentage of regional road per kilometre.
- The figure in the draft budgetary plan is an estimate and funding will be available at a future date under the roads programme.
- LPT is one third of €800,000 and is calculated by dividing total number of Councillors (39) and multiplying by the number of members in each MD. The Members can agree on projects that they want to carry out for example expenditure can be made on one or two big projects. They can also examine the option of projects that can attract match funding. The funding comes from the revenue account will be transferred to the capital account for expenditure on the agreed projects.
- The layout of the GMA is set out in the Department Circular.
- The breakdown of recipients of funding under F0502 will be circulated to Members.
- If funding is changed in the codes, there will be an increase in one area, but another area will have less funding. There is little scope for making changes on the funding.

Cllr. O'Hara expressed that Athenry had insufficient funding compared to other MDs and felt funding was unfairly distributed. He was not in favour of the budget.

On the **PROPOSAL** of Cllr. Collins **SECONDED** by Cllr. Keane the members agreed to adopt without amendments, under Section 58 of the Local Government Reform Act 2014, a Draft Budgetary Plan for the Municipal District of Athenry, as prepared under the direction of the Chief Executive.

The next meeting of the Athenry MD will take place on Tuesday 12th November 2024, and the Cathaoirleach proposed that the meeting take place in the Bia Innovation Centre in Athenry. Mr Keane said that he would be in favour of the meetings taking place in different locations.

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Approved by:


CATHAOIRLEACH

Date: 11/11/24

