

**Minutes of the Monthly Meeting of the  
Municipal District of Conamara held in the Council Chamber,  
on Friday 13<sup>th</sup> September 2024**

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**CATHAORILEACH:**

Cllr. Tom Welby

**I LATHAIR FREISIN:**

Cllr. Noel Thomas, Comh. Tomás Ó Curraoin, Cllr. Gerry King, Cllr. Eileen Mannion, Cllr. Séamus Walsh, Comh. Pádraig Mac An Iomaire, Comh. Máirtín Lee and Cllr. Michael Leainde.

**OIFIGH:**

Mr. U. Finn, Director of Services; Ms. R. Lowe, Senior Engineer, Mr. T. Prendergast, Senior Engineer, Mr. T.J. Redmond, Senior Executive Engineer, Mr. B. McDonagh, Executive Engineer, Mr. N. 'Conaola, Executive Engineer; Mr. L. Tierney, Executive Technician; Ms. I. Martyn, Meetings Administrator  
Ms. S Murray, Staff Officer Ms. N. Rabbitte, Clerical Officer.

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**1. Confirmation of the Minutes of the Ordinary Meeting of the Municipal District of Conamara held on Friday 26<sup>TH</sup> JULY, 2024**

In the **Proposal** of Cllr. Walsh and **Seconded** by Comh. Ó Curraoin the Minutes of the Ordinary Meeting held on 26<sup>th</sup> July 2024 were agreed.

**2. National Speed Limit Review – Local Roads**

Mr. Prendergast made a presentation to the Members on the National Speed Limits Review on Local Roads. He explained 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.

He explained, the report contained principal recommendations relating to three different road categories: 1). Recommendation that a default speed limit of 30km/h for built up and urban areas be introduced. 2). 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. 3). 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.

He explained the priority actions are being progressed through legislation and supporting Statutory Guidelines. He added, the Department of Transport have indicated an intention to implement the changes commencing at the end of November 2024 with the Implementation of 60km/h for Rural Local Roads and in the first half of 2025 to implement for National Secondary Roads 80km/h and Urban Speed Limits 30km/h.

He advised that Galway County Council developed a plan to ensure all required changes can be made to meet the projected timelines as set out. 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."

He added, a high-level desktop assessment of the local roads has shown that there may be up to 235km to 400km of local roads that may be suitable for an 80kph speed limit, based on criteria set down by the Department of Transport. He continued, this was also considered at the Transport SPC meeting on 26<sup>th</sup> April, and members having been asked to consider the matter agreed that should roads meet the criteria (having a road width of greater than 5.5m and centre road markings) they should be considered and assessed under the Guidelines for Managing Speed Limits to determine if they are appropriate for a Special Speed Limit of 80kph.

He continued; the roads identified under Stage 1 Assessment have undergone a Stage 2 assessment in accordance with D<sup>T</sup> Guidance. The stage 2 assessment includes consideration of matters such as horizontal and vertical alignment, number of junctions and access to properties and the type and numbers of vehicles and other road users. The results of the Stage 2 assessment have identified the roads that meet the criteria for a Special Speed Limit of 80 km/h.

Mr. Prendergast explained, these recommendations are now presented to each Municipal District for agreement before proceeding with statutory bye-laws. The next step will then be the preparation of draft bye-laws proposing special speed limits to retain at 80kph those roads identified in Appendix 2. Following a statutory public consultation final draft bye-laws will be brought to the Plenary Meeting of Galway County Council for adoption. It is not proposed to retain an 80kph speed limit on any local roads in the Conamara MD area.

It is also the intention to bring forward supplementary draft Bye-Laws to implement periodic speed limits for a number of schools on National Roads which have been re-classified 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 Garda Síochána will be followed and these supplementary Bye Laws will come before the plenary meeting of the Council for consideration.

Mr. Prendergast also explained that the county wide review, which has been paused in order to effect 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.

Mr. Gallagher concluded by making a presentation to the Members on the methodology used in deciding which roads could retain the 80 km/h speed limit and listed the roads which were brought forward from the Stage 1 assessment as potentially being suitable for the retention of an 80km/h speed limit within the Conamara MD (two roads met the relevant criteria - Spiddal to Moycullen and Barna to Moycullen). In application of the Stage 2 assessment criteria, neither road was deemed appropriate for 80km/h retention and it is recommended that the default 60km/h limit apply on all Local Roads in the Conamara MD area.

#### **Matters Arising:**

Comh. Ó Curraoin expressed concern that the R336 is not fit for more than 60km/h speed limit and he suggested that a footpath be installed when the speed limit is reduced. He stated Notice of Motion monies were kept for footpaths in the Pairc Area of Spiddal but were refused because it is an 80 km/h zone and he questioned why the speed limit west of Padraicin's Pub was changed to 80km/h.

Cllr. Tomas expressed that the speed limit reduction to 30km/h in urban areas was too slow for towns like Moycullen.

Cllr. King asked if the smaller villages, such as Tully and Cleggan will be classed as urban areas in this review.

Cllr. Mannion welcomed the new signage at Scoil Baile Nua, Maigh Cuillin and queried why the speed limit was reduced without Bye-Laws on the N59 between Clifden to Letterfrack.

Cllr. Thomas asked if the Gardai are involved in overseeing these new speed limits.

#### **Responses to Matters Arising**

Mr. Prendergast, in response to Comh Ó Curraoin confirmed that changes to default speeds on Regional Roads are not part of the National Review recommendations and are not included in the 2024 legislative proposals. Numerous submissions have been received in relation to speed limits on the R336, including locations referenced by Comh Ó Curraoin and these will all be considered as part of the county wide review in 2025.

Mr. Prendergast advised that further clarification is awaited from the Department regarding the classification of Moycullen, Tully and Cleggan as urban villages.

Ms. Lowe responded to Cllr. Mannion advising that Scoile Baile Nua on the N59 is part of the Safe Routes to School Scheme and this school is a pilot scheme being funded by Transport Infrastructure. It is hoped to develop a standard for all schools adjacent to national routes. In response to the provision of footpaths, the National Transport Authority may look for a specific standard for footpaths with reduced speed limit requirements.

Mr. Prendergast replied that he is not aware of a speed limit change on the Clifden to Letterfrack road and will enquire about this matter and revert to Cllr. Mannion.

Mr. Prendergast confirmed that the expectation is that central government funding will be provided to cover the cost of the implementation of the new default speed limits on local roads. Signs and poles have been centrally procured and are being distributed to Local Authorities.

Mr. Prendergast confirmed that enforcement of speed limits is a matter for An Garda Síochána. Local Authorities have no direct role but are engaged in formal liaison with the Gardái and the Road Safety Authority in respect of all road safety issues including speed limits.

Cllr. Welby asked the members if they were in agreement with Mr. Prendergast's proposal to include the Spiddal to Moycullen Road and the Barna to Moycullen road in this tranche of speed limit review.

Cllr. Thomas **Proposed** and Cllr. Leainde **Seconded** the proposal.

### **3. Clifden Flood Relief Scheme**

Mr. McDonagh gave a presentation on the Clifden Flood Relief Scheme., details of which were previously distributed to the attendees. It is currently at Stage I – Scheme Development and Design. A business case was submitted to the TWP for the implementation of the scheme in June 2024 and it is envisaged to go to Stage II – Planning by Q1 2025.

#### **Matters Arising:**

Cllr. Mannion expressed concern regarding progress on the scheme and she enquired if the TWP will accept the business case. She advised that notifications of weather alerts should be put in place for people living in flood risk areas such as Clifden.

Cllr. King queried if the Environmental Impact Statement could be completed in a shorter time period. He questioned if hard engineering methods, such as securing embankment are still part of the plan and if works will begin in 2027.

#### **Responses to Matters Arising:**

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Mr. McDonagh responded that GCC are awaiting a response from the ÚPW regarding the business case that GCC submitted to the ÚPW in June 2024.

In response to Cllr. King he confirmed that hard engineering proposals for the Clifden Flood Relief Scheme include reinforced concrete walls in various locations and associated soil embankments.

Ms. Lowe advised that Met Eireann and the Local Authorities are working together, on communications with communities and warning alerts. Ms. Lowe advised that Galway County Council replicates Met Eireann warnings and posts via social media etc. She advised that prediction of exact weather effects at a very localised area is extremely difficult and there is also the challenge that weather warnings can be very broad-based. Ms. Lowe advised that Galway County Council uses the MapAlert text system to communicate various matters, including road closures and that individuals can sign up to receive messages from this system. The Council can use this system to convey certain weather warnings but are reliant on Met Eireann information and Met Eireann broadcasts the alerts etc.

#### **4. Municipal District of Conamara Director's Business**

Mr. Finn advised that the Clifden Regeneration Team were unable to attend the meeting but he would assist with any concerns.

Cllr. Mannion noted the lengthy time the plan is taking to implement and asked can amendments be made at this stage such as car park locations.

Cllr. King asked if a copy of the plan can be distributed to the members.

Mr. Finn replied that he will follow-up with the Clifden Regeneration Team.

#### **5. Municipal District of Conamara Cathaoirleach's Business**

Cllr. Lee raised the issue of the 90-day rule in the new rent pressure zones.

Mr. Finn replied that this is a planning issue.

Cllr. Welby suggested that Cllr. Lee raise this as a notice of motion for the next plenary meeting.

**6. Votes of Sympathy / Congratulations.**

No sympathies.

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**7. A.O.B.**

Cllr. Mannion suggested the need for a policy on campervan parking and funding for designated campervan parking areas.

Comh. Ó. Curraoin asked if the Strategic Policy Committees are in place.

Cllr. Thomas requested an update on the traffic management plan for Moycullen.

Cllr. Mannion asked for an update on the Bughterard pedestrian bridge.

Comh. Mac An Iomaire expressed his concern in regard to the condition of the road surfacing on the R336 near Pairc, Spiddal.

Cllr. Mac Iomaire asked about funding for bridges in Durrow and Seanphaistin.

**Responses to matters arising:**

Cllr. Welby stated that the issue of a campervan parking policy will be raised at the SPC meeting.

Mr. Finn confirmed that the Strategic Policy Committees are not in place as yet.

Ms. Lowe replied that there are six community transport studies being funded by the National Transport Authority and a template transport study for Kinvara has been approved and she will follow-up with the Active Traffic Team.

Mr. Finn advised that he will get an update on the pedestrian bridge for the next meeting.

Mr. Ó'Conaola will consider funding resurfacing works on the R336 in 2025.

Mr. Prendergast mentioned both bridges are in the bridge rehabilitation works programme for 2025 and he will provide an update.

## 8. Notice of Motion

"That Galway County Council investigate the possibility of speed control, both speed reduction, and hard engineering works (similar to works on N83 at Knockdoe) to reduce the ongoing threat to users in the settlement centre Rosscahill which includes St Annin's NS, Laura's Creche and a possible crossing for the Greenway on the N59".

**Proposed:** Cllr. Welby and **Seconded** Cllr. Mannion

"That Galway County Council investigate the possibility of a raised road crossing on the L-5351-0 at the Oughterard Golf Course where pedestrian users cross from one side of the course to the other side. There is considerable vehicular traffic with traffic to the Aughnagure Castle, Golf Course & local traffic".

**Proposed:** Cllr. Welby and **Seconded** Cllr. King

This concluded the business of the meeting.

It was agreed that the next meeting will be held on Friday 18th October 2024 at 10.00 a.m.

**Críochnaigh an Cruinniú Ansin.**

**Signed:**

*Tom Welby*

Cllr. Tom Welby  
Cathaoirleach  
Conamara MD

**Date:**

18/10/24