

COMHAIRLE CHONTAE NA GAILLIMHE
MINUTES OF MONTHLY MEETING OF GALWAY COUNTY COUNCIL

Held at ÁRAS AN CHONTAE, PROSPECT HILL

Monday, 21st October 2024 at 11.00am

CATHAOIRLEACH:

Cathaoirleach Cllr. A. Dolan

Cathaoirleach of the County of Galway

I LATHAIR FREISIN:

Baill:

Comh./Cllr. I. Canning, J. Charity, D. Collins, D. Connolly, S. Cunniffe, S. Curley, T. Ó Curraoin, G. Donohue, P. Feeney, G. Finnerty, A. Harney, M. Hoade, C. Keane, P. Keaveney, D. Kelly, D. Killilea, P. Killilea, G. King, M. Lee, P. Mac an Iomaire, M. Maher, E. Mannion, J. McClearn, K. McHugh Farag, L. O'Hara, Dr. E. F. Parsons, A. Reddington, P. Roche, N. Thomas, O. Turner, S. Walsh and T. Welby.

Baill ar líne:

Comh./Cllr. M. Connolly, M. Kinane, M. Leainde.

Oifigh:

Mr. L. Conneally, Chief Executive, Mr. L. Hanrahan, Director of Services, Mr. U. Finn, Director of Services, Ms. E. Ruane, Director of Services, Ms. J. Carroll, Director of Services, Ms. K. O'Connor, Head of Finance, Mr. M. Owens, Director of Services, Ms. J. Brann Meetings Administrator, Ms. H. Riordan, A/Staff Officer, Ms. L. O'Donnell, Assistant Staff Officer.

Thosnaigh an cruinniú leis an paidir.

The meeting opened with votes of sympathy conveyed to the following: Cllr. Lee on the passing of his brother-in-law Mr. Pat Gavin, Tom Murray, his wife Sheelagh and the Murray family on the passing of Mr. Noel Murray, the families of Roscommon Councillor John Naughton and Mr. Tommy Greaney from Bearna.

ITEM NO.1 CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES OF THE FOLLOWING MEETINGS

4414

On the **PROPOSAL** of Cllr. Hoade **SECONDED** by Cllr. Maher the minutes of the Monthly Plenary Meeting held on 23rd September 2024 were **AGREED**.

Members raised the following points and queries:

- Thanks were expressed to the Council staff for their work in clearing the roads following storm Ashley.
- Clarity was sought on where responsibility lies for maintaining roadside trees when the tree is outside the boundary.
- Rachel Lowe's Roads team and Claire Smith from Corporate were thanked for their work over the weekend in relation to storm Ashley.

Members Queries were responded to as follows by Mr. Finn:

- Confirmed that the responsibility for maintaining roadside trees lay with the landowner. When a tree falls on the road, Council staff respond to make the road passable and safe.
- There is a distinction between trees being inside or outside the boundary. Under Section 70 Part 2 of the 1993 Roads Act, the owner or occupier of land shall take all reasonable steps to ensure that a tree is not a hazard to road users where the tree is inside the boundary. Where the tree is outside the boundary it is the responsibility of the Local Authority.

Members raised the following points and queries:

- An update was sought on the measures taken to prevent a re-occurrence of the high number of spoiled votes received during the Local Elections.
- What steps have been taken in training polling station staff.
- What work is being undertaken to ensure that the Register of Electors is up to date and to ensure that young people are added to the voting register.
- Ballot papers should not be invalid because they have not been sealed at the polling station.
- If the polling station that did not seal all the local election ballot papers has been identified.
- An update on the potential provision of accommodation for the International Protection Accommodation Services in Belclare was requested.
- Why live streaming is still not in operation for Council meetings.

Members Queries were responded to as follows by Mr. Owens:

- The responsibility for polling stations lies with the Returning Officer, in this case Ms. Chambers Higgins. The concerns of the Members have been conveyed to her and a report on the spoiled votes has been shared with the relevant stakeholders, including the Department.
- The matter of the spoiled votes is not within the remit of this Local Authority.
- He understood that training took place before the Local Elections.
- He undertook to follow up with Ms. Chambers Higgins.
- There is no further update regarding the provision of accommodation in Belclare.

Members Queries were responded to as follows by Ms. Ruane:

- Work is currently ongoing to update the voting register.
- Two additional staff will be added to the unit.
- Outreach projects with schools are being undertaken.

Members Queries were responded to as follows by Ms. O'Connor:

- Quotations have been sought to provide live streaming. A significant upgrade to the current equipment is required as it is 10 years old.
- The investment cost will be included in the 2025 Budget. A tender has been submitted to the Department seeking funding.

Members raised the following points and queries:

- When will applicants benefit from the increases to the housing grant schemes. Will those that have already applied be eligible to avail of the increases or only new applicants.
- Reassurance was sought that the costs to install live streaming will be minimal.
- It was questioned if the public would watch live streamed Council meetings.
- The decision to approve the cost of upgrading the Chamber should lie with the Members.
- There are more deserving areas that monies can be spent before implementing live streaming of meetings such as hedge cutting.
- If live streaming does not go ahead will the previous motion raised by Cllr. McKinstry need to be revoked.
- Live streaming is important to involve the community in the working of the Council and to show them how they are represented in the Chamber.
- It was asked why houses are advertised via Choice Based Letting before they are ready for occupation. Also, why deposits and rent are required to be paid before the property is ready.

Members Queries were responded to as follows by Mr. Owens:

- The Minister has indicated the intention to increase the amount that can be awarded for grant applications by 30%, income limits to increase by 20% and local authority contribution to reduce to 15%. A Statutory Instrument must be prepared to enable these changes. This is expected in quarter 1 of 2025. At the moment the scheme remains unchanged.

- The applicants that will benefit from the changes to the housing grants scheme will depend on the content of the Statutory Instrument.
- The Council are obliged to advertise certain properties through Choice Based Letting. They are advertised as not ready to avoid them lying vacant. All tenants are required to pay a deposit and a week's rent, which is refundable.
- If the timeline for occupancy is expected to be longer than normal, the tenant will be notified.
- Timelines are determined by the level of work required. Occasionally prospective tenants change their minds.
- He will revert to Cllr. Donohue directly regarding her specific enquiry.

Members Queries were responded to as follows by Ms. O'Connor:

- The quotations for the works to the Chamber can be presented to the Members. The cost will form part of the 2025 budget. The Members will be given the opportunity to decide if the proposed changes will address the Chambers' wants and needs.

Members Queries were responded to as follows by the Cathaoirleach:

- The motion from Cllr. McKinstry in the previous Council regarding live streaming was not a costed motion, it was a sentiment. The costed proposal that will be presented to us will be considered at the budget meeting.

ITEM NO.2 CONSIDERATION OF REPORTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

4415

On the **PROPOSAL** of Cllr. Maher **SECONDED** by Cllr. Walsh the minutes of the Corporate Policy Group held on 16th September 2024 were **NOTED**.

A discussion took place on the holding of civic receptions.

Members raised the following points and queries:

- That civic receptions should be held at MD level.
- That civic receptions be grouped together to generate a larger attendance.
- The importance of Elected Members attending civic receptions was expressed.
- That the start time of plenary meetings should be later when a civic reception is being held.
- That Evan O'Brien, 3 times World Irish Dancing champion be honoured.
- That there should be music played at civic receptions.

On the **PROPOSAL** of Cllr. Mannion **SECONDED** by Cllr. Keaveney it was **AGREED** to hold the November plenary meeting on 25th November at 1pm.

ITEM NO.3 TO CONSIDER REPORT UNDER SECTION 183 OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 2001 ON THE DISPOSAL OF PROPERTY AT ATTIGODDAUN, CLEGGAN, CO. GALWAY – 0.221HECTARES.

4416

Statutory Notice issued in accordance with Section 183(1)(b) and report dated 10th October 2024 was published on the Extranet prior to the meeting.

Members raised the following points and queries:

- Could the process for the disposal of properties be changed to facilitate people with a local connection to purchase them.
- Can the disposal process be discussed at Strategic Policy Committee (SPC).

Members Queries were responded to as follows by Mr. Owens:

- Under Section 183, properties to be disposed of are placed on the local market via the media and online. An estate agent is obtained through procurement. They make a recommendation on any offers that are received. The Section 183 then comes before the Members. If approved,

it then proceeds to sale agreed stage and is referred to the Law Agents.

Monies received are held in the capital account.

- A further 3 Section 183s are expected to come before the Members at the December plenary meeting.
- He is happy to discuss the matter with the incoming chair of the Housing SPC.
- The best manner in which to dispose of properties under Compulsory Purchase Order Activation programme can be discussed at SPC.

On the **PROPOSAL** of Cllr. Maher **SECONDED** by Cllr. Kelly it was **AGREED** to dispose of property at Attigoddaun, Cleggan, Co. Galway in accordance with the Statutory Notice dated 10th October 2024.

ITEM NO. 4 TO CONSIDER REPORT UNDER SECTION 183 OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 2001 ON THE DISPOSAL OF PROPERTY AT LISSANISKA, KILLIMOR, CO. GALWAY – 0.209 HECTARES. **4417**

Statutory Notice issued in accordance with Section 183(1)(b) and report dated 10th October 2024 was published on the Extranet prior to the meeting.

On the **PROPOSAL** of Cllr. McClearn **SECONDED** by Cllr. Maher it was **AGREED** to dispose of property at Lissaniska, Killimor, Co. Galway in accordance with the Statutory Notice dated 10th October 2024.

ITEM NO. 5 TO CONSIDER REPORT UNDER SECTION 183 OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 2001 ON THE DISPOSAL OF PROPERTY AT TIRANASCRAUGH, BALLYCRISSANE, BALLINASLOE, CO. GALWAY – 0.383 HECTARES **4418**

Statutory Notice issued in accordance with Section 183(1)(b) and report dated 10th October 2024 was published on the Extranet prior to the meeting.

Members raised the following points and queries:

- Can the process for the Section 183s be paused and a review of the process carried out before a decision is made.
- This disposal process has previously been agreed by the Members.
- The decision to sell these properties lies in the Council Chamber today.

Members Queries were responded to as follows by the Cathaoirleach:

- These Section 183 properties are near conclusion and so the process must continue.

Members Queries were responded to as follows by Mr. Owens:

- Confirmed that the properties on the agenda today are at the point of sale agreed, it is too late to stop the process.
- If a change is made at SPC, the process of disposing properties under the CPO Activation Programme and future Section 183s can be addressed.

On the **PROPOSAL** of Cllr. McClearn **SECONDED** by Cllr. Canning it was **AGREED** to dispose of property at Tiranascragh, Ballycrissane, Ballinasloe, Co. Galway in accordance with the Statutory Notice dated 10th October 2024.

ITEM NO. 6 TO CONSIDER REPORT UNDER SECTION 183 OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 2001 ON THE DISPOSAL OF PROPERTY AT KILLEENEEN BEG, CRAUGHWELL, CO. GALWAY – 0.107 HECTARES.

4419

Statutory Notice issued in accordance with Section 183(1)(b) and report dated 10th October 2024 was published on the Extranet prior to the meeting.

On the **PROPOSAL** of Cllr. Maher **SECONDED** by Cllr. Kelly it was **AGREED** to dispose of property at Killeeneen Beg, Craughwell, Co. Galway in accordance with the Statutory Notice dated 10th October 2024.

Members raised the following points and queries:

- As there are local concerns regarding this property, it was asked if the Section 183 process be paused for this item.
- If the item is not approved today, the property will go back on the market. The price offered today will not be attained again.
- This item was discussed at Corporate Policy Group (CPG). Selling is the best option as the property is landlocked.
- Properties should be bought by people with a local connection. If it was a new build the applicant would have to prove local connection.
- Concern was raised at the small size of the plot of land and queried if planning permission would be obtained by the new owner.
- The purchasers of this property are from the same electoral area as the property.
- It was asked where the proceeds of the sale will go.

Members Queries were responded to as follows by Mr. Owens:

- No undertaking has been given to the purchaser regards obtaining of planning permission or any other planning commitment.
- The proceeds go to the capital account and are ringfenced for housing.

ITEM NO. 7 PURSUANT TO S153(2) OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 2001,
APPROVAL IS SOUGHT FROM THE MEMBERS TO PROVIDE THE CHIEF
EXECUTIVE WITH THE EXPRESS AUTHORISATION OF THE ELECTED
COUNCIL TO DEFEND THE HIGH COURT JUDICIAL REVIEW PROCEEDINGS
ENTITLED BAILE BHRUACHLAIN TEO & OTHERS -V- GALWAY COUNTY
COUNCIL – RECORD NO. 2022/689JR.

4420

Report dated 18th October 2024 was published on the Extranet prior to the meeting.

Cllr. Dr. E.F. Parsons left the Chamber before the item commenced, due to potential conflict of interest.

On the **PROPOSAL** of Cllr. Maher **SECONDED** by Cllr. Hoade it was **AGREED** to provide the Chief Executive with the express authorisation of the Elected Council to defend the High Court Judicial Review Proceedings entitled Baile Bhrúachlain Teo & Others -V- Galway County Council – Record No. 2022/689JR.

ITEM NO.8 TO CONSIDER A DATE AND TIME FOR THE BUDGET MEETING.

4421

On the **PROPOSAL** of Cllr. Maher **SECONDED** by Cllr. McClearn it was **AGREED** to hold the Budget Meeting on Friday 29th November 2024 at 1:00pm.

ITEM NO.9 UPDATE ON THE STRATEGIC POLICY COMMITTEE NOMINEES.

4422

Ms. Ruane provided an update on the Strategic Policy Committee (SPC) nominees. The final nomination for the SPCs was received on Friday evening. The committee membership will be circulated to the Members in the coming days. It was attempted as far as possible to accommodate Members in their first preference choice. The Director of each SPC will be in contact with the SPC Chairs to agree dates and times of the first meetings of the committees.

ITEM NO. 10 TO CONSIDER AND IF DEEMED APPROPRIATE AUTHORISE THE ATTENDANCE AT TRAINING IN ACCORDANCE WITH SECTION 142(5A) OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 2001 (AS AMENDED).

4423

Report dated 16th October 2024 was published on the Extranet prior to the meeting.

On the **PROPOSAL** of Cllr. Maher **SECONDED** by Cllr. McClearn it was **AGREED** to authorise Cllrs. Roche, Hoade, Maher and Grealish to attend AILG Module 4 September Training Module 'An Overview of the Planning System' at The Bridge House Hotel, Tullamore (Retrospective Approval).

On the **PROPOSAL** of Cllr. Maher **SECONDED** by Cllr. McClearn it was **AGREED** to authorise Cllrs. D. Killilea, Hoade and McClearn to attend LAMA Autumn Training Seminar at The Newgrange Hotel, Navan on 17th & 18th October 2024. (Retrospective Approval).

On the **PROPOSAL** of Cllr. Maher **SECONDED** by Cllr. McClearn it was **AGREED** to authorise Cllrs. Reddington, King, Leainde and Hoade to attend AILG October Training Module 'Local Authority Finance & Budget System' at The Radisson Hotel, Limerick on 2nd November 2024.

ITEM NO. 11 TO CONSIDER THE MANAGEMENT REPORT – OCTOBER 2024 IN ACCORDANCE WITH SECTION 136(2) OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 2001 (AS AMENDED). **4424**

Report dated 16th October 2024 was published on the Extranet prior to the meeting.

The Management Report – October 2024, in accordance with Section 136(2) of the Local Government Act 2001 (As Amended) was **NOTED**.

Members raised the following points and queries:

- The Lumina event in Tuam for Culture night was praised.
- The Director and Local Enterprise Office team were complimented on the Decade of Success celebration event in Claremorris.
- The turning of the sod for social housing in Clifden was welcomed. The demand for affordable and private housing in Clifden was stated.
- Concern was raised at the 8 abandoned dwellings mentioned in the report.
- It was asked that routes leading to the N59 be included in the Winter Service Plan.

- If pre-planning meetings are only available online.
- If the recently purchased community warden vans are powered by hybrid or electric.
- The affordable houses in Baile Chláir are out of financial reach of first-time buyers.
- The equity of €10,000 lump sum to be paid is unaffordable on top of mortgage costs.
- The Autism Resource Fair held in Loughrea was praised.
- The EU Just Transition Regenerative Tourism and Placemaking Scheme should be prioritised, and tourism initiatives supported.

Members Queries were responded to as follows by Mr. Owens:

- Houses are abandoned when the tenant leaves a property without prior notification. There is a statutory process that must be adhered to in order for the property to come back into the remit of the Council. There is generally a significant cost to getting the house back to an acceptable standard.
- The Local Authority implements the Affordable Housing Scheme as it is prescribed by the Minister. The scheme in Baile Chláir is the Council's first scheme in 10 years. 100 applications have already been received since the scheme opened last Monday. We have conveyed the limitations of the scheme to the Minister.

Members Queries were responded to as follows by Mr. Finn:

- The new community warden vans are fuelled by diesel. The type of operations a vehicle is purchased for and the availability of charging points are considered when purchasing new vehicles. Future purchases will be considered under the objectives of the Climate Action Plan.

Members Queries were responded to as follows by Ms Carroll:

- To date 25 expressions of interest have been received under the EU Just Transition Regenerative Tourism and Placemaking Scheme 2023-2026. 13

applications have been approved. A number of training webinars were held in September.

Members raised the following points and queries:

- The turning of the sod for new houses in Clifden was welcomed.
- A call for a new fire station in Ballinasloe was made. It currently only has one bay which is not adequate.
- If the preparatory work has been completed and if plans have been updated in preparation for lodging an application for a new fire station in 2025.
- Separate changing areas are required in Ballinasloe Fire Station for male and female staff.

Members Queries were responded to as follows by Mr. Finn:

- The funding for each fire station is made under separate applications. Funding has been received for new fire stations in Loughrea, Athenry and Galway City under the Capital Programme 2021-2025. Ballinasloe will be considered in the new 2025 Capital Programme.
- Enough preparatory work has been undertaken to make an application for funding, though not enough yet for a planning application.

Members Queries were responded to as follows by the Chief Executive:

- Made a commitment to seek the funding for a new Fire Station in Ballinalsoe and to prioritise the delivery of the Fire Station.

Members raised the following points and queries:

- The Ballinasloe Fair was described as a success and the clean up after as exemplary.
- Staff were commended for their work in the aftermath of Storm Ashley.
- The design for Poolboy Amenity Park was welcomed.

- Concern was raised on the quality of service at the Tuam swimming pool. It was asked that the Executive liaise with the management company.
- The Fire Station in Portumna is out of date, there are no changing facilities for the firefighters.

Members Queries were responded to as follows by Mr. Finn:

- Significant investment has been made to the County fire service. He will meet the Chief Fire Officer to discuss Portumna Fire Station upgrade with him.

Members raised the following points and queries:

- If Housing circular 23/2021 is still current.
- Feedback from the recent online survey was sought.
- The number of applications received for the 17 affordable housing units in Baile Chláir was asked.
- Mountbellew Fire Station requires investment especially due to the closure of Castlerea Fire Station.
- Accessibility issues in entering the swimming pool in Tuam were raised.
- The upcoming meeting with Uisce Éireann on 6th November was welcomed and it was asked that all Members attend.

Members Queries were responded to as follows by Mr. Owens:

- Housing Circular 23/2021 is still operating. The task force is applying flexibility in regards its enforcement. Applications are judged on a case-by-case basis.
- Over 100 applications were received for the Baile Chláir affordable housing scheme in the first few hours of opening.
- The closing date for the affordable housing survey was extended from the 4th September to 13th October. 467 valid responses were received. The results are currently being analysed. The results will be brought to the Housing SPC and circulated to the Members through the Management Report.

Members Queries were responded to as follows by Ms. Ruane:

- The issues raised in relation to the Tuam swimming pool are being looked at with the Management Company.

ITEM NO. 12 CHIEF EXECUTIVE'S BUSINESS & CORRESPONDENCE.

4425

The following items of correspondence which were published on the extranet prior to the meeting were **NOTED**:

- Letter dated 16.09.24 from Sligo County Council. Resolution – Scheme to build rural housing.
- Letter dated 16.09.24 from Sligo County Council. Resolution – Review of existing community employment schemes.
- Letter dated 10.10.24 from Donegal County Council. Resolution - Review hedge cutting policy.
- Letter dated 10.10.24 from Donegal County Council. Resolution - Condemn and reject the selective use of the extradition procedure.
- Email dated 14.10.24 from Westmeath County Council. Resolution – Remove mandatory aspect of secondary level Social Personal & Health Education (SPHE).

Members raised the following points and queries:

- It was asked that consideration be given to the Notice of Motion received from Donegal County Council, listed in the correspondence. It is seeking that hedge cutting be permitted during the last two weeks of August.
- It was asked if specific dates for hedge cutting are stated in legislation or if the Council set the parameters.

Members Queries were responded to as follows by Mr. Finn:

- The dates for hedge cutting will be brought to the SPC for consideration.

ITEM 13. QUESTION

4426

Cllr. Donohue submitted the following Question prior to the meeting:

'To ask the Chief Executive that Galway County Council have shower and toilet facilities open and available all year round at our designated swimming areas e.g. Loughrea Lake, Traught etc due to the demand of swimming at these locations. Note. Swimming in Ireland is not just a summer activity but is a daily physical and mental therapy for many.'

The following reply issued:

Each year a Municipal District budget is adopted by the local elected representatives. The budget is allocated across several categories, and this year the amount allocated to the Long Point, Loughrea was €23,332.00 and Traught Beach was €20,412.00. The budget covers all repair and maintenance, labour, litter disposal, heating, cleaning and sanitary supply costs.

While the Long Point and Traught facilities are available to the public all year round, the approach for very many years has been to open the public toilet and shower facilities in line with the Blue Flag period i.e., late May until September. Even with this limited opening we generally find it extremely challenging to stay within the budgeted amount.

Without an increase in this allocated budget, we will not be in a position to open the public toilet and shower facilities outside of the period already mentioned. Any review of toilet opening times and associated additional budget provision would also need to consider other such facilities across the county such as those listed below:

- Dog's Bay, Roundstone
- Caladh Mhuinse, Cill Chiaráin
- Gurteen, Roundstone
- Glasillaun, Renvyle
- Trá na bhForbacha
- Céibh an Spidéil

- Mannin, Bunowen
- Trá Mhór, Indreabhán
- Trá an Dóilín, An Cheathrú Rua
- Muighris, Carna - Toilets and Bins

Cllr. Donohue spoke on the Question, stating that people swim all year around for mental and physical health and deserve a place to shower and change.

The Chief Executive responded that extending services is dependent on him being provided with the budget to cover the costs.

ITEM 14. NOTICE OF MOTION

4427

Cllr. O'Hara submitted the following Notice of Motion prior to the meeting:

'I propose that the Chief Executive makes delivery of a publicly owned public swimming pool in Loughrea an objective and a priority of Galway County Council.'

The following reply issued:

The Loughrea Local Area Plan Community Facilities Zoning allows for the development of civic, community and educational facilities to facilitate community, health, religious, educational, social and civic infrastructure within the life time of the Local Area Plan. The associated Land use matrix of the LAP allows for this to be considered.

Galway County Council considered an expression of interest submitted for a swimming pool for Loughrea in the context of the Large-Scale Sports Infrastructure Fund (LSSIF). In the submissions that went forward from the Local Authority the swimming pool expression of interest was not included as the criteria stated that projects for submission and funding consideration should be in a state of readiness in terms of being shovel ready. Moreover, applicants would need to have a site acquired or a long-term lease in place as part of the eligibility criteria.

The Community Development Team has engaged extensively and will continue to engage with the local groups and Loughrea MD to bring forward a comprehensive funding application.

In the meantime, the Council has neither a development site or funds to advance this project, but will continue to work diligently with the local community.

Cllr. O'Hara said that he submitted this Notice of Motion on behalf of Mr. Colm O'Donnell who is leading the campaign for a swimming pool in Loughrea. The community in Loughrea have been looking for this for a long time and there is huge demand in the town and catchment area. There are posters in shop windows looking for this facility to be provided. It will benefit the health and wellbeing and be availed of by children and the elderly alike. He urged the Executive to work to identify a site and to get funding for the pool.

ITEM 15. NOTICE OF MOTION

4428

Cllr. Kelly submitted the following Notice of Motion prior to the meeting:

'I propose that Galway County Council and the Chief Executive of Galway County Council commit to making a publicly owned public swimming pool in Loughrea an urgent priority of the Council. I further propose that potential sites in public ownership be evaluated and that if none are suitable then privately owned sites be considered. This preparatory work and business plan should be finalised with an ambition to commence construction in 2025.'

The following reply issued:

The Loughrea Local Area Plan Community Facilities Zoning allows for the development of civic, community and educational facilities to facilitate community, health, religious, educational, social and civic infrastructure within the lifetime of the Local Area Plan. The associated Land use matrix of the LAP allows for this to be considered.

Galway County Council considered an expression of interest submitted for a swimming pool for Loughrea in the context of the Large-Scale Sports Infrastructure Fund (LSSIP). In the submissions that went forward from the Local Authority the swimming pool expression of interest was not included as the criteria stated that projects for submission and funding consideration should be in a state of readiness in terms of being shovel ready. Moreover, applicants would need to have a site acquired or a long-term lease in place as part of the eligibility criteria.

The Community Development Team has engaged extensively and will continue to engage with the local groups and Loughrea MD to bring forward a comprehensive funding application.

In the meantime, the Council has neither a development site or funds to advance this project but will continue to work diligently with the local community and Government departments.

Members raised the following points and queries:

- There are no indications that the private sector will provide a swimming pool in Loughrea and so the onus is on the Local Authority to progress the provision of one.
- It was asked that a map be provided to the Loughrea MD showing all lands owned by the Local Authority.
- It was asked where the funding to run and maintain a swimming pool would come from.
- Loughrea are also awaiting sports facilities.
- Lack of site for a swimming pool in Loughrea is the stumbling block.

Members Queries were responded to as follows by the Chief Executive:

- There is currently no site nor funding for capital or operational costs for a swimming pool in Loughrea.
- The Council and Community directorate will engage with groups regarding the need and provision of community facilities.

- A site is needed first, thereafter an application for national funding will be required.
- A community operated swimming pool is also an option.

ITEM 16. NOTICE OF MOTION

4429

Cllr. Donoghue submitted the following Notice of Motion prior to the meeting:

'That the Chief Executive - Director of Housing confirm when a property is offered on (CBL) Choice Based Lettings is the property ready for occupancy.'

The following reply issued:

In order to reduce the reletting time and vacancy rate, a property maybe offered via Choice Based Letting (CBL), once the property has entered the maintenance and/or allocation workflow process. This provides time for the allocation process to be advanced, to include possible refusal(s) of the property, allowing for early occupation of the property on the completion of any necessary maintenance works.

ITEM 17. NOTICE OF MOTION

4430

Cllr. Donoghue submitted the following Notice of Motion prior to the meeting:

'That the Chief Executive confirm all lands in hectares that are in the ownership of Galway County Council indicating if zoned for residential or agricultural use, and will he confirm if he has quantified these lands in terms of the potential scope and liability for the RZLT, and the possible impact for our local government finances.'

The following reply issued:

The Finance (No.2) Act 2023 provides that the first liability date for Residential Zoned Land Tax (RZLT) is deferred until 01 February 2025. It is anticipated the registration for RZLT will open in early December 2024. Residential Zoned Land Tax

(RZLT) is an annual tax. It is calculated at 3% of the market value of land within its scope. RZLT applies to land that on, or after, 01 January 2022, is zoned for residential use and is deemed serviced.

The staff of Galway County Council (GCC) are presently reviewing all lands in the ownership of GCC to quantify the potential scope and liability for the RZLT, and the possible impact for our local government finances. It is yet uncertain as to whether there will be any exemptions for such lands owned by GCC or if the Department will give funding towards this. As part of the 2025 Annual Budget for GCC, it is anticipated that GCC will provide an amount for the payment of the tax on Residential Zoned Land.

Cllr. Donohue raised her concerns on the possible exposure of the Council to the tax. She asked if the Chief Executive has a map of the concerned lands in Council ownership and requested an update.

Members raised the following points and queries:

- If Health Service Executive lands would be liable for the tax.
- Will it result in public monies being used to pay public taxes.
- The tax is being introduced to encourage lands to be used to provide housing, it is not intended to tax agricultural land.

Members Queries were responded to as follows by the Chief Executive:

- We are awaiting the Finance Bill to be enacted to establish the process and to determine if the Council will be liable to pay the tax. Maps of Council owned lands (residential) are currently being prepared to quantify any tax liability. Once the maps are prepared, he stated that a case for exemption will be made to Revenue.
- It will be included as part of the Council's 2025 budget deliberations.
- Only serviced lands that are zoned residential would be liable for the tax.

ITEM NO.18 CATHAOIRLEACH'S BUSINESS

4431

On the **PROPOSAL** of Cllr. O'Hara **SECONDED** by Cllr. Curley the Members **AGREED:**

'that Galway County Council, in light of the recent ruling of the International Court of Justice on the illegality of Israeli settlements in Occupied Palestinian Territories, calls on the Irish Government to enact the Occupied Territories Bill.'

As the motion was proposed without the required notice, the Cathaoirleach referenced Standing Order 28. A vote was taken, a majority of the Members present voted to approve the taking of the motion.

Cllr. O'Hara spoke on his motion describing the war crimes and genocide that is occurring in Palestine, 40,000 people murdered and 90,000 have been seriously injured. Lack of food, increase in disease, hospitals, schools and universities destroyed. Goods from Israeli settlements should be banned and the Government need to be called on to enact the Bill.

Members raised the following points and queries:

- It was asked if the Chamber was the appropriate place to raise this issue, as there have been atrocities on both sides.
- A message needs to be sent to the Government and the European Union that this genocide must stop.
- The perpetrators must be held to account in The Hague.
- Irish peace keeping forces have been fired upon by Israel.

The Members agreed to accept the motion and the Cathaoirleach confirmed that the motion was carried.

Members raised the following points and queries:

- If the Community Improvement Scheme could be used to cut verges. It is very costly for farmers. It was asked if the Council could extend the LIS for farmers or if the Department could be written to requesting extension of the remit of the scheme.
- A consistent county wide policy for hedge trimming is needed.
- If a tree falls in a graveyard and damages a headstone, who is responsible.
- Hedge cutting should conclude in December in line with the end of the financial year.
- Ash dieback is an urgent issue as dead trees can fall especially after storms.
- There is no enforcement monitoring the cutting of hedges. Some farmers bear the expense themselves while others wait for the Council to do it. Landowners should be written to and informed of their responsibilities.
- Once the Section 83 public consultation is complete, when will the 6 bus shelters be delivered.
- Concern was raised at the retrofitting of Council houses that are not suitable for retrofitting. It was asked how much time and how often issues have been raised following retrofitting.

Members Queries were responded to as follows by Mr. Finn:

- There are many things to be considered with regards hedge cutting. The Strategic Policy Committees (SPC) should be established shortly. A work programme will be agreed, and this item will be on it. The topic can be discussed in depth at the SPC.
- The Community Improvement Scheme is grant funded by the Department and can be used to improve sight lines. This can also be discussed at SPC.
- Contracts have been signed for the new bus shelters; work will start in November.

Members Queries were responded to as follows by Mr. Owens:

- Retrofit works are certified by the contractor as meeting the required standards. Tenants may need time to adjust to the new system.
- He will arrange a review and revert to the Council.

ITEM NO.19 VOTES OF SYMPATHY / CONGRATULATIONS

4432

A resolution of congratulations was extended to the following:

- Cllr. Ollie Turner on winning the MacNamee Award for the Documentary 'The men of 2023.'
- Mr. Rossa Ryan on winning the Prix de l'Arc de Triomphe.

A resolution of sympathy was extended to the following:

- Maureen O'Toole and Family, Cartron, Moyard, Co. Galway
- Elizabeth Murray, Cluain Bú, Corr an Dola, Co. Galway
- Eileen Greaney, Corboley Road, Boleybeg, Bearna, Co. Galway
- Annie Gavin, Doirefharta Beag, An Cheathrú Rua, Co. Galway
- Cllr. Mairtin & Maura Lee, Tír an Fhia, Leitir Mór, Co. Galway
- Siobhan Joyce, Kilcloghans, Tuam, Co. Galway
- Sean Maloney, Dunmore, Tuam, Co Galway
- Mrs. Breda Naughton, Ardeen, Drum, Athlone, Co Westmeath.
- Cathaoirleach Albert Dolan, The Willows, Raheen, Atherry, Co. Galway

Chriochnaigh an Cruinniú Ansin.

Submitted, Signed and Approved

Cathaoirleach:

Cllr Ollie Turner

Date:

25/11/24