

COMHAIRLE CHONTAE NA GAILLIMHE
MINUTES OF MONTHLY MEETING OF GALWAY COUNTY COUNCIL
Held at ÁRAS AN CHONTAE, PROSPECT HILL
Monday, 22nd July 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. Connolly, M. Connolly, S. Cunniffe, T. Ó Curraoin, G. Donohue, P. Feeney, G. Finnerty, D. Geraghty, T. Grealish, A. Harney, M. Hoade, C. Keane, P. Keaveney, D. Kelly, P. Killilea, G. King, M. Lee, P. Mac an Iomaire, M. Maher, E. Mannion, J. McClearn, P.J. Murphy, L. O'Hara, A. Reddington, P. Roche, N. Thomas, O. Turner, S. Walsh and T. Welby.

Baill ar líne: Cllr. D. Collins, S. Curley, D. Killilea, M. Kinane, N. Leainde, K. McHugh Farag, Dr. E. F. Parsons.

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, Mr. M. Owens, Director of Services, Ms. L. Keady Meetings Administrator, Ms. H. Riordan, Assistant Staff Officer, Ms. E. Hoffman, Assistant Staff Officer.

Thosnaigh an cruinniú leis an paidir.

The meeting began with warm congratulations from the Chamber to the Chief Executive, County Secretary and County Clare on their win in the All-Ireland hurling final the previous day.

Sympathy was extended to the family of the late John O'Mahony. His achievements as a politician and with the Galway Football team were praised.

The newly elected Councillors were invited by Cllr. Dolan to address the Chamber.

A request that a homecoming be held for the Galway Footballers in Ballinasloe after the upcoming All-Ireland final, was received.

Congratulations were given to the Galway Ladies Football team on also reaching the All-Ireland final and wishes were expressed for a homecoming to be held for the team.

ITEM NO.1 CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES OF THE FOLLOWING MEETINGS

4379

On the **PROPOSAL** of Cllr. McClearn **SECONDED** by Cllr. Walsh the minutes of the Monthly Plenary Meeting held on 20th May 2024 were **AGREED**.

Members raised the following points and queries:

- The lack of public transport from county towns and villages into the Galway Arts Festival.
- Request for Local Link bus service to be established between Williamstown and Tuam and onto Galway City.
- Frustration was expressed in that the bus service between Clifden and Ballyconneely has been removed. It was said that the National Transport Authority (NTA) should consult with the Council before decisions are made to cease operating routes.
- A request was made of the Executive to provide a list of all existing transport links to enable a full review.

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

- Bus routes must be extended to achieve the targets set out in the Climate Action Plan. The Department of Transport and NTA are the authorities that have responsibility for this.
- There is a need for a shift from private to public transport use.
- A list will be provided to the Members detailing existing transport links to identify potential gaps in service.
- An invitation will issue to the NTA, inviting them to attend a plenary meeting as soon as possible.

Members Queries were responded to as follows by the Cathaoirleach:

- The NTA have indicated that while they are not willing to meet with individual Municipal Districts (MDs), they will attend a meeting of the full Council.
- Inviting the NTA to attend a meeting of the full Council will be an item on the next Corporate Policy Group (CPG) meeting.

Members raised the following points and queries:

- An NTA office is needed in the Western Region of the country.
- The NTA should create a clinic with a dedicated point of contact for Elected Members.
- A special meeting with the NTA is needed instead of them being invited to a plenary meeting.
- The NTA must produce a Public Service Plan stating their concrete commitments.
- There is a lack of bus shelters and disabled bus services on bus routes.

On the **PROPOSAL** of Cllr. Hoade **SECONDED** by Cllr. Maher the minutes of the Annual Meeting held on 21st June 2024 were **AGREED**.

ITEM NO.2 CONSIDERATION OF REPORTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

4380

On the **PROPOSAL** of Cllr. Maher **SECONDED** by Cllr. Hoade the minutes of the Corporate Policy Group held on 17th May 2024 were **NOTED**.

On the **PROPOSAL** of Cllr. Finnerty **SECONDED** by Cllr. Maher the minutes of the Local Traveller Accommodation Consultative Committee Meeting held on 29th April 2024 were **NOTED**.

ITEM NO.3 IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE PROVISIONS OF SECTION 48 OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 2001, AS AMENDED BY SECTION 41 OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT REFORM ACT 2014, CONSIDERATION OF THE DRAFT STRATEGIC POLICY COMMITTEE SCHEME 2024-2029

4381

The report on the Draft Strategic Policy Committee (SPC) Scheme 2024-2029 was published on the Extranet prior to the meeting.

Members raised the following points and queries:

- The inclusion of Agriculture as an SPC heading was welcomed.
- It was requested that the new SPCs be established as soon as possible.
- It was asked when the first SPC meetings will be held.
- It was requested that nominations be sought immediately to avoid unnecessary delay in re-starting the SPC meetings.

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

- The closing date for submissions to the draft SPC Scheme is late August. The scheme will be brought back before Council at the September plenary meeting. The first SPC meetings should be held in late October.

ITEM NO. 4 TO CONSIDER AND IF DEEMED APPROPRIATE TO APPROVE A CONTRIBUTION TOWARDS THE OPERATION OF IRISH WATER SAFETY IN ACCORDANCE WITH SECTION 67 OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 2001.

4382

Report dated 11th July 2024 was published on the Extranet prior to the meeting.

On the **PROPOSAL** of Cllr. McClearn **SECONDED** by Cllr. Finnerty it was **AGREED** to approve a contribution of €6,100 towards the operation of Irish Water Safety in accordance with Section 67 of the Local Government Act 2001.

Members raised the following points and queries:

- The need to ensure safety provisions at inland rivers and lakes.
- Lifeguard services need to be extended beyond 3 months in a year and the current hours of cover need to be increased.
- Facilities and opening times of facilities need to be improved particularly in Portumna and Loughrea. There are no toilet facilities between Loughrea town and the lake.
- An update was sought from the Water Safety Officer on providing lifesaving equipment at an unofficial water recreation area in Ballinasloe.

ITEM NO. 5 FILLING OF A CASUAL VACANCY ON THE MEMBERSHIP OF THE GALWAY RURAL DEVELOPMENT BOARD.

4383

Report dated 12th July 2024 was published on the Extranet prior to the meeting.

On the **PROPOSAL** of Cllr. Hoade **SECONDED** by Cllr. McClearn it was **AGREED** to appoint Cllr. M. Connolly a member of the Galway Rural Development Board (GRD).

**ITEM NO. 6 APPOINTMENT OF CHAIRPERSON TO THE LOCAL TRAVELLER
ACCOMMODATION CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE.** **4384**

Report dated 12th July 2024 was published on the Extranet prior to the meeting.

On the **PROPOSAL** of Cllr. Welby **SECONDED** by Cllr. Hoade it was **AGREED** to appoint Comh. Ó Curraoin the Chairperson of the Local Traveller Accommodation Consultative Committee (LTACC).

**ITEM NO. 7 TO CONSIDER AND APPROVE THE EXTERNAL AUDIT COMMITTEE
MEMBERSHIP IN ACCORDANCE WITH LOCAL GOVERNMENT (AUDIT
COMMITTEE) REGULATIONS SI 244 OF 2014 UNDER THE LOCAL
GOVERNMENT REFORM ACT 2014.** **4385**

Report dated 12th July 2024 was published on the Extranet prior to the meeting.

On the **PROPOSAL** of Comh. Mac An Iomaire **SECONDED** by Cllr. Finnerty it was **AGREED** to appoint Ms. Martina Moloney (Chair), Mr. Seamus Duffy and Ms. Sarah Roarty as members of Galway County Council's External Audit Committee.

Cllr. McClearn queried the ratification process for nominations to the External Audit Committee, commenting that Councillors do not have input into who is nominated or in the decision-making process. The Cathaoirleach informed him that the recommendations came from the Corporate Policy Group (CPG).

**ITEM NO.8 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).** **4386**

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

On the **PROPOSAL** of Cllr. D. Killilea **SECONDED** by Cllr. Canning it was **AGREED** to authorise Cllr. McClearn to attend AILG Module 1 'Elected Members Briefing: Annual Declarations, Donations, Code of Conduct and Local Representation Allowance Update.' at The Fairways Hotel, Dundalk on 25th January 2024. (Retrospective Approval).

On the **PROPOSAL** of Cllr. D. Killilea **SECONDED** by Cllr. Canning it was **AGREED** to authorise Cllrs. D. Killilea, Turner, Welby, Hoade, Curley, Maher, Keane & Comh. Ó Curraoin to attend AILG Elected Member Induction Training Programme at The Mullingar Park Hotel, Co. Westmeath on 11th July 2024. (Retrospective Approval).

On the **PROPOSAL** of Cllr. D. Killilea **SECONDED** by Cllr. Canning it was **AGREED** to authorise Cllrs. McClearn & Kinane to attend AILG Elected Member Induction Training Programme at The Radisson Blu Hotel Cork on 13th July 2024. (Retrospective Approval).

On the **PROPOSAL** of Cllr. D. Killilea **SECONDED** by Cllr. Canning it was **AGREED** to provide retrospective approval for Cllr. K. McHugh Farag to attend Bachelor of Science in Quality – Year 1 at ATU Galway in academic year 2023-2024.

On the **PROPOSAL** of Cllr. D. Killilea **SECONDED** by Cllr. Canning it was **AGREED** to authorise Cllr. K. McHugh Farag to attend Bachelor of Science in Quality Year 2 at ATU Galway in academic year 2024-2025.

**ITEM NO.9 TO NOTE THE SUMMARY OF PROCEEDINGS OF CONFERENCES
ATTENDED IN ACCORDANCE WITH SECTION 142 (5f) OF THE LOCAL
GOVERNMENT ACT 2001 (AS AMENDED).** **4387**

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

On the **PROPOSAL** of Cllr. Maher **SECONDED** by Cllr. McClearn the summary of proceedings at conferences attended were **NOTED**.

ITEM NO. 10 TO CONSIDER THE MANAGEMENT REPORT – JULY 2024 IN ACCORDANCE WITH SECTION 136(2) OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 2001 (AS AMENDED). **4388**

Report dated 17th July 2024 was published on the Extranet prior to the meeting.

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

Members raised the following points and queries:

- Clarification was sought on staffing levels in Tuam Fire Station. It was queried if the delay in recruitment was due to difficulties in obtaining training places on the Road Traffic Collision Course.
- Is there is adequate cover in Fire Stations if a major incident were to occur, particularly in Tuam which is short 2 crew members.
- The approval of new housing units in Tuam was welcomed. A request was made that public consultation takes place before the Part 8 process begins.
- If unspent Conference Allocation from the first half of 2024 will be carried over to the second half of 2024.
- Update on Rossaveal pier was requested.
- If the First Home Scheme purchase price ceiling in towns such as Bearna, Oranmore and Claregalway could be increased to €450,000 to match the cap level in Galway City.

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

- There are currently 17 new recruits in the fire service. There is an ongoing recruitment process in place.
- Funding has been received for new fire equipment.
- The fire station areas overlap, this ensures that there are teams available to respond to call outs at all times.
- Staff vacancies always arise. There are enough staff on call to provide the necessary services.

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

- Regarding Rossavel Pier, Judicial Review has been adjourned until 22nd October. This is to allow the Department of the Marine remove all machinery and to obtain consent from An Bord Pleanála. The department are fully committed to the project.

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

- The housing project on the Galway Road, Tuam is at an advanced stage and so the opportunity for public consultation at this stage is limited.
- There is opportunity for public consultation in respect of the housing project on Sun Street, Tuam as it is at an early stage.
- The limits for the First Home Scheme are set by the Department. A motion may be submitted asking for a review of the scheme or for a change in limits.

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

- Confirmed that he has already raised the issue on cap limits under the First Home Scheme with the Department at the Galway Housing Taskforce.

Members raised the following points and queries:

- An update and timeline for the Clarenbridge Wastewater Treatment plant was requested.
- The number of spoiled votes, particularly ballot papers that were not stamped at the Local Election Count was queried.
- The work of the Headford Lace Project including the Lace Matrix was acknowledged and congratulated.
- It was asked that the situation regarding Closed Circuit Television (CCTV) prosecutions and fines for illegal dumping be clarified.

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

- Suggested that the Municipal District (MD) meetings are a more appropriate forum to provide specific updates on wastewater treatment projects.

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

- Polling Clerks in polling stations are not employed by Galway County Council. Returns have been made to the Department which included data on the number and type of spoiled votes received at the Count Centre at Local Elections 2024.

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

- An oversight board is to be set up for CCTV usage in relation to illegal dumping. She made a commitment to provide an update to Elected Members via e-mail.
- There are currently 10 ongoing pilot projects collating information on illegal dumping.

Members raised the following points and queries:

- Clarity was sought on the dissolution of the Joint Policing Committee (JPC) and the working brief of its replacement, the Local Community Safety Partnership (LCSP).
- It was queried why the Council have spent €400,000 on 2 salt spreader vehicles that will only be used 2 months of the year, instead of replacing the older Council fleet, some of which are 17 years old.
- Is the funding of €38,000 for CCTV adequate to address estate management issues.
- If there has been any progress on installing CCTV at bottle banks.
- If the Wastewater Scheme for Eyrecourt will be coming back before the Councillors.
- If the polling station that did not seal the ballot papers could be identified.

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

- The 2 salt spreader vehicles were 100% funded by Transport Infrastructure Ireland (TII).
- Three 26 tonne tippers have been tendered for which will increase the Council fleet.

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

- The Local Community Safety Partnership (LCSP) will replace the JPC. It will have a broader remit, broader membership and will increase stakeholder involvement. 7 Elected Members will be elected to the committee.
- There is currently a recruitment campaign to recruit a Chairperson for the LCSP, closing date for which is 25th July.
- CCTV is a complicated area due to data protection. Individual impact statements will be carried out on each site, initially concentrating on identified dumping sites.

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

- CCTV is currently operating in a number of Council estates, there is potential to expand to others.
- If the Returning Officer for the Local Elections seeks assistance, it will be provided.

Members raised the following points and queries:

- It was called on that the refurbishment of Ballinasloe Fire Station be approved as soon as possible now that funding has been received.
- Should there be plans to house refugees in a particular area, it was asked that the Elected Members be informed in advance, so as to facilitate their engagement with members of the public regarding same.

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

- If advance notice in relation to the movement of refugees is received it is important that this information is immediately conveyed to the Councillors in that area.
- The Department have full responsibility for the housing of refugees and international protection applicants.

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

- The Department in relation to housing of Ukrainian refugees, seek expression of interest from property owners, if the property is deemed up to standard by the Department it then progresses to planning. It is at this point that the Council will become aware of it.

Members raised the following points and queries:

- An update on the Strategic Workforce Plan review was requested. There is currently a 3 month wait for housing grants inspections due to staff shortages.
- It was asked how the LCSP Chairperson will be nominated, through an interview process or by committee vote, and what qualifying criteria is required for the candidate together with what support or training will be provided to the appointed Chairperson.
- Following a huge clean-up of Kilsallagh bog it is once again destroyed. The CCTV there is not fit for purpose.
- The exemption on the levy charged to remote waste from sites is to cease on 1st September. This cost will be passed onto the purchaser of the home. Can the money stay with the Local Authority and not be sent to the Exchequer.

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

- The Strategic Workforce Plan is completed. It is a multi-annual programme across all directorates and will take place over the next 3 years, during which approximately 80 new staff will be recruited per annum during the period.

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

- The staff vacancies in housing are currently being recruited for and will be filled in the next few weeks.

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

- If the Elected Members have any particular areas of concern regarding illegal dumping they should contact her. There is a budget available to update systems.
- The recruitment of a Chairperson of LCSP will not be brought before the Council. In line with national guidance an interview panel will be set up and the recommendation for appointment will go to the Minister for approval.
- An update will issue to the Members by e-mail on the waste levy exemption.

Members raised the following points and queries:

- Electoral Register needs updating.
- Regulations governing election posters needs to be enforced.
- In relation to the Summer Ready Report update, it was noted there is a lack of infrastructure at beaches, a policy for camper vans is required with disability access to beaches being essential, and lifeguard cover needs to increase to every day of the week, especially in Roundstone which only has cover at weekends.

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

- Guidelines were issued in relation to the erection of campaign posters for elections. She asked that the Community Wardens be advised if there are posters still up.

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

- Development of a Camper Van Policy will be included in the work programme for the SPC.

ITEM NO. 11 CHIEF EXECUTIVE'S BUSINESS & CORRESPONDENCE.

4389

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

- Letter dated 15.04.24 to Ms. Anne Graham, Chief Executive Officer, National Transport Authority. Resolution – Multi-stop bus service between Ballinasloe & Galway
- Letter dated 08.05.24 to Mr. Darragh O'Brien, T.D., Department of Housing, Local Government & Heritage. Resolution – Croí Cónaithe Scheme
- Email dated 28.05.24 from Ms. Niamh Redmond, Private Secretary, Department of Housing, Local Government & Heritage. Resolution – Croí Cónaithe. Response.
- Letter dated 13.05.24 from Fingal County Council. Resolution – Fossil Fuel Non-Proliferation Treaty.
- Letter dated 14.05.24 from Clare County Council. Resolution – Reconfigured Health Services.
- Letter dated 15.05.24 from Monaghan County Council. Resolution - Free Education Scheme.
- Letter dated 18.05.24 from President of Mayors for Peace. Letter of Protest in relation to Nuclear Testing.
- Letter dated 20.05.24 from Wicklow County Council to Minister Eamonn Ryan, T. D., Minister for Transport. Resolution - Full time Road Safety Officer for each Local Authority.
- Letter dated 21.05.24 from Tipperary County Council. Resolution- Support for Farmers impacted by Ash Dieback.
- Email dated 23.05.24 from The Institute of Geologists of Ireland. EU Critical Raw Materials Act – IGI Factsheet.
- Letter dated 15.04.24 to Ms. Heather Humphreys T.D., Minister for Social Protection, Social Welfare Services. Resolution – Dietary Supplements Payments.

- Email dated 23.05.24 from Linda Carr, HEO, School Meals, SWA Policy. Resolution -Dietary Supplements Payments. Response.
- Letter dated 04.06.24 from Limerick City and County Council. Resolution – One Week Tax Free at Christmas.
- Letter dated 15.04.24 to Mr. Eamonn Ryan T.D., Minister for Transport. Resolution – Multi-stop bus service between Ballinasloe & Galway.
- Email dated 04.06.24 from Amanda Corley, Private Secretary to Minister Ryan, Minister of Transport. Resolution - Multi-stop bus service between Ballinasloe & Galway. Response.
- Letter dated 15.04.24 to Mr. Michael McGrath T.D., Minister for Finance. Resolution – Residential Zoned Land Tax.
- Email dated 17.06.24 from Niamh Kavanagh, Private Secretary to the Minister for Finance. Resolution – Residential Zoned Land Tax. Response.
- Email dated 19.06.24 from Mayors for Peace. Introduction to Initiatives and Peace Exhibition from Mayors for Peace.
- Letter dated 28.05.24 to Mr. Eamon Ryan T.D., Minister for Transport. Resolution – Community Involvement Scheme.
- E-mail dated 01.07.24 from Mr. Eamon Ryan T.D., Minister for Transport. Resolution – Community Involvement Scheme. Acknowledgement.
- Letter dated 28.06.24 to Mr. Peter Walsh. Chief Executive Officer. Transport Infrastructure Ireland. Resolution – Safety Works on the N84.
- Email dated 08.07.24 from Suzanne Cahill, Regulatory & Administration Executive, TII. Resolution – Safety Works on the N84. Response.
- Letter dated 28.06.24 to Minister Kieran O 'Donnell, Office of Public Works. Resolution – Enhance visitor experience at OPW sites.
- Letter dated 03.07.24 from Minister Kieran O 'Donnell, Office of Public Works. Resolution – Enhance visitor experience at OPW sites. Acknowledgment.
- Letter dated 28.06.24 to Mr. Eamon Ryan T.D., Minister for Transport. Resolution – Surplus Renewable Energy.
- Email dated 01.07.24 from Mr. Eamon Ryan T.D., Minister for Transport. Resolution – Surplus Renewable Energy. Acknowledgement.
- E-mail dated 01.07.24 from Richard Kelly, NTA Oireachtas Liaison to Ms. Flynn Meetings Administrator for Loughrea MD. Resolution – Issue raised at the Loughrea MD. Response
- Letter dated 12.03.24 to Mr. Eamon Ryan T.D., Minister for Transport. Resolution – Additional Roads Funding
- Letter dated 15.04.24 to Mr. Eamon Ryan T.D., Minister for Transport. Resolution – Additional Roads Funding
- E-mail dated 11.07.24 from Mr. Eamon Ryan T.D., Minister for Transport. Resolution – Additional Roads Funding. Response
- Mayors for Peace News Flash dated May 2024
- Mayors for Peace News Flash dated June 2024

The Newly Elected Members were reminded to submit their annual declaration by 26th July 2024.

All Members were reminded to submit statement of expenditure for local elections by 5th September 2024.

The Chief Executive reminded Members that a Corporate Plan Review Workshop is being held on Tuesday 23rd July in the Claregalway Hotel between 10am and 4pm. The Corporate Plan is a strategic document that sets out the vision and high-level work plan for the Council over the next 5 years. He acknowledged the work of the Corporate Team to date in preparing the draft document. Priorities include strengthening the MDs, Project Management Office, training for Elected Members and staff, communication team, new digital strategy, climate action and housing services delivery. All other documents will flow from the Corporate Plan.

ITEM 12. QUESTION

4390

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

'To ask the Chief Executive of Galway County Council has a new Section 85 been put in place in relation to the Athlone to Galway Greenway now that there are two schemes - Scheme 1 Portumna to Athlone will be delivered by Westmeath County Council and Scheme 2 Portumna to Ballyloughane Beach will be delivered by Galway County Council, bearing in mind the original Section 85 was put in place in 2014.'

The following reply issued:

Galway to Athlone Cycleway

The Galway to Athlone Cycleway Project is being delivered as two separate schemes:

- Scheme 1 - Galway to Portumna - 114km in length: This scheme extends from Ballyloughane in Galway to the existing Waterways Ireland Greenway at Portumna Castle.
- Scheme 2 - Portumna to Athlone - 83 km in length: The scheme extends from the existing Waterways Ireland Greenway at Portumna Marina to Athlone Castle and includes a link to Ballinasloe.

Scheme 1 is being managed by Galway County Council and Scheme 2 will be managed by Westmeath County Council.

A framework competition to procure new consultants to deliver the schemes was published and five consultants have made submissions. An Assessment Board aided by the project team have assessed the submissions to determine the suitability of each of the applicants. Once this process is finalised and a framework has been established a call-off competition will be published to procure a consultant for each of the schemes. In the interim landowner liaison, updating of Section 85 agreements where required, assessments to determine the scoping of the contract brief and the preparation of the call-off tender documents will be progressed.

Cllr. Donohue commented that the executive response was lacking information.

ITEM 13. QUESTION

4391

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

'To ask the Chief Executive what discussions and progress has been made in remedying and collaborating with Clare County Council in relation to the L-8504-6 public road Termon to Attyslaney Tubber Co Clare that links counties Galway and Clare and becomes unpassable and becoming eroded over the years due to flooding in South Galway and this region.'

The following reply issued:

Engineering staff from Galway County Council have recently inspected this location and are currently finalising a proposal which relates specifically to the damaged road surface. Clare County Council have previously indicated their willingness to collaborate as required and will be advised of any proposed works in due course.

The issue of flooding at this location is within the scope of the South Galway Flood Relief Scheme. Proposals in the area are limited by the proximity of the SAC. Also, road raising is expected to increase the water level in the 'turlough' (Termon Lough) and could increase the level of flooding experienced at Termon North. It is currently

proposed to provide an alternative access from the south to the one property that gets isolated, via a new track in a high-level field.

ITEM 14. NOTICE OF MOTION

4392

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

'That the Polling Station for Milltown, in the Tuam L.E.A., be moved from its current location of Milltown National School to Milltown Community Centre for all future local and general elections.'

The following reply issued:

The local authority prepares a Polling Scheme in consultation with the County Registrar which sets out the polling districts (composed of electoral divisions and townlands) and the polling place for each polling district within the county.

As set out in the Electoral Act 1992 (as amended) in making the Polling Scheme the local authority endeavors to appoint a polling place in each polling district which allows the County Registrar to provide a polling station which is accessible for wheelchair users. The County Registrar determines the venue of the polling station at the designated polling place.

It is outside the remit of the local authority to change the venue of a polling station. The County Registrar may however make such a change, notwithstanding the Polling Scheme confirmed, as she considers necessary having regard to the convenience of electors and to facilitate voting.

ITEM 15. NOTICE OF MOTION

4393

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

'I propose that Galway County Council redoubles its efforts to enforce the Derelict Sites Register, by identifying more derelict sites, adding them to the register and collecting levies owed. Currently there are only three properties on the County's

register - this is not an accurate reflection of the situation on the ground across the County. Properly enforcing the register and collecting levies will discourage dereliction and can raise much needed revenue for the Council to tackle dereliction in our communities.'

The following reply issued:

Definition of Derelict Site

Under the Derelict Sites Act, 1990, a 'Derelict Site' means any land which detracts, or is likely to detract, to a material degree from the amenity character or appearance of land in the vicinity of the land in question because of:

- (a) The existence on the land in question of structures which are in a ruinous, derelict, or dangerous condition; or
- (b) The neglected, unsightly, or objectionable condition of the land or any structures on the land in question; or
- (c) The presence, deposit, or collection on the land in question of any litter, rubbish, debris or waste, except where the presence, deposit or collection of such litter, rubbish, debris or waste results from the exercise of a right conferred by statute or law.

Cases of derelict sites are reported to the Environment section by members of the public, our community warden service and area office personnel. Each report is logged and assessed per the criteria set out in the derelict's sites act.

The Council endeavor to work closely with owners of derelict properties once identified and encourage that owners of such properties co-operate in addressing the dereliction noted preventing any unnecessary expense. During 2023 11 derelict sites reported to the Environment Section were dealt with satisfactorily through owner engagement and did not require entry on to the derelict sites register. The number of sites on a register is not necessarily a portrayal of the section's activity regarding this function.

When the section cannot advance the matter on a co-operative basis, procedures as set out under the derelict sites act are initiated. This is a highly administrative process and involves the following once the local authority has deemed a site to be derelict.

Section 8(2) notice –Council gives notice of intention to put on the derelict sites register and the owner may make representations within a specified period in response to same.

Section 8(7) notice – Where the property owner does not submit an appropriate response, the local authority serves notice on the owners that the site has been entered on the derelict sites register.

Section 11 notice – Following entry on the register, this notice is served on the owner which states the measures required to address the dereliction and gives an appropriate period within which the specified measures must be taken.

Section 22 - Where the measures as listed in the Section 11 have not been complied with and where the property continues to be in a derelict state, the local authority must determine the market value of the land. A Section 22 notice is issued to the owner of the land of the valuation which has been placed on the land by the Council. The Notice informs the owner that they may appeal to the Valuation Tribunal against the determination made by the Council within 28 days from the day on which the notice is received by them.

Section 23(3) – The levy demand is served on the owner of the property. Levy is 7% of the market value of the land. Levy can only be applied in an 'Urban Area' (i.e. an area prescribed by the Minister under section 21 of the Act).

The Department of Housing initiated a review of the Derelict Sites Act in 2022 and invited local authorities to make submissions on potential improvements to the legislative provisions and the way they are applied. A working group was established to investigate the submissions received and we await the outcome of their recommendations.

Some of the issues encountered in dealing with dereliction in the County which hinders remediation include: -

- Identification of owners and control of derelict land or sites. This is the most common obstacle encountered. Often sites are unregistered, registered owners may be deceased and passing of title has not been established or banking institutions have registered burdens on the folio. Considerable resources can be expended on unwinding these scenarios.
- Construction challenges. Where owners are identified their ability to carry out work today is challenged by their own means, escalating constructions costs, availability of tradesmen and in some cases restrictions where buildings are protected structures.

Where appropriate the Environment Section will liaise with the Housing Unit and Urban Regeneration Unit regarding any building or possible purchase of derelict property for housing purposes. In such cases negotiations would proceed enforcement.

As a final note, per the definition of a derelict sites, the objective of the act is to address the detracting from amenity, character, or appearance of land in the vicinity. The expectation sometimes can be formed that the process will lead to a property

being brought back to a habitable condition or a commercial operation which may co-incidentally arise but is not required in this process.

Derelict sites can be reported to the Environment Section on 091-509510 or by contacting environment@galwaycoco.ie.

Cllr. O'Hara reiterated that this is an important issue that needs to be tackled. Not addressing it will lead to properties falling into disrepair, dereliction and encourage anti-social behaviour, when they could be providing homes. He asked that more resources be put into tackling dereliction to address housing vacancy issues and to increase enforcement of the Dereliction Sites Register.

ITEM NO.16 CATHAOIRLEACH'S BUSINESS

4394

The following motion **PROPOSED** by Cllr. Collins **SECONDED** by Cllr. Reddington:

'I propose that the Cap on the First Home Scheme for County Galway be raised in Par with Galway City from €400,000 to €450,000.'

It was agreed that the above motion be sent to the Minister for Housing.

Members raised the following points and queries:

- The number of Council ground staff is critically low.
- Small rate paying businesses are targets of crimes such as theft.
- A call was made that the motorway be fully re-opened for the day of the All-Ireland final.
- That a request be made to Transport Infrastructure Ireland (TII) to stop them using their current type of road kerbing. It is not tested, is very brittle and creates a build-up of silt which encourages weed growth.
- Toilet facilities at beaches should be open in the evenings.
- Need for Elected Representatives to have a contact point in Uisce Éireann.
- A request was made that the public have 2 hours free parking in county towns.
- Roads and bridges need to be built wider to accommodate modern tractors and machinery.

- That a homecoming be held for the Galway Football Men's team in Ballinasloe after the All-Ireland final. Also, that the match be shown on large screens around the County.
- There was a call for more grass and verge cutting.
- The placement of ESB poles needs to be mapped as they are having a negative impact on road safety.
- If a portion of the land bank in Tuam has been dedicated to community use.
- There is no playing field provision for the amalgamated schools in Tuam.
- Can the Council assist with Tuam/Cortoon Ladies Football Club in obtaining a pitch to play football.
- Mirror bushes are still causing problems for lorries.
- Will the Council follow Clare County Council in reducing all rural roads to a speed limit of 60km/h.

Members Queries were responded to as follows by the Cathaoirleach:

- Theft from small businesses should be raised at the LCSP once it is established
- Opening the motorway is not in the Council's jurisdiction, he will ask the Director to contact the TII.
- That the issue of road kerbing be discussed at the Roads SPC.
- Parking fees should be discussed at SPC.
- The GAA determine where homecomings take place.

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

- Grass and verge cutting queries can be discussed at MD level. During the nesting season cutting can only occur where there is a concern for safety. The high level of rainfall this summer has contributed to rapid growth. Budgetary constraints means that main roads are prioritised.
- By default, come November all local roads will reduce to speed limit of 60km/h as per the national speed limit review. The Council can consider keeping limits on certain roads to 80km/h, but over 95% of the roads will reduce.

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

- Uses for land banks is determined by the size of the bank. Recreational pitches have been provided for in the Tuam Local Area Plan. The zoning of land in Tuam can be reviewed.
- He is aware of the Cortoon Ladies GAA club problems with obtaining a playing pitch and will continue to look into this.

ITEM NO.17 VOTES OF SYMPATHY / CONGRATULATIONS

4395

A resolution of congratulations was extended to the following:

- Clare Senior Men's Hurlers on winning the All-Ireland final.
- Galway Under 14 Ladies team on winning the All-Ireland U14 Ladies Football Championship for the third time.
- Mícheál Breathnach Under 15A team on winning the Féile Peil a nÓg.

A resolution of sympathy was extended to the following:

- Mrs. Geraldine O'Mahony, Tower House, Ballaghaderreen, Co. Roscommon
- Mrs. Helena Ó Muircheathaigh and Family, Dún Síon, Dingle, Co. Kerry

Chriochnaigh an Cruinniú Ansin.

Submitted, Signed and Approved

Cathaoirleach:



Date:



