

COMHAIRLE CHONTAE NA GAILLIMHE
MINUTES OF MONTHLY MEETING OF GALWAY COUNTY COUNCIL
Held at ÁRAS AN CHONTAE, PROSPECT HILL
Monday, 23rd September 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, M. Connolly, S. Cunniffe, S. Curley, T. Ó Curraoin, G. Donohue, P. Feeney, G. Finnerty, D. Geraghty, T. Grealish, A. Harney, M. Hoade, C. Keane, P. Keaveney, D. Kelly, D. Killilea, P. Killilea, M. Kinane, G. King, M. Leainde, M. Lee, P. Mac an Iomaire, M. Maher, E. Mannion, J. McClearn, K. McHugh Farag, P.J. Murphy, L. O'Hara, Dr. E. F. Parsons, A. Reddington, P. Roche, N. Thomas, O. Turner, S. Walsh and T. Welby.

Baill ar líne:

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. G. Scully, Senior Executive Officer, Ms. J. Brann Meetings Administrator, Ms. V. Loughnane, Senior Planner, Ms. E. Keaveney, Administrative Officer, Ms. H. Riordan, A/Staff Officer, Ms. L. O'Donnell, Assistant Staff Officer.

Thosnaigh an cruinniú leis an paidir.

The Cathaoirleach welcomed representatives from the area of the proposed windfarm, to be discussed in item 3 of the agenda. He also greeted the representatives of the Public Participation Network, Senator Mark Daly and Minister Anne Rabbitte, who were also in attendance at the September plenary meeting of Galway County Council.

ITEM NO.1 CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES OF THE FOLLOWING MEETINGS

4396

On the **PROPOSAL** of Cllr. McHugh Farag **SECONDED** by Cllr. Donoghue the minutes of the Monthly Plenary Meeting held on 22nd July 2024 were **AGREED**.

Members raised the following points and queries:

- Has a date had been agreed for the National Transport Authority (NTA) to attend a meeting of Galway County Council.
- A suggestion was made that each individual Municipal District (MD) be given an allocated time of 1 to 1.5 hours to discuss local concerns with the NTA.
- Bus transport issues affecting constituents were raised. Service inadequacies between Athenry and Galway. The reliance of students on bus services due to the lack of accommodation and rail service between Loughrea and Galway. The negative effect on student nurses working in Portiuncula Hospital. The Ballyconneely to Roundstone service needs to be resumed. Students in Renvyle are without a school bus service.
- That extra buses are required at peak times, bus stops need to be reinstated, bus shelters and wheelchair accessible buses are required.
- If a request for a civic reception to be held in honour of the Galway U14 Ladies Football team on winning the Platinum Championship title was approved at Corporate Policy Group (CPG).
- The high number of spoiled votes received in the Count Centre at the local elections was raised.
- It was asked when the Loughrea Fire Station proposal will be brought back before the Loughrea Municipal District.

Members Queries were responded to as follows by the Cathaoirleach:

- The NTA have agreed to meet with the Council in advance of the October plenary meeting.
- The holding of a civic reception for the Galway U14 Ladies football team was approved at CPG. The CPG have decided that honouring a number of groups together creates a better atmosphere and celebration at civic receptions.

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

- Suggested that the Members prepare their questions for the NTA in advance of the meeting. This will enable the NTA to have responses prepared for the Members at the workshop and for Members to concentrate on high level policy issues.

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

- The Part 8 process for the Loughrea Fire Station had commenced but was paused. A new Part 8 process will commence in the coming weeks and following public consultation a Chief Executive recommendation will be brought to the Loughrea MD Meeting, likely 2 to 3 months' time.

ITEM NO.2 CONSIDERATION OF REPORTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

4397

On the **PROPOSAL** of Comh. Mac An Iomaire **SECONDED** by Cllr. Maher the minutes of the Corporate Policy Group held on 16th July 2024 were **NOTED**.

**ITEM NO.3 TO CONSIDER REPORT UNDER SECTION 37E (4)(5)(6) OF THE
PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT ACT 2000 (AS AMENDED) ON THE
STRATEGIC INFRASTRUCTURE DEVELOPMENT APPLICATION ABP
REFERENCE 320095 SUBMITTED TO AN BORD PLEANÁLA BY COOLPOWRA**

**FLEXGEN LIMITED TO DEVELOP A RESERVE GAS-FIRED GENERATOR
COMPRISING THREE OPEN CYCLE GAS TURBINE (OCGT) UNITS
POSITIONED WITHIN A BUILDING AND ASSOCIATED DEVELOPMENT IN THE
TOWNLANDS OF COOLPOWRA, COOLDORRAGHA, BALLYNAHESKERAGH,
GORTLUSKY & SHEEAUNRUSH.**

4398

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

The Cathaoirleach reminded the Members that they do not have the power under reserved functions to change the Chief Executive report that has been prepared on this item. Members can however have their comments added as an appendix to the report that will be sent to An Bord Plenála (ABP). He informed the Members that a record of the minutes from this item agenda will also be attached to the report that will be submitted to ABP.

Mr. Hanrahan introduced the item explaining that the application is for permission for a period of 10 years for a reserve gas-fired generator, comprising of 3 open cycle gas turbine units. The subject site is 42.3 ha in area, located approximately 5km from Portumna and 3.7km from Killimor. Following due process, planners met with the relevant MD and took their comments on board.

Ms. Loughnane informed the Members present that she had previously furnished the report to the Members of the Loughrea MD. Three applications have been submitted in relation to the proposed development. The first one was submitted to Galway County Council relating to battery storage. Galway County Council issued their decision, which is now with An Bord Plenála. The second application for the substation was made under section 182 directly to ABP. A report was issued by the Executive directly to ABP on this application, to which the Members did not have an input. The third application is being discussed today. It is for a generator and power plant. Closing date for submissions which were submitted directly to ABP was 30th August, the Council have not seen them. The Council must submit their report by 2pm on 2nd October. The Members of the MD have agreed to hold a special meeting on 30th September to which Ms. Loughnane will attend to answer any questions that the MD Members may have.

The proposed development will include three 45m high stacks. An Environmental Impact Assessment Report and Natura Impact Statement, which are required by legislation have been prepared and accompany the planning application. The Roads and Infrastructure, Environment sections and the Conservation Officer have included their comments in the Executive Report. She informed the Elected Members that the Roads section have significant concerns and the Conservation Officer has observations on the visual aspects. If permission should be granted, these items will be included as conditions on the permission. Ms. Loughnane informed that acceptance of submissions closed the previous Friday and were currently available for viewing at the planning public counter.

Members raised the following points and queries:

- A strong opposition to the proposed development was expressed on health grounds.
- Disappointment was expressed that the planning process doesn't allow for Elected Members to receive advanced information on these types of planning applications.
- The refusal of the application for the battery storage plant was welcomed.
- The proposed development would be out of character for the quiet rural area.
- The serious deficit in consultation with local residents was not acceptable.
- The impact on the local roads, heritage and noise caused by the plant were highlighted.
- The contradiction of removing the windmills in Derrybrien was commented.
- The cost of lodging objections was raised, as the proposed development has been submitted as 3 separate planning applications.
- The power regarding local issues should lie with the local MD.
- The work of the East Galway Concern Group was commended.
- The anger and frustration of the local community was conveyed.

On the **PROPOSAL** of Cllr. Kinane **SECONDED** by Cllr. Maher it was **AGREED** to approve the report under Section 37E (4)(5)(6) of the Planning and Development Act

2000 (as amended) on the Strategic Infrastructure Development application ABP Reference 320095.

ITEM NO. 4 TO CONSIDER REPORT UNDER SECTION 37E (4)(5)(6) OF THE PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT ACT 2000 (AS AMENDED) ON THE STRATEGIC INFRASTRUCTURE DEVELOPMENT APPLICATION ABP REFERENCE 320089 SUBMITTED TO AN BORD PLEANÁLA BY CLONBERNE WINDFARM LIMITED TO DEVELOP 11 NO. WIND TURBINES AND ASSOCIATED DEVELOPMENT IN THE TOWNLANDS OF KILLAVOHER, GORTAGARRAUN, CLOONARKAN, LOMAUNAGHROE, CLONBERG, BALLAGH WEST, CARROWNTRYLA AND LISSYBRODER. **4399**

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

Mr. Hanrahan explained that the application site is 346.5 ha in area and includes 4 parcels of land in the Tuam and Dunmore areas. As ABP have determined it to be a Strategic Infrastructure Development (SID) the planning application was made directly to the Bord, as per Section 37E of the Planning and Development Act, 2000 (as amended). The section of the site is largely characterized by areas of bog. The application site comprises of 2 separate land parcels to facilitate the construction vehicle movements.

Ms. Loughnane said that the acceptance of submissions closed the previous Friday, they are currently available for viewing at the planning public counter. The report has been returned to ABP. Elected Members may make submissions regarding the application. The application proposes the erection of 11 wind turbines with an overall turbine tip height of 180 metres, a rotor blade diameter of 162 metres, hub height of 99 metres and associated foundations, hard-standing and assembly areas. Reports on the proposed development were received from the Roads & Infrastructure, Environment sections and the Conservation Officer. The proposed development will be primarily in the Tuam MD area; however a small line connection is proposed to be located in the Ballinasloe MD area. The closing date for submissions to ABP was

27th August. The Council's report must be submitted to ABP by 11th October, this has changed from the previous deadline of 2nd October. Members are welcome to make submissions that will be added to the report. She pointed out that a Community Benefit Fund is proposed at €2 per MWh for the first 15 years of operation of the proposed project. Should the proposed project be developed under Renewable Electricity Support Scheme (RESS), it would attract a community contribution on the region of approximately €400,000 per year for the local community. A full assessment of the Natura Impact Statement (NIS) was included in the report.

The Cathaoirleach informed the Members that all comments made will be included in the appendix of the report that will be submitted to An Bord Pleanála.

Members raised the following points and queries:

- The Tuam MD do not support the proposed development.
- Clarification was sought on the difference between this proposed development and a recent application in the Belclare area.

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

- The application submitted for Laurclavagh related to a location that was not deemed open for consideration for development. Different layers of assessment are used to determine if an area is suitable for development. This site location is open to consideration in principle. There are pockets in the site that would not be open but it is not proposed to erect turbines in these pockets of land.

Members raised the following points and queries:

- The absence of flood mapping in the report was stated.
- Concern was raised regarding the effect on the aquifer and water source in the area and the local group water schemes.
- The visual effect on the area was raised.
- The lack of consultation with local representatives was raised.
- The effect on mental health was not included in the report.

- The negative effect on house values in the area was highlighted.
- It was asked what will happen in Derrybrien following the removal of the wind turbines there.
- Concern was raised on the impact the development would have on local communities.
- Compliments and thanks were conveyed to the local community group on their work and submissions they made.
- The level of specialised expertise in ABP was queried.
- The effects of excavation of the site, lorries involved, amount of concrete that will be poured into the ground, the resulting noise and flicker was raised.
- Instead of proceeding with this development for a windfarm, the windfarm in Derrybrien should be restored.
- If there would be a delay or restriction on granting planning permissions in the area during the planning process.

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

- Pre-planning meetings are part of the planning process and are available to everyone, corporations and private individuals alike.
- Notification of an application cannot be made until the application has been lodged or the public notice issues.
- Applications of a Strategic Infrastructure Development (SID) nature are displayed in local newspapers and through the public notice process.
- During the pre-application process, the Council encourages applicants to speak to the relevant MD and to engage with the local community.
- The decision to close the windfarm at Derrybrien was on foot of a decision by An Bord Pleanála (ABP)
- The concerns of the Members raised today and from the MD will form the appendix to the report.
- He assured the Members that ABP have the necessary expertise to carry out its work.
- Planning applications in the area will be assessed on their merits.

Members raised the following points and queries:

- It was asked what condition Derrybrien would be left in after the dismantling of the wind farm.
- If amendments could be made to the County Development Plan to stop the windfarm.
- If ABP would meet with the MD.
- The planning issues with the Loughrea Sports facilities site was raised.

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

- Chapter 5, page 67 refers to impact on mental health. If any additions are required, they can be included in the report.
- The draft first revision of the National Planning Framework public consultation phase closed for submissions on the 12th of September 2024. It is expected that following examination of the submissions, the document will be finalised in the next few months. Following that, the Northern and Western Regional Assembly will commence their review of the Regional Spatial Economic Strategy (RSES) and finalise their document. Once that is complete, Galway County Council will review the contents of both revised documents and if required will commence a process to bring the County Galway Development Plan into line with these overarching documents, the revised National Planning Framework NPF and revised RSES. In the event that this is required, the process will allow for public consultation and during that time Members can make submissions and or observations with respect to the document on public display.
- A Bill is currently going through the Dáil which proposes to increase the life of County Development Plans (CDP) from 6 to 10 years. That will determine if there will be a new CDP or if the current one will be extended.
- The Loughrea MD meeting on 30th September is for the MD Members to discuss submissions to add to the report. She will be available at the meeting to answer any technical questions that may arise.
- Regarding the Loughrea Area Plan, the Minister received 8 submissions. There is no further role for the Council.

On the **PROPOSAL** of Cllr. Maher **SECONDED** by Cllr. D. Killilea it was **AGREED** to approve the report under Section 37E (4)(5)(6) on the Strategic Infrastructure Development Act 2000 (as amended) on the Strategic Infrastructure Development application ABP Reference 320089.

ITEM NO. 5 TO CONSIDER VARYING THE BASIC RATE OF LOCAL PROPERTY TAX IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE LOCAL PROPERTY TAX (LOCAL ADJUSTMENT FACTOR) REGULATIONS 2022. **4400**

The report was published on the Extranet prior to the meeting.

The Chief Executive outlined the services provided by the Council and confirmed that the Council's Strategic Workplace Plan has been completed. The staffing deficit to realise ambitious work plans now needs to be addressed. The Department have sanctioned additional staff, the Council must now find the funding to pay them. He assured the Members that any extra monies raised from an increase in the Local Property Tax (LPT) would be retained by the Council. An increase of 15% would yield almost €2.4m annually in additional funding. The majority of households would experience a small increase in their property tax bill. Areas that will benefit from the extra funding are the MDs, climate action, digital transformation, the Project Management Office, the masterplan for the economic corridor, Town Centre First, Rural Regeneration and Development Fund (RRDF) and Urban Regeneration and Development Fund (URDF). Capital projects require the Council to provide between 20% and 25% from our own resources to co-fund projects. To achieve these ambitious plans, he asked the Members to support an increase in the LPT of 15% for the next 5 years.

Members raised the following points and queries:

- Clarity was sought where a Member voted against an increase in the LPT would they still have access to the additional MD funding.
- The Council have been told by Government that it needs to increase its own Revenue.

- An increase of 43% in the LPT for households would be equivalent to 26c per week.
- There is a huge deficit in outdoor workers and Council contributions are required to progress infrastructural projects.
- It is not fair to ask the people to bear the burden of the government decision to underfund Galway County Council.
- The proposed increase in LPT was questioned during a time of record returns and monies that are to be received by Government from Apple.
- Clarity was sought if the vote was to increase the LPT for 1 year or for the next 5 years.

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

- He met with every political grouping in relation to the LPT proposal. All Members have been treated equally. All business of the Council is conducted in a transparent, fair and equal manner.

A vote was taken on the proposal to increase the basic rate of the Local Property Tax by 15% for 2025 through to 2029 inclusive.

The following was the result:

For 32

Cllr. Harney	Cllr. Reddington	Cllr. Dolan
Cllr. Keane	Cllr. D. Killilea	Cllr. Collins
Cllr. Geraghty	Cllr. Kelly	Cllr. Dr. Parsons
Cllr. Mannion	Cllr. Donohue	Cllr. Finnerty
Cllr. King	Cllr. Canning	Cllr. McClearn
Cllr. McHugh Farag	Cllr. M. Connolly	Cllr. Hoade
Cllr. Maher	Cllr. Kinane	Cllr. Lee
Cllr. Turner	Cllr. Feeney	Cllr. Keaveney
Cllr. Roche	Cllr. P. Killilea	Cllr. Murphy
Cllr. Cuniffe	Cllr. Curley	Cllr. Grealish

Cllr. Welby

Comh. Mac an Iomaire

Against 6

Cllr. Charity

Cllr. O'Hara

Comh. Leainde

Cllr. Thomas

Cllr. Walsh

Comh. Ó Curraoin

Abstain 0

Absent 1

Cllr. D. Connolly

The Cathaoirleach declared that the vote was carried.

On the **PROPOSAL** of Cllr. McClearn **SECONDED** by Cllr. Hoade it was **AGREED** to increase the basic rate of the Local Property Tax by 15% for the next 5 years in accordance with the Local Property Tax (Local Adjustment Factor) Regulations 2022.

ITEM NO. 6 TO CONSIDER OVERDRAFT ACCOMMODATION FOR THE 12 MONTHS 1 JANUARY 2025 TO THE 31 DECEMBER 2025. 4401

Report dated 23rd September 2024 was published on the Extranet prior to the meeting.

On the **PROPOSAL** of Cllr. Maher **SECONDED** by Cllr. Hoade the Overdraft Accommodation for the 12 months, 1st January 2025 to 31st December 2025 was **AGREED**.

ITEM NO. 7 TO CONSIDER, IN ACCORDANCE WITH SECTION 48 OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 2001 (AS AMENDED) AND GUIDELINES ISSUED UNDER SECTION 41 OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT REFORM ACT 2014 SUBMISSIONS ON THE DRAFT STRATEGIC POLICY COMMITTEE AND ADOPT A SCHEME FOR

IMPLEMENTATION OF THE STRATEGIC POLICY COMMITTEE SYSTEM 2024-2029. **4402**

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

On the **PROPOSAL** of Cllr. Feeney **SECONDED** by Cllr. Roche it was **AGREED** to adopt the scheme for implementation of the Strategic Policy Committee system 2024-2029.

Members raised the following points and queries:

- Specifying Gaeltacht in the Strategic Policy Committee (SPC) heading excludes Irish speakers that reside outside of a Gaeltacht area.
- What plans are there to promote the Irish language on all SPCs.
- It was recommended that the Irish language be represented on all SPCs.
- Irish should be spoken in the Chamber.
- There has been a poor uptake in places on Irish courses from Elected Members.

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

- Informed that 5 submissions were received referring to the Irish Language in the scheme.
- Irish Language would be included as an SPC title.
- She will link with the Department with regard to future SPC guidelines.

ITEM NO.8 FILLING OF A CASUAL VACANCY ON THE MEMBERSHIP OF THE MIDLANDS REGIONAL TRANSITION TEAM (MRTT). **4403**

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

On the **PROPOSAL** of Cllr. Hoade **SECONDED** by Cllr. Roche it was **AGREED** to appoint Cllr. Michael Connolly as a member of the Midlands Regional Transition Team.

**ITEM NO.9 FILLING OF A CASUAL VACANCY ON THE MEMBERSHIP OF THE
LOCAL COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE.** **4404**

Report dated 27th August 2024 was published on the Extranet prior to the meeting.

On the **PROPOSAL** of Cllr. Maher **SECONDED** by Cllr. Hoade it was **AGREED** to appoint Ms. Eveanna Ryan as a member of the Local Community Development Committee.

**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).** **4405**

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

On the **PROPOSAL** of Cllr. Maher **SECONDED** by Comh. Ó Curraoin it was **AGREED** to authorise Cllr. Turner to attend Certificate in Continuing Professional Development in Climate Crisis and Local Government at University College Cork and online, during 2024 -2025 (Retrospective Approval).

On the **PROPOSAL** of Cllr. Maher **SECONDED** by Comh. Ó Curraoin it was **AGREED** to authorise Cllrs. D. Killilea, Maher, Walsh, King, Curley, Collins, Turner, Hoade and Keane to attend AILG Autumn Training Seminar 2024 at The Hillgrove Hotel Monaghan on 11th & 12th September 2024. (Retrospective Approval).

On the **PROPOSAL** of Cllr. Maher **SECONDED** by Comh. Ó Curraoin it was **AGREED** to authorise Cllrs. Reddington, Kinane and Comh. Ó Curraoin to attend AILG Module 4 'An overview of the planning system' at The Bridge House Hotel, Tullamore on 28th September 2024.

ITEM NO. 11 TO CONSIDER AND IF DEEMED APPROPRIATE TO AUTHORISE THE ATTENDANCE AT CONFERENCES, MEETINGS, OTHER EVENTS IN ACCORDANCE WITH SECTION 142(5) OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 2001 (AS AMENDED).

4406

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

On the **PROPOSAL** of Cllr. Maher **SECONDED** by Cllr. Roche it was **AGREED** to authorise Cllr. Walsh to attend 34th La Touche Legacy Seminar 'Ireland in the post WW2 world and the challenge of modernity' at Greystones Golf Club, Co. Wicklow on the 20th to 21st September 2024 (*Retrospective Approval*)

On the **PROPOSAL** of Cllr. Maher **SECONDED** by Cllr. Roche it was **AGREED** to authorise Comh. Ó Curraoin to attend Celtic Conferences – 'A practical guide to Budget 2025' at McKevitt's Hotel, Carlingford on the 11th -13th October 2024

ITEM NO.12 TO NOTE THE SUMMARY OF PROCEEDINGS OF CONFERENCES ATTENDED IN ACCORDANCE WITH SECTION 142 (5f) OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 2001 (AS AMENDED).

4407

Report dated 19th September 2024 was published on the Extranet prior to the meeting.

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

ITEM NO. 13 TO CONSIDER THE MANAGEMENT REPORT – SEPTEMBER 2024 IN ACCORDANCE WITH SECTION 136(2) OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 2001 (AS AMENDED).

4408

Report dated 13th September 2024 was published on the Extranet prior to the meeting.

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

Members raised the following points and queries:

- Congratulations were offered to all the community groups that held events for Culture Night, particularly those in Tuam and Headford.
- It was requested that Members be informed if a property is to be advertised through Choice Based Letting.
- The transfer of Council staff to the Department of Agriculture, at a time when the Council are struggling to respond to cases of animal cruelty, was queried.
- If going forward animal services will be provided by Council staff or will the role be contracted out.
- Loughrea library was commended for hosting Comhrá Gaeilge group and LEGO free play events.
- The change in policy for housing grants where the inspection occurs after the works was welcomed.
- Ms. Marie Mannion was commended for her work in delivering the number of heritage events over the last 2 months.
- Assurance was sought that the Council would meet their Local Authority Housing Targets this year.

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

- Choice Based Letting was relaunched in June.
- He will verify that Members are being notified of properties available under Choice Based Letting.
- Unsuccessful bidders are not notified that their bid was unsuccessful, due to the significant number of responses.

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

- The transfer of staff to the Department of Agriculture has been agreed in principle. There are significant challenges to be met in relation to the control of dogs and horses. How it will proceed will need to be explored. She

assured the Members that provision will be provided by Q4 2024 and that no gap in service provision will occur.

- As regards filling the Veterinary post, all options will be considered. Not all duties of the role are veterinary in nature, some duties may be contracted out.

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

- He assured the Members that the Council are striving to achieve the housing provision targets. The only steady channel of housing delivery that is within the Council's control is that via Capital provision. Otherwise, the Council works with Approved Housing Bodies and developers to deliver turnkey and purchase houses whenever possible.
- 2027 targets under Housing For All will be met.
- He believes that current housing targets will increase.
- The 2024 targets should be met, however there are supply side elements of housing provision that are outside the control of the Council.
- He will revert to the Members at the November plenary with a clearer picture of the targets.
- He has asked the Director to focus on the self-build side of housing delivery as this is where the Council have most control in the delivery of units.

Members raised the following points and queries:

- Over 80s should be prioritised for bathroom housing grants.
- Special mention was given to Williamstown on their Pride of Place achievements and acknowledgement of the involvement of Ms. Marie Mannion at the recent Heritage Workshops.
- A request was made that Members be kept up to date on the Ballygar and Mountbellew Wastewater Treatment Plants.
- If the funding for Local and National Roads has been spent.
- If resurfacing works on the N84 will happen.
- If homeless services are to be provided in Tuam.

- Congratulations were expressed to Mountbellew Agricultural College on their new Veterinary School.
- It was highlighted that Galway County Council have a good rate of planning permission approvals at 86%.
- It was queried if advertising houses via Choice Based Letting was a good idea. It is causing traffic issues in the vicinity of the houses and creates false expectation for the applicants. Only those eligible to apply should be allowed to view the property.

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

- The change in policy to accept photographic evidence in lieu of initial inspection, is an effort to address the backlog in housing grant applications. The new procedure will commence next Monday.
- Houses are chosen for Choice Based Letting when the Council finds it difficult to allocate a particular house. People cannot be prevented from viewing the property.
- He was not aware of homeless services being provided in Tuam, he offered to discuss this after the meeting.

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

- Transport Infrastructure Ireland TII have implemented a nationwide pause on overlay schemes and an update was provided to members in the May Management Report
- An additional €2 Million has been received for non-national roads.
- It has been indicated that the funding for national roads will fall again next year.

Members raised the following points and queries:

- The new photograph in lieu of initial inspection policy in housing grants now requires quotations to accompany the application. This had previously been

abolished. It was highlighted how difficult it is to obtain quotations which will impact people's ability to apply for the grant.

- If photographs or engineers report could be accepted for Croi Conaithe grant applications to help fast track them.
- For the second year in a row the anti-dumping initiative clean up couldn't take place at the intended site in Ballinasloe, due to health and safety concerns. A stronger approach is required to enable the clean-up of the.
- The launch of the Community Sports Hub in Ballinasloe was commended.
- It was asked if The Greater Galway Area Drainage Study could be broken into smaller projects. It is feared that other projects in the area will be delayed due to the complexities of such a large project.
- Concern was raised at the reduced funding from TII.

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

- The improvement works on the N59 have not been affected by the TII funding constraints.
- The yearly routine maintenance funding of approximately €1million has not been reduced, however there has been a reduction in the additional funding from the TII.
- Additional safety signage on the N63 will be erected shortly.
- The drainage study can be raised at the upcoming workshop with Uisce Éireann.

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

- He will revert regarding abolishing the requirement to submit quotations with window grant applications.

ITEM NO. 14 CHIEF EXECUTIVE'S BUSINESS & CORRESPONDENCE.

4409

The Chief Executive provided an update on the Draft Corporate Plan 2025-2029. He explained that the Annual Service Delivery Plans, Team Plans and Personal

Development Plans will all flow from the Corporate Plan. He thanked the Members and staff for their input to the plan that is currently on public display. Following public comment, the final draft will be brought before the Members for final consideration. It will be ready for adoption at the December 2024 meeting.

Ms. Carroll gave a report on the trip to Chicago, Wisconsin and Milwaukee in August by a delegation from the Council. The delegation met with business and community organisations, including Enterprise Ireland, Chicagoland Chamber of Commerce, 167 Green Street/ Fulton Market developers, Chicago Sister Cities International, World Business Chicago, MATTER Chicago and After School Matters. Galway County Council delegates travelled to West Bend, the administrative seat of Washington County, where the 21st anniversary of the transatlantic twinning arrangement was celebrated. The delegation also attended at a meeting of the County Board, chaired by Chairman Jeff Schlieff, the Chief Executive and the County Board supervisors.

The delegation viewed the Next Generation Housing project, an innovative and unique housing initiative that provides affordable housing where participants availed of the subsidy and agreed to participate in voluntary community activities to repay the equivalent subsidy on the cost of the house and Washington County's Chief Community Development Officer also gave a presentation on Parks Sustainability, showcasing a self-funding model which benefits the entire community in the pursuit of outdoor recreation. A highlight of the delegation's trip was its attendance at Milwaukee Irish Fest on the shore of Lake Michigan. Galway has held an annual presence at the world's largest celebration of Irish Celtic music and culture for the past 25 years, promoting the county's tourism sector to more than 100,000 festival goers.

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

- Letter dated 12.03.24 to Mr. Eamon Ryan T.D. Minister for Transport.
Resolution – Additional Roads Funding

- Email dated 10.09.24 from Mr. Eamon Ryan, Minister for Transport.
Resolution – Additional Roads Funding – Response
- Letter dated 28.06.24 to Mr. Kieran O'Donnell, Office of Public Works.
Resolution – Enhance Visitor experience at OPW sites.
- Email dated 03.09.24 from Mr. Garret Nolan, Private Secretary to the Minister of State, Kieran O' Donnell, TD Office of Public Works. Resolution Enhance Visitor experience at OPW sites. Response.
- Letter dated 28.06.24 to Mr. Eamon Ryan T.D Minister for Transport.
Resolution – Community Involvement Scheme
- Email dated 11.09.24 from Mr. Eamon Ryan, Minister for Transport.
Resolution – Community Involvement Scheme. Response
- Letter dated 26.07.24 to Mr. Darragh O'Brien T.D. Minister for Housing, Local Government and Heritage. Resolution - First Home Scheme
- Email dated 07.08.24 from Mr. Eoghan Mc Carthy, Private Secretary to Minister Darragh O'Brien T.D. Minister for Housing, Local Government & Heritage – Acknowledgement
- Email dated 11.09.24 from Mr. Eoghan Mc Carthy, Private Secretary to Minister Darragh O'Brien, Department of Housing, Local Government & Heritage – First Home Scheme – Response
- Letter dated 09.08.24 from Wexford County Council to Minister Helen McEntee and An Taoiseach Simon Harris. Resolution – Gender based violence
- Letter dated 02.09.24 from Roscommon County Council to Ms. Catherine Martin T.D, Minister for Tourism, Arts, Culture, Gaeltacht, Sport & Media.
Resolution – Hospitality sector VAT rate.
- Letter dated 02.09.24 from Roscommon County Council to Mr. Jack Chambers T.D. Minister for Finance. Resolution – Hospitality sector VAT rate.
- Letter dated 02.09.24 from Roscommon County Council to Mr. Eamonn Ryan T.D, Minister for Environment, Climate & Communications. Resolution – Fines to deter illegal dumping.

- Letter dated 02.09.24 from Roscommon County Council to Mr. Simon Harris T.D, An Taoiseach. Resolution – Reduction in match funding requirements for major capital projects.
- Letter dated 06.09.24 from Leitrim County Council to Minister Ryan. Resolution – Strategic Gas Emergency Reserve.
- Letter dated 06.09.24 from Leitrim County Council to Minister for Finance, Jack Chambers. Resolution - Reduce Vat Rate from 13.5% to 9%.
- Letter dated 6.08.24 from Mayors for Peace
- The City of Hiroshima Peace Declaration 06.08.24
- Nagasaki Peace Declaration dated 09.08.24
- Mayors for Peace News Flash dated July 2024
- Mayors for Peace News Flash dated August 2024

ITEM 15. NOTICE OF MOTION

4410

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

'I propose that Galway County Council applies for emergency government funding for Hedge cutting in the County.

The growth of trees, bushes, & foliage is now out of control on the sides of the roads and is a serious hazard to motorists, pedestrians, & cyclists.

It is clear Galway County Councils own budget is not adequate to fund this programme and requires extra resources.'

The following reply issued:

Galway County Council acknowledges the concerns raised regarding the overgrowth of trees, bushes, and foliage along the public roads.

Galway County Council will proceed with an application for additional funding for hedge cutting from the relevant government sources. We will seek funding from the Department of Transport for local and regional roads and from Transport Infrastructure Ireland (TII) for national roads.

It is important to note that Galway County Council has already received an additional €2,000,000 in funding for road improvements in 2024. While we receive funding from the Department of Transport for general road maintenance and improvements, there are always significant demands on the road budget.

Currently, the budget for hedge cutting is part of Galway County Council's Ordinary Maintenance allocation and is funded by the Department of Transport and with Own Resource Funding from our 2024 Revenue Budget. This budget is used for a range of essential road maintenance activities, including but not limited to:

- Drainage (water tables, cleaning gully traps, and repairing culverts)
- Signage (repair/replacement along road networks)
- Line marking (replacement of faded centre lines and junction markings)
- Road sweeping
- Pothole repair / Patching
- Ironworks (repairing/replacing defective infrastructure)
- Footpath repairs
- Winter maintenance (P4 routes)
- Hedge trimming and tree surgery

While hedge trimming is included within this broader maintenance budget, the increasing demands across the county mean that the current budget is not sufficient to address the level of hedge cutting required.

Furthermore, under the Roads Act 1993, landowners have a legal responsibility to maintain trees, hedges, and other vegetation on their property that forms the boundary with a public road. This includes ensuring that road boundary hedges and trees do not endanger road users or obstruct road visibility. Galway County Council will continue to remind landowners of their obligations, and we will take appropriate action to ensure compliance where necessary.

Cllr. King said that the reply he received to his Notice of Motion was not adequate following the TII's reduction in maintenance funding. This is now an emergency situation. There has been a lack of planned programmes and investment. Weather systems have changed which has affected growth rates. Large vehicles are being

pushed into the middle of the road. The N59 is overgrown and there are safety, visibility and tourism concerns. He asked if a Community Employment Scheme could be employed to address the problem. He enquired if there is a costed plan for Council staff to begin trimming earlier in the year.

The Cathaoirleach informed Cllr. King that the Director would speak to him directly on the matter.

ITEM 16. NOTICE OF MOTION

4411

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

'To ask the Chief Executive to outline the progress being made towards delivery of affordable housing in County Galway, including expected timeframes for delivery of housing and breakdown by Municipal District area.'

The following reply issued:

Galway County Council is committed to the delivery of affordable housing with a number of projects currently being progressed and planned for delivery during 2025 - 2026 as follows:

Affordable Housing Fund Pipeline

Municipal District	Status	Scheme Name	No. of Affordable Purchase/Rental	Delivery
Municipal District of Athenry	Project in development	Lake View, (Garrai Na Gaoithe) Phase 1, Claregalway	17	Q1 2025
	Project in development	Lake View, (Garrai Na Gaoithe) Phase 2, Claregalway	16	Q2/3 2025
	Project in development	Lake View, (Garrai Na Gaoithe) Phase 3, Claregalway	28	Q3/4 2025

	Project in development	Droim na Gaoithe, Claregalway	45	Q1 2026
	Project in development	Gort Maoilir, Athenry	30	Q2 2026
	Project in development	Pairc na hAbhainn, Athenry	10	Q1 2026
	Totals		146	

Galway County Council is committed to adding to the pipeline as detailed above in other locations where affordable housing is deemed viable.

An affordable housing survey is currently being undertaken to determine the level and profile of demand for affordable housing in settlements across the county. The survey is available at www.galway.ie/affordablesurvey with a closing date of 6pm on Friday, 4th October 2024.

Cllr. O'Hara said that it is useful for people to be informed of the projected upcoming supply in affordable housing. Affordable houses have not been supplied in years and there is an enormous demand.

ITEM NO.17 CATHAOIRLEACH'S BUSINESS

4412

The Cathaoirleach reminded the Members that a special meeting with Uisce Éireann is to take place on October 8th at 2pm. He asked Members that they submit their questions in advance to give Uisce Éireann the opportunity to have answers prepared.

Members raised the following points and queries:

- If available resources are affecting the delivery of affordable housing.
- If the Council could purchase their own machinery to carry out hedge trimming.

- Safety concerns were raised regarding the signage at Marless Cross on the N63.
- A county wide policy is required to provide clarity on where responsibility lies regards hedge trimming.
- Hedge cutting needs to be done in September when the growth occurs.

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

- The Director will revert regarding other affordable housing projects.

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

- Advised that additional signage is being provided at this junction in the coming weeks.

Members Queries were responded to as follows by the Cathaoirleach:

- Preparing a hedge cutting policy should be on the agenda of the relevant SPC.
- Clarified that the Uisce Éireann meeting would not be open to the media to attend.
- The next meeting of the Council will be on Monday 21st October.

ITEM NO.18 VOTES OF SYMPATHY / CONGRATULATIONS

4413

A resolution of congratulations was extended to the following:

- Mountbellew Agricultural College on their new Veterinary School.

A resolution of sympathy was extended to the following:

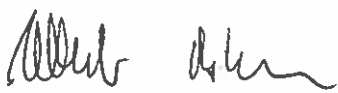
- Cunningham Family, Derrybrien, Loughrea Co. Galway
- Egan Family, Derrybrien, Loughrea, Co. Galway
- Mrs. Mary Williams, Rinneen, Gort, Co. Galway
- Mrs. Jane Mc Namara & Staff, Greenpark Nursing Home, Tuam, Co. Galway.

- Mrs. Catherine Ó Fátharta, Baile an tSléibhe, Rossaveal, Ballinahown, Galway.
- Ms. Vicky Keane, Rathfee, Turloughmore, Athenry, Co. Galway.
- Mr. Pat Treacy, Kilskeagh, Turloughmore, Athenry, Co. Galway.
- Mr. Frank Kearney, Letterfrack, Co. Galway.
- Mr. Martin & Francis Healy, "Roselawn", Deerpark, Ballinasloe, Co. Galway.
- Ms. Ann Kelly, Renville West, Oranmore, Co. Galway.

Chriochnaigh an Cruinniú Ansin.

Submitted, Signed and Approved

Cathaoirleach:



Date:

21/10/2024

