

COMHAIRLE CHONTAE NA GAILLIMHE

Ceantar Bardasach Chonamara

Municipal District of Conamara

Minutes of the Municipal District of Conamara Draft Budget Meeting held on Friday 10th October 2025 at 2.00pm in the Council Chamber.

I LATHAIR

CATHAORILEACH: Cllr. Gerry King

BAILL: Comh T. Ó Curraoin, Cllr M. Leainde, Cllr M. Lee, Cllr E. Mannion, Cllr. Welby.

OIFIGH: U. Finn D.O.S., K. O'Connor HOF, A. Fenton, S.E.O., I. Martyn, Meetings Administrator, N O'Conaola E.E, L. Tierny E.T, B. McDonagh E.E, S. Casey A.S.O.

APOLOGIES: Cllr. Walsh, Comh Mac An Iomaire, Cllr. Thomas.

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

Cathaoirleach Cllr. King welcomed Ms. O'Connor, Head of Finance.

Ms. O'Connor advised the members of the draft budget plan for the Conamara Municipal District for 2026 showing an indicative expenditure of €10,191,036, for 2026. Advising that for budget 2026 some increased expenditure in roads

and housing maintenance is anticipated and specific projects as outlined by the Municipal Districts.

Ms. O'Connor outlined that in July 2025, Galway County was allocated €21,609,071 under the 2026 Local Property Tax (LPT), pending any decision. She noted that the Council decision taken on 23 September 2024 to increase the LPT rate by 15% for five years has been factored into the draft budget. This will result in an increase in the LPT of €2,581,838 for 2026.

Galway County Council - 2026 LPT Allocation		
	2026 €	2025 €
LPT Retained Locally	17,212,256	15,806,429
Shortfall from equalisation fund	4,369,815	4,502,651
Total LPT Funding to be provided (Baseline)	21,609,071	20,309,071
Value of increase of 15% in LPT allocation	2,581,838	2,370,963
Total Local Property Taxation	<u>24,190,909</u>	<u>22,680,034</u>

Sub Service	Description	Indicative Expenditure 2025	Indicative Expenditure 2025	Total Indicative Expenditure for 2026
<i>Housing and Building</i>				
A0101	Maintenance of LA Housing Units	189,373	169,998	1,113,974
A0102*	Maintenance of Traveller Accommodation Units	-	-	126,000
A0104	Estate Maintenance	63,000	50,000	365,000
<i>Road Transport & Safety</i>				
B0301	Regional Roads Surface Dressing	658,242	585,162	1,628,798
B0302	Reg Rd Surface Rest/Road Reconstruction/Overlay	1,551,166	957,751	7,487,863
B0303	Regional Road Winter Maintenance	67,571	67,571	265,000
B0305	Regional Road General Maintenance Works	498,237	483,013	1,937,355
B0306	Regional Road General Improvement Works Bridges	35,000	35,000	35,000
B0401	Local Road Surface Dressing	456,927	538,282	3,703,702
B0402	Local Rd Surface Rest/Road Reconstruction/Overlay	3,340,870	3,484,055	17,268,637
B0405	Local Roads General Maintenance Works	1,516,659	1,656,890	7,074,645
B0406	Local Roads General Improvement Works	722,196	686,696	2,420,979
B0901	Maintenance and Management of Car Parks	5,000	2,160	45,858
B0902	Operation of Street Parking	27,590	27,590	176,975
<i>Water Services</i>				
C0401	Operation and Maintenance of Public Conveniences	43,190	42,994	131,305
<i>Development Management</i>				
D0905	Economic Development & Promotion	221,063	207,718	909,250
D1101	Heritage Services	33,100	29,100	165,500
<i>Environmental services</i>				
E0201	Recycling Facilities Operations	275,000	260,000	305,000
E0202*	Bring Centres Operations	33,176	26,541	232,939
E0502	Litter Control Initiatives	24,800	22,976	114,880
E0503	Environmental Awareness Services	12,000	12,000	60,000
E0601	Operation of Street Cleaning Service	275,312	275,320	1,200,000
E0901	Maintenance of Burial Grounds	74,540	59,577	401,584
<i>Recreation and Amenity</i>				
F0301	Parks, Pitches & Open Spaces	30,000	30,000	267,990
F0401	Community Grants	20,315	20,315	113,450
F0502	Contributions to other Bodies Arts Programme	14,710	18,260	73,548
F0504	Heritage/Interpretive Facilities Operations	-	-	20,000
<i>Agriculture, Education, Health and Welfare</i>				
<i>Miscellaneous Services</i>				
H0702	Casual Trading Areas	-	-	85,000
Indicative Gross Expenditure		10,191,036	9,758,968	47,730,232

*update FY numbers

The Budget process involves three key stages:

1. Decision on the Local Property Tax (LPT)
2. Review of the Draft Municipal District Budgetary Plan
3. Review of the Draft Overall Budget for Galway County Council

This process is challenging due to limited budgetary information during the first two stages. In mid-September, ahead of the LPT decision, a projected deficit of €11 million was identified. However, this estimate lacked detailed input from Business Units and certainty on several evolving factors.

Key unresolved issues include:

- Potential Government funding for Local Authorities in 2026.

- Provisions for bad debts and rate appeals following the 2023 commercial property revaluation.
- Funding gaps related to retained firefighters.
- Stranded costs associated with Uisce Éireann.
- Possible reductions in income due to economic slowdown or rising unemployment.

The Head of Finance reminded the members that the draft budget outlines how the General Municipal Allocation (GMA) will be spent in each Municipal District. This discretionary funding includes a portion of the Local Property Tax, distributed based on the number of councillors in each MD. It supports projects such as Local Authority Infrastructure and Community Capital Projects, which are selected by elected members. These funds offer Municipal Districts a valuable opportunity to invest in larger-scale initiatives and attract additional match funding.

Ms. O'Connor shared that the attached figures reflect an increase in roads grant funding received in 2025, consistent with previous years. Similar funding levels are expected in 2026, but final allocations won't be confirmed until mid-February. These will be included in the Municipal District works schedule. The attached indicative figures will be considered in framing the full Council Budget and that the final allocations for 2026 will be decided on the adoption of the 2026 Budget by the Council on 14 November 2025.

She closed her presentation reminding members that after reviewing the draft budget plan, Municipal District members must vote to adopt it, either as is or with changes. The Chief Executive will consider the adopted plan when finalising the budget. If members don't adopt a plan, the Chief Executive may proceed based on the original draft.

On the **PROPOSAL** OF Cllr. Welby and **SECONDED** by Cllr. Mannion the members agreed to adopt the Budgetary Plan for 2026 for the Municipal District of Conamara as prepared under the direction of the Chief Executive.

Cllr. Mannion thanked Ms. O'Connor for the draft budget presentation and acknowledged that figures may change, especially road allocations. She highlighted the serious impact of flooding on the N59, which was closed

during Storm Amy, and stressed the need for dedicated funding to address flooding and road issues.

She praised council staff for their response, including providing sandbags and keeping roads clear. She also called for increased funding for roads, flood prevention, and more operational and local staff in Clifden. She urged that these needs be reflected in the final budget and brought to the attention of the Department and TII.

Cllr. Lee supported Cllr Mannion's concerns, emphasising the need for increased funding for road drainage. He noted that additional resources are urgently required in both administrative support and machinery operations. He also called for greater financial support from central government to address these pressing infrastructure needs.

Cllr. Leainde expressed concern that new roads are not being properly drained. He emphasised that drainage should be considered from the outset of road construction to prevent future issues and ensure long-term durability.

Comh. Ó Curraoin thanked Ms. O'Connor and her team for their work. He noted that flooding caused by Storm Amy was more severe than expected and agreed that drainage should be considered from the outset of road construction. He also highlighted that poor drainage on private lands contributes to flooding, stating that if land is not properly drained, the water has nowhere to go. He expressed appreciation for the Council staff's efforts in responding to the flooding and keeping roads clear.

Cllr. Welby requested that additional funding—between €10,000 and €15,000—be allocated to support the Geopark, noting that such an increase would significantly benefit the area. He stressed the importance of including flood management in the budget, citing climate change and increasingly intense rainfall as key factors contributing to more frequent flooding. He expressed concern that the standard of work by the OPW has declined due to complex regulations and overlapping responsibilities. He urged all relevant agencies to collaborate more effectively and efficiently. Finally, he strongly advocated for dedicated flood funding in the budget, stating that extreme weather is becoming the new normal.

Cathaoirleach King thanked the Finance Team for their work on the draft budget. He welcomed the increase in the Housing Maintenance budget but expressed concern that funding for parks, pitches, and open spaces remains

low. He agreed with fellow councillors that additional funding should be allocated for flood prevention and response measures.

Mr. Finn thanked all councillors for their contributions to the draft budget meeting. He suggested that the issue of flooding and related concerns may be more appropriately addressed at the Municipal District level, where specific local needs can be discussed in greater detail.

Ms. O'Connor thanked the councillors for their feedback on the draft budget. She noted that she would explore the possibility of increasing funding for flood-related measures. She informed the members that Galway County Council is still awaiting funding related to Storm Éowyn, which occurred in January 2025.

She also acknowledged Cllr Welby's concerns regarding the Geopark and confirmed that additional funding for the machinery yard would be given serious consideration.

Mr. Finn advised that there is no budget for Emergency repairs but an application for funding can be made to The Department of Public Expenditure and Reform (DPER). He said the Department always supports emergency response. He acknowledged the councillors' concerns regarding flooding. He noted that while these issues are important, flooding may be viewed as a once-off event, and the Council may need to engage with the relevant Department to address it appropriately.

The members expressed surprise upon learning that Galway County Council is still awaiting funding for Storm Éowyn (January 2025). Ms. O'Connor clarified that this is not unique to Galway, but part of a wider national issue. Cllr. Welby voiced strong concern that the Department lacks contingency planning for severe weather events, especially given that the majority of the Council's budget is non-discretionary. Mr. Finn added that while there is no specific funding stream for extreme weather events, the Department does provide support for emergency works.

On the proposal of Cllr. Mannion and seconded by Cllr. Welby a motion was passed to write to the National Directorate of Fire & Emergency Management to seek payment for emergency works carried out after storm Eowyn across County Galway.

Cathaoirleach King formally concluded the Draft Budget Meeting for the Conamara Municipal District 2026.

Signed Gary King
Date: 28 March 35
