

MINUTES OF REMOTE COUNCIL MEETING OF GALWAY COUNTY COUNCIL

Monday 28th February 2022 at 11:00am via Microsoft Teams

CATHAOIRLEACH: Cllr. Peter Keaveney
Cathaoirleach of the County of Galway

I LATHAIR FREISIN:

Baill: Comh./Cllr. T Broderick, J. Byrne, I. Canning, L. Carroll, J. Charity, D. Collins, D. Connolly, M. Connolly, G. Cronnelly, D. Ó Cualáin, J. Cuddy, S. Curley, T. Ó Curraoin, Albert Dolan, G. Donohue, G. Finnerty, D. Geraghty, S. Herterich Quinn, M. Hoade, C. Keaveney, D. Kelly, D. Killilea, M. Kinane, G. King, P. Mac an Iomaire, M. Maher, E. Mannion, J. McClearn, K. McHugh Farag, A. McKinstry, P. Murphy, E. Francis Parsons, A. Reddington, P. Roche, J. Sheridan, N. Thomas, S. Walsh and T. Welby.

Oifigh: Mr. J. Cullen, Chief Executive, Mr. M. Owens, Director of Services, Mr. L. Hanrahan, Director of Services, Mr. D. Pender, Director of Services, Mr. G. Mullankey, Head of Finance, Ms. J Brann, Meetings Administrator, Ms. V. Loughnane-Moran Senior Planner, Mr. B. Dunne Senior Executive Planner, Mr. B. Corcoran, Executive Planner, Ms. A. Power, Senior Staff Officer, Ms. U. Ni Eidhín, Oifigeach Gaeilge, Ms. B. Ryan, Staff Officer, Ms. E. Hoffman, Clerical Officer

Thosnaigh an cruinniú leis an paidir.

Prior to the commencement of the formal business the Cathoirleach expressed his sympathies to Cllr. Ivan Canning on the death of his mother Josephine Canning RIP. The Cathoirleach expressed condolences to the Treacy family on the death of Noel Treacy RIP and to the Kitt family on the death of Bridie Kitt RIP.

Cllr. Hoade said Noel Treacy was a great loss to Galway. He had worked closely with the people of Galway and had served at every level in a number of Government Departments during his career. In recent times he had borne his illness with great bravery and dignity. Cllr. Hoade noted that Bridie Kitt who recently passed away, had also been very much involved in political life with four family members including her husband elected to the Dáil. She expressed her condolences to both families.

Two former employees of Galway County Council were also remembered following their recent passing - Michael Donnellan RIP and Midie (Michael) Hussey RIP. In addition, Billy Kinsella RIP, an employee of Wexford County Council, who tragically lost his life in the course of his work during storm Eunice was also remembered. The Members joined with the Cathoirleach in expressing their condolences to all the families of the deceased.

The Chief Executive expressed his sympathies to Cllr. Canning and to the Treacy and Kitt families. He expressed condolences also to the Donnellan, Hussey and Kinsella families on their recent losses.

Cllr. Charity raised the issue of the unfolding events in the Ukraine. The following motion was proposed by Cllr. Charity

"Galway County Council condemns the actions of the Russian State in the Ukraine, stands in solidarity with all Ukrainian citizens living in County Galway, and calls on the Government to immediately expel the Russian Ambassador and diplomatic staff from the State, and to raise to the Ukrainian flag outside County Hall in solidarity with Ukraine."

Members joined with Cllr. Charity in their condemnation of the Russian invasion of Ukraine and supported the proposal of raising of the Ukrainian flag to send a strong

message of support to the Ukrainian people. Concerns were raised by a number of Members regarding the proposal to expel the Russian Ambassador from Ireland. It was suggested the move may be counterproductive and may even provoke an irrational response from the Russian Administration. It was also noted that many Ukrainians hold dual citizenship and may require the assistance of the embassy at this time. Some Members considered it was important to keep the diplomatic lines of communication open. It was noted the removal of the Ambassador was a matter for the Government working in line with an international strategy.

In light of the issues raised Cllr. Charity proposed two separate motions.

On the **PROPOSAL** of Cllr. Charity **SECONDED** by Cllr. Curley it was **AGREED** that: *"Galway County Council condemns the actions of the Russian State in the Ukraine, stands in solidarity with all Ukrainian citizens living in County Galway, and confirms the raising of the Ukrainian flag outside County Hall in solidarity with Ukraine."*

The following motion was **PROPOSED** by Cllr. Charity and **SECONDED** by Cllr. Broderick:

"Galway County Council calls on the Government to immediately expel the Russian Ambassador and diplomatic staff from the State."

As the motion was not agreed the Cathoirleach called for a vote.

The following was the result:

For - 8

Cllr. Broderick	Cllr. Charity	Cllr. D. Connolly
Cllr. Cronnelly	Cllr. McHugh Farag	Cllr. Roche
Cllr. Walsh	Cllr. Welby	

Against - 9

Cllr. M. Connolly	Comh. Ó'Curraoin	Cllr. C. Keaveney
Cllr. Killilea	Cllr. Kinane	Cllr. Maher
Cllr. McKinstry	Cllr. Sheridan	Cllr. Thomas

Abstain - 19

Cllr. Byrne	Cllr. Carroll	Cllr. Collins
Comh. Ó 'Cualáin	Cllr. Cuddy	Cllr. Curley
Cllr. Dolan	Cllr. Donohue	Cllr. Finnerty
Cllr. Geraghty	Cllr. Herterich Quinn	Cllr. Hoade
Cllr. P. Keaveney	Cllr. Kelly	Comh. Mac an Iomaire
Cllr. Mannion	Cllr. Murphy	Cllr. Dr. Francis Parsons
Cllr. Reddington		

Absent for vote - 3

Cllr. Canning	Cllr. King	Cllr. McClearn
---------------	------------	----------------

The Meetings Administrator confirmed the motion was not carried.

Cathaoirleach Peter Keaveney expressed horror at the shocking images of war emerging from the Ukraine. He noted the images of Russian troops on their way to Kiev and said the images were reminiscent of times in Europe which we thought were well behind us. He expressed solidarity and support for the Ukraine and Ukrainian people, including the Ukrainian community living in County Galway.

ITEM NO.1 CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES OF THE FOLLOWING MEETINGS 3925

(a) Minutes of Monthly Plenary Meeting held on 24th January 2022.

On the **PROPOSAL** of Cllr. Maher **SECONDED** by Cllr. M. Conolly the minutes of the of Monthly Plenary Meeting held on 24th January 2022 were **AGREED**.

(b) Minutes of Special Meeting held on 6th, 10th, 13th, 17th, 20th December 2021 and the 5th, 6th, 7th, 10th, 11th, 12th and 13th January 2022.

Cllrs. Byrne, C. Keaveney, Carroll, Collins, Maher, Sheridan and Donohue voiced their concerns about the accuracy of the minutes presented.

Cllr. Byrne queried the accuracy of the Chief Executive's Report to the Office of the Planning Regulator (OPR). He confirmed he submitted queries to the Planning

Department, which he needed a response to before agreeing the minutes. Cllr. C. Keaveney said he had serious concerns and considered there were significant inconsistencies between the minutes and the report sent to the OPR. He indicated he had also submitted queries to the Planning Department.

In response to the queries raised Mr. Owens advised that the minutes were presented by the Executive as an accurate record of the Special Meeting held in relation to the Development Plan. He acknowledged with approximately 1,000 pages Members may need more time to consider the minutes. He said it was a matter for the Members to consider the minutes as presented and to agree them, with or without amendments.

He advised the minutes were not for revisiting a decision or a debate but where members had particular issues on particular items, he confirmed they would be considered on a case-by-case basis. Where members felt there may be a contradiction in relation to specific items in the Chief Executive's Report to the OPR they would also be considered. He asked Members with queries to email the Forward Planning unit providing specific details of the meeting date, page number of the minutes and the issue they wanted clarification on.

Cllr. C. Keaveney sought further clarification on the discrepancies between the Chief Executive's Report to OPR and the minutes and queried how details in the report were not represented in the minutes.

In response, the Senior Executive Planner explained that contents of the Chief Executive's Report forwarded to the OPR may not be reflected in the minutes of CDP meetings. He advised that the Chief Executive's Report set out the rationale and reasons for decisions made by Members which were not in line with the OPR's recommendations.

The rationale and reasons were not necessarily discussed at the Development Plan Meetings. Members were given a specific time frame following the meetings to submit the rationale and reason for decisions made which were not in line with the OPR's recommendations. He advised that the Chief Executive's Report reflected the reports and commentaries subsequently submitted.

On the **PROPOSAL** of Cllr. Walsh **SECONDED** by Cllr. Cuddy it was agreed to **DEFER** consideration of the minutes of Special Meeting held on 6th, 10th, 13th, 17th, 20th December 2021 and the 5th, 6th, 7th, 10th, 11th, 12th and 13th January 2022 to a later agreed date to allow further consideration by Members.

ITEM NO.2 CONSIDERATION OF REPORTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS 3926

(a) Minutes of Climate Change and Biodiversity Strategic Policy Committee held on 7th October 2021.

On the **PROPOSAL** of Cllr. McKinstry **SECONDED** by Cllr. Kinane the minutes of the Climate Change and Biodiversity Strategic Policy Committee held on 7th October 2021 were **NOTED**.

(b) Minutes of Housing Strategic Policy Committee held on 3rd November 2021.

On the **PROPOSAL** of Cllr. Byrne **SECONDED** by Cllr. Walsh the minutes of the Housing Strategic Policy Committee held on 3rd November 2021 were **NOTED**.

In response to a query regarding the inspection of HAP properties Mr. Hanrahan confirmed that the Building Inspector of Galway County Council carries out inspections for both HAP and private rental properties. Regarding an update on the Housing Action Plan he advised an update will be presented at the next SPC meeting. Regarding void turnarounds he confirmed all works on vacated properties were carried out to highest standards, which sometimes required full replastering, rewiring, replumbing etc. This process takes time. He noted while there was a voids list there are no long-term voids.

Cllr. Collins raised the issue of vacant and derelict properties in the county referencing a recent report received by members of the Northern & Western Regional Assembly. The report cited 40,000 vacant and derelict properties in the county with 7376 vacant residential units 444 in the city and 6932 in the county. He stressed the urgency of getting a team of vacant home officers in place in an effort to combat the housing crisis in Co. Galway. He advised the national average dereliction rate is 4.9% while Galway stands at 10.1%.

Members agreed some form of incentive was required to get people back into living in our towns and villages. The need to bring existing properties back into use would go part way to solving our housing crises and end the spread of dereliction.

In response Mr. Hanrahan confirmed Galway County Council has a Vacant Home Officer for a number of years. He advised a Town Centre Officers will be shortly appointed to work with the Regeneration Team which will also assist in regard to vacant properties.

Cllr. Collins acknowledged the work being carried out by the Vacant Home Officer but considered with almost 7000 vacant properties in the county more resources and more staff were required to tackle the issue.

*On the PROPOSAL of Cllr. Collins **SECONDED** by Cllr. Reddington the Members AGREED:*

"Galway County Council put together a proposal to get a Team of Vacant home officers to work on the problem of Vacancy and Dereliction in the County of Galway"

Mr. Hanrahan advised that the issues raised by Members were items on the Housing SPC Agenda and Housing Action Plan. He confirmed all matters would be examined further at SPC level.

(c) Minutes of Corporate Policy Group held on 16th November 2021.

On the PROPOSAL of Cllr. McHugh **SECONDED** by Cllr. Killilea the minutes of the Minutes of Corporate Policy Group held on 16th November 2021 were **NOTED**.

(d) Minutes of Corporate Policy Group held on 25th November 2021.

On the PROPOSAL of Cllr. M. Connolly **SECONDED** by Cllr. McKinstry the minutes of the Minutes of Corporate Policy Group held on 25th November 2021 were **NOTED**.

Concerns were raised regarding staffing levels in the Planning Department and the resulting difficulties getting constituents queries addressed regarding refusals, further information requests etc. The high number of invalidated planning applications were also noted. While acknowledging the current increase in planning applications in anticipation of the possible changes to one off housing rules, Members stressed the

importance of engagement between Members and the Planning Department. Queries were raised regarding the resumption of the pre-planning meetings and regarding the possibility of reintroducing the "Prior Notice" arrangement which was previously in place.

The Chief Executive reassured Members he was conscious of the importance of planning to the public at large and to the Elected Members as public representatives. He advised Members that while the volume of applications had increased significantly recently, planners had been already dealing with volumes in excess of other local authorities per head of staff prior to the current level. He advised Members that on the recommendation of the Director of Services Planning and Director of Services Human Resources he had approved additional staff for the Planning Department and progress would be made to allow for a resetting of the Planning Function and the delivery of an improved Planning Service.

- (e) Recommendation from the Corporate Policy Group that Galway County Council hold a Civic Reception to honour the Killkerrin/Clonberne Ladies football team who won the All-Ireland Senior Club final.

On the **PROPOSAL** of Cathaoirleach **SECONDED** by Cllr. M. Connolly it was agreed to hold a Civic Reception to honour the Killkerrin/Clonberne Senior Ladies football team who won the All-Ireland Club final.

ITEM NO.3 TO CONSIDER REPORT UNDER SECTION 183 OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 2001 ON THE DISPOSAL OF 0.8372 HECTARES OF LANDS AT GORTNAHOWN, ATHENRY, CO. GALWAY. 3927

Statutory Notice issued in accordance with Section 183(1)(b) and report dated 27th January was published on the Extranet prior to the meeting.

On the **PROPOSAL** of Cllr. Cronnelly **SECONDED** by Cllr. Dolan it was **AGREED** to dispose of 0.8372 hectares of lands at Gortnahown, Athenry, Co. Galway, in accordance with the terms of the Statutory Notice dated the 27th January.

ITEM NO. 4 FILLING OF 2 CASUAL VACANCIES IN THE MEMBERSHIP OF GALWAY AND ROSCOMMON EDUCATION AND TRAINING BOARD (GRETB).

3928

Report dated 23rd February 2022 was published on the Extranet prior to the meeting.

On the **PROPOSAL** of Cllr. C. Keaveney **SECONDED** by Cllr. Mannion it was **AGREED** to appoint Cllr. Hoade a member of the Galway and Roscommon Education and Training Board (GRETB) to replace Cllr. C Keaveney.

On the **PROPOSAL** of Cllr. Cronnelly **SECONDED** by Cllr. Welby it was **AGREED** to appoint Cllr. McHugh a member of the Galway and Roscommon Education and Training Board (GRETB) to replace Cllr. Cronnelly.

Cllr. Maher thanked Cllr. Cronnelly and Cllr. C. Keaveney for their work on the GRETB and welcomed the new appointees. He advised Members there were other vacancies on the GRETB for Parent Representatives. He advised that any Member as a parent of a child in a GRETB school were also eligible to be nominated to the Board. He encouraged them to do so.

ITEM NO. 5 APPOINTMENT OF REPLACEMENT LOCAL AUTHORITY ELECTED MEMBER TO THE LOCAL COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE (LCDC).

3929

Report dated 22nd February 2022 was published on the Extranet prior to the meeting.

On the **PROPOSAL** of Cllr. McHugh Farag **SECONDED** by Cllr. Welby it was to appoint Cllr. Cronnelly a member of Local Community Development Committee (LCDC) to replace Cllr. McHugh Farag.

Cllr. Thomas commended Cllr. McHugh Farag for her work and contributions to the LCDC and welcomed Cllr. Cronnelly to the role.

On the **PROPOSAL** of Cllr. Maher **SECONDED** by Cllr. Collins it was **AGREED** to defer the remaining items on the Agenda to a Teams meeting to be held at 10:00am on Monday 7th March to facilitate the Members of the Loughrea Municipal District to attend a meeting scheduled for 3:00 pm.

MINUTES OF REMOTE COUNCIL MEETING OF GALWAY COUNTY COUNCIL

Monday 7th March 2022 at 10:00am via Microsoft Teams

Deferred February Plenary Meeting

CATHAOIRLEACH: Cllr. Peter Keaveney
Cathaoirleach of the County of Galway

I LATHAIR FREISIN:

Baill: Comh./Cllr. T Broderick, J. Byrne, I. Canning, L. Carroll, J. Charity, D. Collins, D. Connolly, M. Connolly, G. Cronnelly, D. Ó Cualáin, J. Cuddy, S. Curley, T. Ó Curraoin, Albert Dolan, G. Donuhue, D. Geraghty, S. Herterich Quinn, M. Hoade, C. Keaveney, D. Killilea, M. Kinane, G. King, P. Mac an Iomaire, M. Maher, E. Mannion, J. McClearn, K. McHugh Farag, A. McKinstry, P. Murphy, A. Reddington, P. Roche, J. Sheridan, N. Thomas, S. Walsh and T. Welby.

Oifigh: Mr. J. Cullen, Chief Executive, Mr. M. Owens, Director of Services, Mr. L. Hanrahan, Director of Services, Mr. D. Pender, Director of Services, Mr. G. Mullarkey, Head of Finance, Ms. J Brann, Meetings Administrator, Ms. V. Loughnane-Moran Senior Planner, Mr. B. Dunne Senior Executive Planner, Mr. B. Corcoran, Executive Planner, Ms. A. Power, Senior Staff Officer, Ms. B. Ryan, Staff Officer, Ms. C. Walsh, Assistant Staff Officer Ms. E. Hoffman, Clerical Officer

ITEM NO.6 TO CONSIDER THE COUNTY GALWAY JOINT POLICING COMMITTEE ANNUAL REPORT 2021.

3930

The Annual Report was published on the Extranet prior to the meeting.

As Chair of the JPC Cllr. Cuddy presented the Annual Report. He commended the committee for their work and commitment. He noted there was no public meeting during the past year due to Covid, but he expected to have one later in the year.

On the **PROPOSAL** of Cllr. Carroll **SECONDED** by Cllr. Hoade the County Galway Joint Policing Committee Annual Report 2021 was **NOTED**.

The following queries and points were raised by Cllrs. Byrne, Killilea, Hoade, Carroll, Maher, Roche, Reddington, Herterich Quinn, Mannion, Donohue, Curley, Broderick, Collins, King, C. Keaveney, Sheridan, Ó Curraoin, Geraghty, Canning and M. Connolly.

- There is a need to increase public awareness of the waste presentation byelaws.
- Gardai are doing great work in terms of drug seizures. Concern there are no follow up supports in place for people struggling with drug addiction.
- Concern that out of the 3,781 newly graduated Gardai only 73 were sent to Galway.
- The drugs issue is a much bigger than illegal dumping.
- Acknowledge the cooperation of the Gardai and their engagement with Councillors.
- CCTV legislation needs to be expedited. We need to be able to name and charge the people responsible illegal dumping.
- Despite cleanups in certain locations, dumping of large items happens again and again. CCTV would ensure such cleanups are effective.
- Community Alert is not working properly. In certain areas the messages aren't going out due to lack of Garda resources.
- Too much emphasis on litter in the JPC. We need to highlight the issue of domestic violence. It was a huge issue during Covid. No reference to it in the report.
- SIPTU have called for an overhaul of domestic waste collection. Could the local authority take back control of the waste service?

- We have a process in place regarding the inspections for disposal. We need to discuss the consequences if no waste disposal in place to tackle the problem fully.
- There is a drugs pandemic. Galway will never be drug-free, but Galway County Council need to send a clear message it does not condone drug taking.
- Compliment the JPC for tackling the issue of cyber bullying which can have huge mental health effects.
- Compliment the JPC on the illegal substance abuse initiative - Gardaí speaking in schools and the universities.
- When it comes to illegal dumping and substance abuse, we are over dependent on community voluntary sector to help tackle the issues.
- Suggest a need for greater public awareness with signage regarding drugs in the hospitality sector.
- Need to revert to glass bottles and paper bags to combat the litter issue.
- The Government need to take a lead regarding dumping on people's property.
- Compliment community groups carrying out work the council don't have funding to do.
- In terms of substance abuse the Gardai need to be more pro-active in following up the suppliers.

Cllr. Welby advised Members a machine marking scheme similar to one in operation in Monaghan County Council was currently being run in his area. He noted there was a 70% reduction in burglaries in the areas it was used in Monaghan. Cllr. Welby suggested the scheme should be rolled out in all Municipal Districts in an effort to combat crime. He noted the *Dot Peen* marking machine was purchased by Independent Councillors a number of months ago, owners are charged €5 to mark their equipment or machinery, the money raised is used for fundraising.

Cllr. Dolan raised concerns that Council owned property would be used for fundraising. He queried the oversight in relation to the scheme. In response Cllr. Welby clarified the machine was purchased through the budgetary process noting the scheme in place at that time when some Members allocated their individual Training and Conference monies to community groups. He confirmed Galway County Council did not own the machine purchased.

Cllr. Cuddy addressed issues raised as follows:

- The issue of domestic violence is an area of priority for the JPC.
- More and more specialist units are being created to tackle specific crime issues effectively. These units require staff resulting in less guards in the communities.
- The drug addiction center in Merlin Park, Galway was burnt down.
- The waste disposal companies are providing a very good service. Indiscriminate dumping is the problem. Council waste collection is not the solution.

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

- Increasing the awareness of the Waste Presentation byelaws is part of Environment Sections efforts.
- There is no possibility of the council resuming the control of the waste service. It would lead us into direct competition with well-established companies. The absence of a Regulator in the waste market raises difficulties. Tendering of routes would be required to ensure waste collectors provide a service in all areas and not just the profitable ones.
- Revised legislation regarding CCTV use is expected in the second quarter of this year.

**ITEM NO.7 TO CONSIDER AND IF DEEMED APPROPRIATE ADOPT THE
GALWAY COUNTY COUNCIL SERVICE DELIVERY PLAN 2022, IN
ACCORDANCE WITH SECTION 134(A) OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 2001
(AS AMENDED).**

3931

Draft Annual Service Delivery Plan 2022 was published on the Extranet prior to the meeting.

Mr. Owens informed Members the Annual Service Delivery Plan outlined under the headings of the Strategic Goals of the Corporate Plan the Business Actions and the associated target dates and service levels based on the resources available for 2022 for service delivery.

On the **PROPOSAL** of Cllr. Byrne **SECONDED** by Cllr. Collins it was **AGREED** to **ADOPT** the Galway County Council Service Delivery Plan 2022, in accordance with Section 134(a) of the Local Government Act 2001 (as amended).

The following queries and points were raised by Cllrs. Byrne, Hoade, Reddington, Cuddy, and Geraghty

- We need a discussion on the Fire Service provided in County Galway. Other local authorities operate differently. Suggest the Fire Service could provide medical services prior to ambulances arrival on the scene of an accident.
- Suggest we need to discuss the legacy of Galway 2020.
- Each service department need adequate staffing resources to carry out service delivery. Any proposals regarding staffing levels?
- In relation to the Fire Service, where fire brigades attend from two bordering local authorities is there a requirement to pay both Fire Services?
- Clarification sought on who is responsible for paying Fire Services when called to an accident, the caller or the person involved in the accident?
- The community groups don't have enough money for the upkeep of the playgrounds. Can we allocate some funding?

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

- The Fire Services are not a medical response service. While they do assist when notified or where there are delays it is not a primary function of the Fire Service.
- Discussions are taking place regarding charges for Fire Services in border areas. An update will be provided when further information is available.
- The Fire Service bill is charged to the individual who requires the service or benefits from the service. Calls are generally made in good faith.

Members Queries were responded to as follows by the Chief Executive

- Regarding staff resources, the number of staff is dictated largely by the budget. Last year provision was made for more staff in the Budget 2022. It was nowhere near enough to ensure services are provided to the levels required.
- Additional staff have been provided in some areas through the provision of direct funding for staff e.g. Housing and Active Travel. There are other areas in the organisation that are understaffed.

ITEM NO.8 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).

3932

Report dated the 15th February was published on the Extranet prior to the meeting.

On the **PROPOSAL** of Cllr. Hoade **SECONDED** by Cllr. McClearn it was **AGREED** to authorise Cllr. Roche to attend Celtic Conferences '*Housing For All. How will it help people find homes?*' at O'Donovan's Hotel, Clonakilty, Co. Cork. 21st – 23rd January 2022. (Retrospective Approval).

ITEM NO.9 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).

3933

Report dated the 15th February was published on the Extranet prior to the meeting.

On the **PROPOSAL** of Cllr. King **SECONDED** by Cllr. Geraghty it was **AGREED** to authorise:

- Cllrs. O Curraoin, Herterich Quinn, Welby and Hoade to attend AILG Module 1 '*Elected Member's Personal Safety and Risk*' at Mullingar Park Hotel, Co. Westmeath on 17th February 2022. (Retrospective Approval)
- Cllrs Kinane, McClearn and Roche to attend AILG – Module 1 '*Elected Member's Personal Safety and Risk*' at The Clayton Silver Springs Hotel, Co. Cork on 19th February 2022. (Retrospective Approval)

ITEM NO.10 TO CONSIDER THE MANAGEMENT REPORT – FEBRUARY 2022 IN ACCORDANCE WITH SECTION 136(2) OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 2001 (AS AMENDED).

3934

Report dated the 25th February was published on the Extranet prior to the meeting.

On the **PROPOSAL** of Cllr. Mannion **SECONDED** by Cllr. Geraghty the Management Report – February 2022 in accordance with section 136(2) of the Local Government Act 2001 (as amended) was **NOTED**.

The following queries and points were raised by Cllrs. Byrne, Hoade, Welby, McKinstry, Sheridan, Cuddy and Carroll

- Will Approved Housing Bodies (AHB) reach their target to deliver up to 40% of social housing. The Affordable Housing Bill drafted suggests Affordable Housing is only suitable where the price of residential property is very high.
- How many extra housing staff are to be made available.
- Any update on appointment of Town Centre First Officer recently announced.
- Request a report on litter enforcement cases setting out details of the number of cases brought to court and the outcome of the cases. A lot of cases go to court and don't get decisions that merits the time spent on them. Chronic enforcement issues don't get the attention they require.
- Consideration should be given to hiring a marine specialist for work on projects such as Inis Oirr Pier, bylaws and foreshore licences. There is a lack of expertise in the council which leads to delays when we need to hire specialists.
- An Aquatic Engineer could deal marine and freshwater issues.
- Request for update from the Department on an increase in the funding base for Galway County Council.
- Request for update on the provision of social housing in the Council's site in Baile Chláir.

Members Queries were responded to as follows by Mr. Hanrahan

- Housing have started a series of meetings with the AHBs. They are fully committed to increasing their number of units, but it will take time.
- The location of affordable housing will have to be assessed on a case by case basis. We can't build affordable housing where it cost less to buy the house in the private sector than we can sell it. With current prices a lot of areas will be covered by the affordable housing scheme.
- An additional 13 staff have been approved by the Department of Housing for the Housing Capital Programme.
- Town Centre First Officers will be appointed in each local authority. The Department will formally set out details regarding their role, the type of work to be undertaken and the schemes they will oversee. It will be agreed with CCMA.

- The Street Enhancement Scheme deadline has been extended until April. A lot of money not drawn down at this stage. The deadline won't be extended.
- Regarding Baile Chláir, Housing are finalising the designs with consultants at the moment and looking at the affordable social mix and costs. The application to An Bord Pleanála will be ready coming weeks.

Members Queries were responded to as follows by Mr. Pender

- Regarding the Active Travel posts a Senior Executive Engineer has been appointed. There are two Executive Engineering posts - one has been filled and interviews are completed for the other. An administrative position must be filled.
- Regarding the Inis Oirr Foreshore Licence we have submitted a pre application to the Department. We await a response and cannot proceed any further.

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

- Regarding a report on enforcement cases there is a limited amount of information that can be provided in the Management Report. It will be reviewed by CPG.
- Regarding a marine planner it is the role of the Chief Executive to engage whatever staff are needed to deliver the functions of the organisation including specialist staff. The Directors of Services advise on what the requirements are in the relevant areas. The requirements are becoming more complex.
- Regarding additional base line funding from the Department, we have written to them formally on a number of occasions explaining how far behind every other local authority we are, relative to the size and population. We are in constant engagement with the Department but to date there is no commitment that we will get additional funding. There is a full review of the LPT process at the moment. A report on the review is expected by July or August.

ITEM NO.11 CHIEF EXECUTIVE'S BUSINESS & CORRESPONDENCE. 3935

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

- Letter dated 14.01.22 from Leitrim County Council. Resolution – Spina Bifida and/or Hydrancephalus.
- Letter dated 14.01.22 from Leitrim County Council. Resolution – Increase grant limits for Community Wastewater Connection Networks.
- Letter dated 17.01.22 from Sligo County Council. Resolution -All-Ireland Strategic Rail Review.
- Letter dated 17.01.22 from Waterford City & County Council. Resolution – Fulltime air sea rescue service.
- Mayors for Peace Newsflash January 2022
- Letter dated 24.01.22 from Cork County Council. Resolution – Parking spaces at schools for hidden disabilities.
- Letter dated 24.01.22 to Minister for Health Stephen Donnelly T.D. Resolution – Funding for Paediatric Orthopaedic care.
- Email dated 25.01.22 from Minister for Health Stephen Donnelly T.D. Acknowledgement – Funding for Paediatric Orthopaedic care.
- Email dated 27.01.22 from Minister for Health Stephen Donnelly T.D. Response – Funding for Paediatric Orthopaedic care.
- Email dated 03.02.22 from Minister for Health Stephen Donnelly T.D. Acknowledgement - Funding for Paediatric Orthopaedic care.
- Letter dated 25.01.22 from Sligo County Council. Resolution – HSE debt collection methods.
- Letter dated 25.01.22 to Fáilte Ireland. Resolution – Inland Fisheries Ireland motion.
- Letter dated 25.01.22 to Francis O'Donnell, CEO Inland Fisheries. Resolution – Inland Fisheries Ireland motion.
- Letter dated 17.02.22 from Inland Fisheries Ireland. Response - Inland Fisheries Ireland motion.
- Letter dated 25.01.22 to Minister Eamon Ryan. Resolution – Inland Fisheries Ireland motion.
- Letter dated 09.02.2022 from Naoise Grisewood, Private Secretary to Minister for Transport Eamon Ryan T.D. Acknowledgement- Inland Fisheries Ireland motion.

- Letter dated 25.01.22 to Eileen Ruane, DOS. Resolution - Team Limerick Clean Up Model
- Letter dated 25.01.22 to all Local Authorities. Resolution - Epilepsy Ireland re. Free Travel and Reasonable Accommodations for State Examinations.
- Letter dated 25.01.22 to Michael Moynihan T.D. Chair, Oireachtas Committee on Disability Matters. Resolution - Epilepsy Ireland re. Free Travel and Reasonable Accommodations for State Examinations.
- Email and letter dated 11.02.22 from Mairead O'Donovan, Clerk to the Joint Committee on Disability Matters. Response - Epilepsy Ireland re. Free Travel and Reasonable Accommodations for State Examinations.
- Letter dated 24.01.22 to Minister for Education, Norma Foley T.D. Resolution - Epilepsy Ireland re. Free Travel and Reasonable Accommodations for State Examinations.
- Email dated 28.01.22 from Derek Newcombe, Private Secretary to Minister for Education Norma Foley T.D. Acknowledgment – Epilepsy Ireland re. Free Travel and Reasonable Accommodations for State Examinations.
- Letter dated 25.01.22 to Minister for Rural and Community Development and Social Protection, Heather Humphreys T.D. Resolution - Epilepsy Ireland re. Free Travel and Reasonable Accommodations for State Examinations.
- Letter dated 25.01.22 to Minister for Health, Stephen Donnelly T.D. Resolution - Epilepsy Ireland re. Free Travel and Reasonable Accommodations for State Examinations.
- Email dated 04.02.22 from Miriam Rooney, Private Secretary to the Minister for Health. Acknowledgement - Epilepsy Ireland re. Free Travel and Reasonable Accommodations for State Examinations.
- Letter dated 25.01.22 to Minister for Disabilities, Anne Rabbitte T.D. Resolution - Epilepsy Ireland re. Free Travel and Reasonable Accommodations for State Examinations.
- Email dated 08.02.22 from Lavinia Davis on behalf of Minister for Disabilities Anne Rabbitte T.D. Acknowledgement – Epilepsy Ireland.
- Letter dated 15.02.22 from Adrian McLaughlin, Private Secretary on behalf of Minister for Disabilities Anne Rabbitte T.D. Acknowledgement – Epilepsy Ireland.

- Email dated 16.02.22 from Adrian McLaughlin, Private Secretary on behalf of Minister for Disabilities Anne Rabbitte T.D. Acknowledgement – Epilepsy Ireland.
- Letter dated 26.01.22 to Department of Social Protection. Resolution - Eligibility for Fás, Tus, and Rural Social Schemes.
- Letter dated 26.01.22 to Cllr. Nicholas Crossan, A.I.L.G. President. Resolution - More inclusive Regional Assembly.
- Letter dated 26.01.22 to Cllr. Micheal Anglim, Chairperson of LAMA. Resolution - More inclusive Regional Assembly.
- Letter dated 26.01.22 to David Minton, Director of NWRA. Resolution - More inclusive Regional Assembly.
- Letter dated 26.01.22 to Minister for Housing, Local Government and Heritage, Darragh O'Brien T.D. Resolution - More inclusive Regional Assembly.
- Email dated 07.02.22 from Caoimhe Barrett on behalf of Minister of State Peter Burke's Office. Acknowledgement - More inclusive Regional Assembly.
- Letter dated 31.01.22 to Minister for Environment, Climate and Communications & Transport, Eamon Ryan T.D. Resolution - Connecting Ireland Proposals for County Galway.
- Email dated 03.02.22 from Naoise Grisewood Private Secretary to Minister for Transport Eamon Ryan T.D. Acknowledgement - Connecting Ireland.
- Letter dated 31.01.22 to National Transport Authority. Resolution - Connecting Ireland Proposals for County Galway.
- Letter dated 18.02.22 from National Transport Authority. Response - Connecting Ireland Proposals for County Galway.
- Letter dated 11.02.22 from Sligo County Council. Resolution – Increase maximum grant amounts for people with a disability and older persons.
- Letter dated 17.02.22 from Tipperary County Council. Resolution – Women of Honour Campaign.
- Letter dated 22.02.22 from Clare County Council. Resolution – Licensing system for forestry.
- Letter dated 22.02.22 from Clare County Council. Resolution – Household Benefit Package.

ITEM NO.12 CATHAOIRLEACH'S BUSINESS.

3936

On the **PROPOSAL** of Cllr. McClearn **SECONDED** by Cllr. Maher the Members **AGREED** to hold a Civic Reception for the following:

- Sarsfield All Ireland Senior Camogie Club Champions 2019-2020 & 2021-2022
- Galway All Ireland Senior Camogie Champions 2021
- Kilkerrin-Clonberne All Ireland Senior Ladies Football Club Champions 2021-2022.

On the **PROPOSAL** of Cllr. Curley **SECONDED** by Cllr. Herterich Quinn the Members **AGREED** to include the Galway All Ireland Senior Camogie Champions 2019.

On the **PROPOSAL** of Cllr. Geraghty **SECONDED** by Cllr. Killilea the Members **AGREED**:

"In light of events on the world oil market and given the importance of the sustainability of food supply in Ireland. Galway County Council call on Minister Paschal Donohue to immediately suspend excise and duty on marked gas oil (agri-diesel) for the agricultural industry and kerosene home heating oil in order to protect and feed the masses. There also needs to be a significant reduction on derv (road diesel) so that the Irish country can continue to deliver services to rural and urban Ireland."

The following points were raised by Members:

- Concerns raised about the sudden hike in fuel costs which occurred almost as soon as the war in Ukraine commenced despite no actual fuel shortages.
- Concerns raised about the impact the increased fuel cost will have on farmers. It was noted that animal feed products traditionally imported from Ukraine and Russia will have to be produced here. The move to tillage will result in a greater use of machinery adding to costs.
- The fishing industry is also seriously affected with the costs of running trawlers and cargo boats increasing significantly.
- It was stressed that any reduction in VAT must benefit the consumer while ensuring it doesn't affect public resources.
- Members stressed they needed a commitment from government to cap prices this week. Suggested it may be too late after that.

ITEM NO.13 NOTICE OF MOTION

3937

On the **PROPOSAL** of Cllr. Curley and **SECONDED** by Cllr. McClearn the Members **AGREED**:

"Galway County Council calls on the Department of Housing to review the current income thresholds of those applying for social housing. The cost of living has drastically increased. For many people in genuine need of social housing, the current income thresholds mean that they are ineligible for a social house. This means that they are living in poverty despite doing their best to hold down a low-paying job."

Mr Hanrahan advised members a change I this regard could not be brought about at a local level. He confirmed the Minister was aware of the issue raised.

The following points were raised by Members:

- The very low threshold for social housing often results in all social housing going to social welfare recipients.
- Low-income workers are being discriminated against. They fall into a trap and qualify for nothing - they don't qualify for mortgages, and they don't qualify for local authority housing as they are often just over the income threshold.
- The current thresholds disincentivises work. Often it benefits people more to work less.
- A change in income thresholds is not a standalone solution. More is required.
- An increase in the threshold levels will result in an increase of numbers on the local authority housing list, this in turn will increase housing requirements.
- The different income threshold levels set for Galway City and Galway County is unfair.

ITEM NO.14 NOTICE OF MOTION

3938

Cllr. Jim Cuddy submitted the following Notice of Motion:

"that Galway County Council immediately carry out a traffic count on the N 83 and the R 381 in Claregalway to support their case to TII for the long awaited relief road for Claregalway. The traffic count should be carried out between Monday and Friday.

Back in 2002 the council identified a preferred route for such a relief road and the estimated cost at that time was in the region of 22 million euro. At that time the traffic volume going through Claregalway was in the region of 35,000 vehicles a day. The excuse for not proceeding with the relief work was that the M6 would take the traffic out of Claregalway and that simple did not happen. I do know that the Roads Department of Galway County Council are fully in support of this relief road going ahead and the preferred route has been protected in the County Development Plan. Once the traffic count is completed, I would ask that the results would be forwarded to TII and the Minister for Transport."

Cllr. Cuddy confirmed he had discussed the motion with Mr. Pender and he had received a written reply. He advised the notice of motion was being dealt with.

ITEM NO.15 NOTICE OF MOTION

3939

Cllr. Finnerty submitted the following Notice of Motion:

"that Galway County Council call on all Banks to immediately assist in setting up cashless transaction and issue Debit cards at low-cost fees, to all OAP and Credit Unions, so that they are allowed to enter to a competitive Banking market and allowed to have current account so as to be able to issue Debit/ Credit cards to their account holders. This is in response to the huge amount burglaries many with violence been carried out across the Country on our senior citizens. I ask this motion be circulated to all local Authorities across the Country. I ask it be forward to our Finance ministers and our minister for Justice"

This item was deferred to the March Plenary Meeting.

ITEM NO.1 CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES OF THE FOLLOWING MEETINGS

3940

(b) Minutes of Special Meeting held on 6th, 10th, 13th, 17th, 20th December 2021 and the 5th, 6th, 7th, 10th, 11th, 12th and 13th January 2022.

Minutes of Special Meeting were published in Extranet prior to meeting.

- On the **PROPOSAL** of Cllr. Mannion **SECONDED** by Cllr. McKinstry the minutes of the of Special Meeting held on 6th December 2021 were **AGREED**.

With respect to the Special Meeting held on 10th December 2021 Cllr. C. Keaveney sought clarification on what he described as inconsistencies between what was decided at the meeting and what was included in the Chief Executive's Report to the OPR. Specifically, he sought an explanation on how the Members voted to have 1.399 ha zoned at the meeting and how it appeared reduced to 0.927 ha. He considered this was not accurate representation of the decision made at that meeting.

In response, Mr. Owens advised it was important to distinguish between Minutes of Meeting and the Chief Executive's Report sent to OPR, and Material Alterations. He advised the Minutes were presented as an accurate record of what happened at the Meeting for the consideration of the Members and approval with or without amendment. He advised that the OPR Report was in respect of the OPR recommendations. It outlined the Members reasons/rationale for not accepting the Chief Executive's recommendations.

Cllr. C. Keaveney said that he had submitted an email to Forward Planning requesting clarification and said no rationale had been given. He queried why the amendment regarding the amount of land was changed.

In response, Mr. Owens said his understanding of Cllr. C. Keaveney's query in relation to flooding was in relation to the land at the rear of National School in Baile Chláir where a motion was brought forward by the Athenry/Oranmore Members. He advised that he had reverted back and provided a map of the relevant zoning and also a map of flood zoned area that indicated that land zoned was not within a flood zone.

Mr. Owens stated that there was a motion brought forward by the Athenry/Oranmore Members and they provided a map with this and also a map of flood zoning. He advised that the Forward Planning Team were available to answer any query any Member had on this. He again advised that the purpose of the Minutes was to review them in terms of accuracy and not for the purpose of revisiting decisions or reopening the debate.

- On the **PROPOSAL** of Cllr. Reddington **SECONDED** by Cllr. McHugh Farag the minutes of the of Special Meeting held on 10th December 2021 were **AGREED**.
- On the **PROPOSAL** of Cllr. Carroll **SECONDED** by Cllr. McKinstry the minutes of the of Special Meeting held on 13th December 2021 were **AGREED**.

With respect to the Special Meeting on 17th December 2021 Cllr. Walsh advised he had emailed proposed amendments to the draft minutes to Mr. Owens. Mr. Owens acknowledged receipt of Cllr. Walsh's submission immediately prior to the meeting and the proposed amendments were presented via teams for ease of reference for all Members.

Cllr. Broderick refuted a statement attributed to him in the proposed amendments regarding Cllr. Walsh and Roscahill. Cllr. Broderick advised that he was unaware of the proposed amendments until they were presented. He expressed concern that the minutes could be amended to attribute a statement to him without consultation. He requested the item be deferred to allow him time to seek independent legal advice.

Cllr. Welby disputed the contents of the proposed amendments put forward by Cllr. Walsh. He considered substantial changes had been made to the original text of the draft minutes of the Special Meeting on 17th December 2021. He stressed that the proposed amendments presented were not a transcript of the meeting. He refuted saying "Cllr. Walsh broke the law" but agreed he had queried if Cllr. Walsh had any conflict of interest. He expressed concern that the minutes would be amended to include things that were not actually said.

Cllr. Walsh said he had given an accurate account of the meeting of the 17th December in the proposed amendment. He refuted any suggestion that it was made up and noted he had verified his account with six other Members who were willing to swear affidavits on it. He said that both himself and his family had suffered as a result of what had transpired at the meeting on the 17th December 2021. Cllr. Walsh said he was agreeable to removing the reference to Cllr. Broderick in the proposed amendment. He said while Cllr. Broderick's comment had led to the discussion that followed it was not relevant to it in any other way. In relation to the draft minutes presented Cllr. Walsh said he was entitled to a right of reply, particularly to the minute querying if he had a conflict of interest.

In response to a query regarding the availability of a recording of the meeting Mr. Owens confirmed there was no recording and clarified that Standing Orders prohibited the recording of a meetings. He advised Members that the Executive had prepared the draft minutes as an accurate record of the decisions taken. It was a matter for the members to accept them with or without amendments.

Mr. Owens clarified for members his engagement with Cllrs. Walsh and Welby in relation to the matter. He noted Cllr. Walsh had raised concerns about a particular item of the draft minutes of 17th December 2021 at the previous meeting on 28th February 2022. Mr. Owens agreed to review the shorthand notes of the minutes and transcribe them to text. He provided Cllrs. Walsh and Welby with an exact transcript of the shorthand notes taken. He confirmed this was the extent of his engagement with both Members on this matter prior to the meeting. Regarding the availability of the document submitted by Cllr. Walsh in relation to the minutes and presented to Members he confirmed he had received it just prior to the meeting. It was displayed on screen for the benefit of the members to see the proposed amendments by Cllr. Walsh.

The Chief Executive advised the Members that the minutes were not meant to be used as a form of adjudication on who said what. They were not intended to be a verbatim account of what was said. He said he was satisfied that the minutes as presented reflected an accurate record of the decisions taken on all items in relation to County Development Plan.

A number of Members wished to have the item dealt with on the day. It was considered a deferral would resolve nothing as there was no further means of clarifying what was said. It was suggested the wording in conflict was removed from the minutes to allow agreement or that both Members would withdraw their statements. It was also suggested that both Members should sit down to resolve their issues.

Cllr. Killilea proposed Members vote on the amendment presented. A number of Members voiced concerns about being asked to determine what was said in a dispute between two or three members at a meeting held over a month ago. Cllr. Broderick stressed that what he supposedly said should not be decided by a vote. He requested a deferral of the item to allow him to seek a legal opinion.

Cllr. Welby asked that a transcript of the shorthand notes taken at the Special Meeting of 17th December 2021 in relation to this issue would be circulated to all Members. He confirmed he received a copy from Mr. Owens at the weekend and confirmed he made one small amendment. In the event of a vote he considered Members should see the original text and the amended text. Cllr. Welby confirmed he was happy to have his reply to Mr. Owens with his amendment circulated to Members also.

The Cathoirleach agreed the text should be circulated and noted a deferral would allow Member's time to read it and reflect on it.

- On the **PROPOSAL** of Cllr. Byrne **SECONDED** by Cllr. C. Keaveney the Members **AGREED** to defer confirmation of the minutes of Special Meeting on 17th December 2021.

Mr. Owens noted the Members decision to defer the item for further consideration. He advised Members that the issue surrounding discussions would not impact the statutory process in relation to the County Development Plan. He sought confirmation from the Members that the draft minutes presented reflected an accurate record of the decision made at the Special Meeting on 17th December 2021. He said it was important to continue the Statutory Process in relation to the County Development Plan and noted formal adoption of Minutes could be agreed at a later stage.

- On the **PROPOSAL** of Cllr. Walsh **SECONDED** by Cllr. Killilea the Members **AGREED** to amend the minutes of the Special Meeting on 17th December 2021 to insert the table 'RH2' in place of table 'RH1' on page 7.
- On the **PROPOSAL** of Cllr. Broderick **SECONDED** by Cllr. Killilea the minutes of the of Special Meeting held on 20th December 2021 were **AGREED**.
- On the **PROPOSAL** of Cllr. McKinstry **SECONDED** by Cllr. Geraghty the minutes of the of Special Meeting held on 5th January 2022 were **AGREED** subject to the following amendment by Comh. O' Cualáin: on p.43 & p.50 Comh. O' Curraoin proposed the 15m setback in Bearná not Comh. O' Cualáin.

Cllr. Welby said he had an issue regarding the minutes of the Special Meeting held on 6th and 7th January 2022. Mr. Owens sought clarification that the amendment related to comments as opposed to the process or decisions made on those dates. Cllr. Welby confirmed it was a minor detail which related to comments made over both meetings. He confirmed his proposed amendment would not change the decisions or overall outcome of the meeting. He said he would correspond with Mr. Owens on the issue as he had to leave the meeting.

- On the **PROPOSAL** of Cllr. McKinstry **SECONDED** by Cllr. Geraghty the decisions as recorded in the minutes of the of Special Meeting held on 6th January 2022 were **AGREED**.
- On the **PROPOSAL** of Cllr. McKinstry **SECONDED** by Cllr. Geraghty the decisions as recorded in the minutes of the of Special Meeting held on 7th January 2022 were **AGREED**.
- On the **PROPOSAL** of Cllr. Broderick **SECONDED** by Cllr. McKinstry the minutes of the of Special Meeting held on 10th January 2022 were **AGREED**.
- On the **PROPOSAL** of Cllr. Geraghty **SECONDED** by Cllr. Killilea the minutes of the of Special Meeting held on 11th January 2022 were **AGREED** subject to the following amendment by Cllr. Killilea: on p.129 delete the word 'Dublin'.
- On the **PROPOSAL** of Cllr. Carroll **SECONDED** by Cllr. Kinane the minutes of the of Special Meeting held on 12th January 2022 were **AGREED**.
- On the **PROPOSAL** of Cllr. M. Connolly **SECONDED** by Cllr. Hoade the minutes of the of Special Meeting held on 13th January 2022 were **AGREED**.

ITEM NO.13 VOTES OF SYMPATHY/CONGRATULATIONS

3941

A resolution of sympathy was extended to the following:

- Pauline Naughton Heavy and Tom Heavy, Moyveela, Oranmore, Co. Galway
- Johnny Healy, St. Martin's, Clorane, Athenry, Co. Galway
- Noreen McNamara, 39 Ard Aoibhin, Athenry, Galway
- Very Reverend Robert McNamara PP, The Rectory, Lisdoonvarna, Co. Clare
- Aishling Sheehy, 7 College Green, St Brigid's Road, Portumna Co. Galway.
- Feeney family, Leitra, Glenamaddy

On the **PROPOSAL** of Cllr. Killilea **SECONDED** by Cllr. M Connolly Members extended congratulations to Mr. Tommy Coleman, Foreman, Tuam Municipal District

on his retirement. Cllr. Killilea expressed the gratitude of the people of Tuam to Mr. Coleman noting in particular the huge role he played in revitalising the Palace Grounds, Tuam. Cllrs. M. Connolly, Roche and Hoade concurred with Cllr. Killilea and wished Mr. Coleman good health and happiness on his retirement. The Chief Executive acknowledged Mr. Coleman's contribution to the organisation and wished him all the very best on his retirement.

On the **PROPOSAL** of Cllr. Curley **SECONDED** by Cllr. Herterich Quinn Members extended congratulations to the Presentation College Athenry on winning the All-Ireland Senior A Camogie Title.

On the **PROPOSAL** of Cllr. McKinstry **SECONDED** by Cllr. Herterich Quinn the Members **AGREED**:

"at the end of today's meeting, we hold an emergency debate on the Ukrainian refugees and Galway's response.

- *So far just over 1900 have arrived (according to RTÉ), with 100,000 expected on UN/EU numbers (our share of 5m total; 1.5m so far). Our pro-rata share in Galway County would be 3,500 over the following weeks and months.*
- *Immediately they will be housed in hotels, army accommodation, but a longer-term answer is needed. This is unprecedented, and "it will be handled by the usual channels" is not enough.*
- *It is essentially a new town to Galway (2% increase in population), mostly women and children so likely several new schools. Likely our Draft Development Plan will need to be revisited.*
- *With hundreds arriving daily (soon thousands) we need to get started on preparations before getting formal instructions from National government, or our response will be inadequate."*

The following queries and points were raised by Cllrs. Herterich Quinn, M Conolly, Roche, Curley, Geraghty, Charity, Killilea, McKinstry Mannion, Byrne and Kinane.

- In addition to our own housing emergency, we have war refugees needing housing. We need to change regulations regarding building and waste-water facilities to allow construction without delay.
- We need information from Government as soon as possible on where to direct people who wish to assist. There is a huge level of goodwill towards the people of Ukraine. We need to harness that, and we need to act fast.
- Concern there may be a negative response to any efforts to host refugees. We need to show generosity and the greatest level of respect and hospitality towards them. The children will have school needs medical needs transport needs. We need organise for those needs in a pragmatic way and expedite the process. We need to make provisions that will last for five years
- In terms of needs we need to look at the demographic of the refugees- predominantly women boys and girls under the age of 18. Housing, women's health, education, and jobs will be main areas need. If managed correctly everyone will benefit from the situation. It needs to be coordinated more quickly and it will require huge investment.
- Accommodation is the most pressing issue. In the short term the local authority could acquire other accommodation for use. Suggest the use of closed down hotels and schools in good condition to get started. We need to identify those buildings that can be put into use right away.
- Many Ukrainians refugees that will come to Ireland may do so because they have family here already. Suggest a starting point to determine how many Ukrainian people are in local authority housing at the moment, contact them, establish the requirements they may have for family members coming and examine how we can assist in this way. Its an alternative to hotels and speedy solutions.
- Ukrainian refugees do not intend to stay long term. They expect to return in 12 months. Planning and organising for refugees is a job for the state agencies.
- No matter how quickly the war ends, it is optimistic to expect refugees will return in 12 months. Rebuilding after the war will take a number of years.
- The response must be a Government and European led response. These refugees are European so direct provision has been ruled out. In terms of

people taking refugees into their homes vetting will be required on both sides in such cases.

- Suggest a dedicated meeting to examine how we can assist in this regard.
- The Council needs to support everyone coming in by removing all red tape.

Members Queries were responded to as follows by the Chief Executive

- The humanitarian crisis unfolding in Ukraine is a desperate situation and we will have a role to play. We need to be careful we don't do anything that's not a part of a coordinated plan.
- At a national level there is an intergovernmental approach been taken to plan a response. They are focusing on an immediate accommodation needs of people from Ukraine coming to the country and will decide what role the local authority will play. It will be a comprehensive approach dealing with issues such as amendments to planning regulations etc., where people should go and what social supports are required.
- All 31 local authorities must act in a coordinated way. We must be part of this integrated approach and response.
- In relation to requests of offers to provide assistance, the local authority have been asked to provide that information to the Irish Red Cross to make sure the assistance being provided can be matched to those who will benefit from it.

The Cathoirleach agreed in this situation it was best to follow a coordinated approach as set out by Government. He said it was reassuring all Members were fully supportive of any measures required to assist in this humanitarian crises. He said whatever is required Galway County Council won't be found wanting. He thanked everyone who had assisted to date organising collections and supplies for the people of Ukraine.

Chriochnaigh an Cruinniú Ansin.

Submitted, Signed and Approved

Cathaoirleach:

Pete Kavaney

Date:

28/3/2022