

**COMHAIRLE CHONTAE NA GAILLIMHE**  
**MINUTES OF MONTHLY MEETING OF GALWAY COUNTY COUNCIL**  
**Held at ÁRAS AN CHONTAE, PROSPECT HILL**  
**Monday, 26<sup>th</sup> September 2022 at 11.00am**

**CATHAOIRLEACH:** Cllr. Michael 'Moegie' Maher  
Cathaoirleach of the County of Galway

**I LATHAIR FREISIN:**

**Baill:** Comh./Cllr. T Broderick, J. Byrne, L. Carroll, J. Charity, D. Collins, D. Connolly, M. Connolly, G. Cronnelly, D. Ó Cualáin, S. Curley, A. Dolan, G. Donohue, G. Finnerty, D. Geraghty, S. Herterich Quinn, M. Hoade, D. Kelly, C. Keaveney, P. Keaveney, D. Killilea, M. Kinane, P. Mac an Iomaire, J. McClearn, 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. L. Hanrahan, Director of Services, Mr. M. Owens, Director of Services, Mr D. Pender, Director of Services, Ms Eileen Ruane, Director of Services, Mr A Farrell, Director of Services, Ms. A. Fenton, Head of Finance, Ms. J Brann, Meetings Administrator, Ms L. Keady, Administrative Officer, Ms. B. Ryan, Staff Officer, Ms. E. Hoffman, Clerical Officer. Mr P. Scannell, Clerical Officer,

**Thosnaigh an cruinniú leis an paidir.**

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

**4023**

On the **PROPOSAL** of Cllr. Carroll **SECONDED** by Cllr. Finnerty the minutes of Monthly Plenary Meeting held on 25<sup>th</sup> July 2022 were **AGREED**.

**ITEM NO.2 CONSIDERATION OF REPORTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS** **4024**

On the **PROPOSAL** of Cllr. McKinsty **SECONDED** by Cllr. Sheridan the minutes of the Climate Change and Biodiversity Strategic Policy Committee held on 16<sup>th</sup> March 2022 were **NOTED**.

On the **PROPOSAL** of Cllr. Hoade **SECONDED** by Cllr. Broderick the minutes of the Economic Development & Enterprise Strategic Policy Committee held on 5<sup>th</sup> April 2022 were **NOTED**.

On the **PROPOSAL** of Cllr. Byrne **SECONDED** by Cllr. Walsh the minutes of the Minutes of Housing Strategic Policy Committee held on 1<sup>st</sup> June 2022 were **NOTED**

On the **PROPOSAL** of Cllr. Roche **SECONDED** by Cllr. Byrne the minutes of Corporate Policy Group held on 24<sup>th</sup> June 2022 were **NOTED**.

On the **PROPOSAL** of Cllr. Collins **SECONDED** by Cllr. Roche the recommendation from the Corporate Policy Group (CPG) that Galway County Council hold a Civic Reception to honour Dr. Ronan Glynn and the Lackagh Ceoltas Group was **NOTED**.

Cllr. Thomas noted his opposition to holding a Civic Reception for Dr. Ronan Glynn. He considered it wasn't appropriate for Galway County Council to honour Dr. Glynn until after the ongoing investigation/review into Ireland's handling of Covid-19 was concluded.

The names of several individuals were proposed by Members to be considered for a Civic Reception. The Cathoirleach advised Members that any person or group Members wished to have included for consideration should be submitted from the Municipal District to the CPG.

**ITEM NO.3. TO CONSIDER REPORT UNDER SECTION 183 OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 2001 ON THE DISPOSAL OF 0.18 HECTARES OF LAND AT KILLAAN, WOODLAWN, BALLINASLOE CO. GALWAY.** 4025

*Statutory Notice issued in accordance with section 183(1)(b) and report dated 5<sup>th</sup> September 2022 was published on the Extranet prior to the meeting.*

On the **PROPOSAL** of Cllr. Broderick **SECONDED** by Cllr. M Connolly it was **AGREED** to dispose of 0.18 hectares of land at Killaan, Woodlawn, Ballinasloe Co. Galway in accordance with the terms of the Statutory Notice dated 5<sup>th</sup> September 2022.

**ITEM NO. 4. TO CONSIDER VARYING THE BASIC RATE OF THE LOCAL PROPERTY TAX IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE LOCAL PROPERTY TAX (LOCAL ADJUSTMENT FACTOR) REGULATIONS 2014.** 4026

*Report dated 20<sup>th</sup> September 2022 was published on the Extranet prior to the meeting.*

The Chief Executive gave an overview of the Local Property Tax (Local Adjustment Factor) Report. He stated that under Section 20 of the Finance (Local Property Tax) Act 2012, as amended, a local authority may vary the rate of Local Property Tax by a maximum of +/- 15%. He informed Members that the 2022 Regulations no longer referred to a yearly decision but instead to a period as specified, meaning elected members could now make a local adjustment factor for a period of their choosing. He said it was necessary that the Revenue Commissioners be notified of the Local Adjustment Factor by the 15<sup>th</sup> October.

The Chief Executive advised there were certain matters that the local authority must have regard to. These included an estimation of income and expenditure, the financial position of the local authority and an estimation of the financial effect of implementing a local adjustment factor. He referred the Members to Table 1 of the report where the relevant figures were set out.

He advised Members that the timing of the report predated the preparation of the council's annual budget and said the figures presented were based on the adjusted budget for 2022 together with predicted unavoidable expenditure and income

changes that would arise in 2023/2024. He referred the Members to Table No. 2 of the report which gave details of those expenditure and income adjustments which showed a potential deficit of €9m for 2023.

He added that it was important to remember that current expenditure levels in County Galway were already far below those of comparable and most, local authorities. He advised there was an urgent need for additional funding for payroll and non-payroll costs so that the erosion of public services could be halted and then quickly reversed. He referred to Table No.3 in the report which set out the additional expenditure needs amounting to €12.7m, which he considered to be the absolute minimum to respond to growing demand to improve the quality of public service for a county of such size and population.

The Chief Executive referred to the summary of the financial position of the local authority which was presented in Table No.4 of the report. He advised Members that every local authority was entitled to receive a minimum of funding under the Local Property Tax allocation process, known as the baseline. He stated Galway County Council's baseline for 2023 was €14,517,890. This was unchanged from previous years.

Regarding the Variation of Local Property Tax base rate, he advised Members that the value of potential increase or decrease for every 1% of local adjustment factor was €143,623 and that an increase of 15% would yield €2,154,345 for County Galway.

He said that in estimating the effect of implementing a local adjustment factor it was a requirement to look at the potential impact on a liable person. He said he was very conscious that the impact of increases in energy costs and inflation were being felt right across the community, in business and in households where the cost of living continued to rise. While not wishing to add to that, he said it was still necessary to adequately resource the provision of the public services that business, communities and households rely on. He referred Members to Tables No.'s 6, 7 & 8 in the report which among other things, showed that for 43% of householders a 15% increase should equate to €13.50 per annum or €0.26 per week.

Referring to staffing resources he said members would be aware from previous frequent discussions on the resources available to the Council that not only was

Galway County Council significantly underfunded but it also had one of the lowest staff ratios by reference to the size and population of the County.

Following an assessment of staffing needs at that time, he began in 2021 the first phase of a plan to bring on board resources in several areas including climate change, waste enforcement, active travel, and the strengthening of the municipal districts. He said that workforce planning was a dynamic process reflecting priorities and opportunities at any given time and it had since become necessary to provide additional resources in other high pressure work areas as the need arose, such as planning, housing capital, rural water, health and safety, tourism and so on.

The Chief Executive said that towns and villages were at the heart of the social and economic activity of the County and over the last few years, the council had sought to maximise investment through initiatives such as the Town and Village Renewal Scheme, Rural Regeneration and Development Fund, Urban Regeneration and Development Fund, Clár, Outdoor Recreation and Infrastructure and Street Enhancement Scheme, Active Travel, and others.

He said that under the Rural Regeneration programme alone, the council had secured allocations totalling €10.99M to date. He said the Council had secured approximately €5.2m under the Town and Village Scheme over the last number of years with a further €1.2m sought. Funding in the amount of €2.93m had also been secured under CLÁR with a further €3.7m secured under ORIS to date. He referred to Table 9 of the report which set out a sample of the locations and projects that had benefited under these programmes.

He went on to say that while an increase in the local rate of property tax was needed to support the unavoidable cost increases referenced earlier, it was important that it was also used to leverage additional funding for programmes and projects such as those listed which have direct positive and meaningful benefit countywide and at Municipal District level.

He gave the example that if the council decided to assign €1m to support such development opportunities, then at a matched funding rate of 20%, that €1m it would have the potential to leverage €5m per annum, amounting to an investment of €10m over the period 2023 and 2024. He said this would enable projects of significance to

be advanced that would have tangible benefits to the Municipal Districts and the county as a whole.

In conclusion, the Chief Executive said there was a fundamental weakness in the council's baseline funding that must be addressed centrally in order for the council to reach the spending and service level of comparable local authorities. He noted that significant efforts had been made at political and executive level to press this case and he remained hopeful of an uplift to the baseline in due course.

He said, however, that the Council could not continue to ignore that those local authorities against whom we sought comparison in support of our case, routinely raise additional revenue through variation in the local rate of property tax.

He said the Council could not ignore the fundamental responsibility every local authority had to raise locally determined income through commercial rates, charges and the local property tax to assist in meeting its basic spending requirements and he recommended the council approve a 15% increase in the local property tax rate for 2023 and 2024.

Cllr. Byrne thanked the Chief Executive for the report. He referred to the underfunding of the council and the need for an adjustment to the council's baseline funding. He said he felt it was not the time to increase the Local Property Tax in the current economic climate.

Cllr. Byrne **PROPOSED** *"that we make no change to the basic rate of the local Property Tax in county Galway for the year 2023"*. Cllr. Welby **SECONDED** the proposal.

Cllr. Welby agreed with Cllr. Byrne, he considered the economic environment did not lend itself to an increase to the LPT. This was supported by Cllr Hoade.

Cllr. McKinstry noted that while there didn't appear to be support for an increase to the LPT, he said that public services were still vital and desperately needed. Cllr. Kinane acknowledged the Council was underfunded and understood that an increase in the Local Property Tax wouldn't be supported at this time. Cllr. McClearn said that it was important that the council have funding to support projects but that any increase in LPT would only help to bridge what was in effect a budget gap. Cllr. Donohue

enquired if the work undertaken by Dr. Turley and Mr. McNena of the National University of Galway was being supported by the council to the Department.

In response, the Chief Executive said that the council had strongly recommended the work of Dr. Turley and Mr. McNena and had communicated this to the Department.

Cllr. Charity submitted an amendment to Cllr. Byrne's proposal, he **PROPOSED**:

*"That there be a 0.01% reduction in Local property tax for the next 2 years effectively leaving the basic rate in place for the remainder of the current Council's lifetime."*

The amendment was **SECONDED** by Cllr. Cronnelly. The Cathaoirleach proceeded to take a vote on the amendment and the result was as follows:

**For 11**

|                 |                       |                 |
|-----------------|-----------------------|-----------------|
| Cllr. Charity   | Cllr. D. Connolly     | Cllr. Cronnelly |
| Comh. Ó Cualáin | Cllr. Dolan           | Cllr. Donohue   |
| Cllr. Geraghty  | Cllr. Herterich Quinn | Cllr. Kelly     |
| Cllr. Kinane    | Cllr. Thomas          |                 |

**Against 18**

|                   |                      |                   |
|-------------------|----------------------|-------------------|
| Cllr. Byrne       | Cllr. Carroll        | Cllr. Collins     |
| Cllr. M. Connolly | Cllr. Curley         | Cllr. Finnerty    |
| Cllr. Hoade       | Cllr. C. Keaveney    | Cllr. P. Keaveney |
| Cllr. Killilea    | Comh. Mac an Iomaire | Cllr. Maher       |
| Cllr. McClearn    | Cllr. McKinsty       | Cllr. Murphy      |
| Cllr. Reddington  | Cllr. Roche          | Cllr. Welby       |

**Abstain 2**

|                 |                          |
|-----------------|--------------------------|
| Cllr. Broderick | Cllr. Dr Francis Parsons |
|-----------------|--------------------------|

**Absent 8**

|                |               |                    |
|----------------|---------------|--------------------|
| Cllr. Canning  | Cllr. Cuddy   | Comh. Ó Curraoin   |
| Cllr. King     | Cllr. Mannion | Cllr. McHugh Farag |
| Cllr. Sheridan | Cllr. Walsh   |                    |

The Cathaoirleach confirmed the amendment was not carried.

On the **PROPOSAL** of Cllr. Byrne **SECONDED** by Cllr. Welby it was **AGREED** not to vary the basic rate of the Local Property Tax in accordance with the Local Property Tax (Local Adjustment Factor) Regulations 2014.

**ITEM NO. 5. TO CONSIDER THE DRAFT STANDING ORDERS REGULATING PROCEEDINGS AND MEETINGS OF THE PLENARY COUNCIL** **4027**

*Draft Standing Orders published on the Extranet prior to the meeting.*

The following queries and points were raised by Cllrs. Herterich Quinn, McClearn, McKinsty, Reddington, Murphy, Byrne, Geraghty, Curley, Dr. Parsons, Killilea, Thomas, Hoade, Charity, C. Keaveney, Donohue, Sheridan, Welby, Kinane and P. Keaveney:

- Members need to be clear on the difference between “hybrid” and “remote” meetings. The wording of the Standing Orders needs to reflect that.
- Hybrid meetings cannot be seen as a solution for people who have difficulties attending meetings in person due to work commitments. It is not possible to attend work and attend a Council meeting remotely at the same time.
- Hybrid meetings will allow Members, restricted from attending in person, to be fully present at a meeting without being in the Chamber. Members should be visible on screen if attending a meeting remotely.
- Council meetings are on too early in the day for members who are working. Hybrid meetings won’t resolve that issue.
- Members made a commitment to represent their constituents. One meeting a month is not a huge requirement. There should be a cap on the number of hybrid meetings a Member attends remotely. Provision could be made for exceptional circumstances.
- Unless there is a cap on the number of hybrid meetings a person can attend remotely, there is a possibility of an empty chamber with no one attending in person.
- Attending plenary meetings is an important aspect of a Member’s work. It facilitates all Members meeting in person to discuss issues, to learn and to work together.
- All Members should be required to attend the AGM and LPT meetings in person.



- The hybrid option may assist to encourage increased participation in local politics. It may help increase numbers of women participating in politics.
- The hybrid option should be welcomed by the Executive team, allowing for more effective use of their time on the day of a plenary meeting.
- Technical difficulties arising from poor quality broadband needs to be considered.
- A hybrid option for the Municipal District and Strategic Policy Committee meetings should also be considered.
- Is all the necessary technology installed? How much has it cost?
- The hybrid option will give Members a choice and allows for more inclusive meetings.
- The technology for hybrid has been available for years. Not to avail of it would be a lost opportunity.
- The hybrid model should be trialed and followed by a review in a year.

**Members queries were responded to as follows by Mr. Owens**

- Regarding the draft Standing Orders there was extensive engagement and discussion with the Corporate Policy Group (CPG) since the 24<sup>th</sup> June. At this meeting it was agreed each group would consult and revert with amendments to CPG on 22<sup>nd</sup> July. The twelve amendments subsequently submitted were agreed at the CPG meeting held on the 2<sup>nd</sup> September. The amendments submitted are included in the draft Standing Orders presented to Plenary.
- The draft Standing Orders allow a Member to attend remotely, a max of two hybrid meetings each year. There are no special exceptions apart from Maternity Leave.
- The draft Standing Orders presented relate to Plenary meetings only. They do not cover Municipal District and Strategic Policy Committee meetings. The technology required for hybrid meetings has only been installed in the Council Chamber.
- The technology has been installed in the Chamber at a cost of approximately €40,000. One component has been delayed with an advised delivery date in December. This will affect the commencement of the livestream and hybrid meetings.

- For “remote meetings” all Members attend online. For “hybrid meetings” some Members attend in person and some members attend remotely online.

As agreement could not be reached the Cathoirleach suggested Members submit their proposals in the following two weeks, via their groupings, to the next CPG meeting. Members **AGREED** to defer the item for consideration to the October Plenary meeting following consideration of the submissions to CPG.

**ITEM NO.6. TO CONSIDER OVERDRAFT ACCOMMODATION FOR THE 12 MONTHS 1 JANUARY 2023 TO THE 31 DECEMBER 2023.** 4028

*Report dated 20<sup>th</sup> September was published on the Extranet prior to the meeting.*

On the **PROPOSAL** of Cllr. C. Keaveney **SECONDED** by Cllr M. Connolly the Overdraft Accommodation for the 12 months, 1<sup>st</sup> January 2023 to 31<sup>st</sup> December 2023 was **AGREED**.

**ITEM NO.7. REPORTS ON ACTIVITIES AND OPERATION OF BODIES ACCORDANCE WITH SECTION 141 OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 2001 ACT (AS AMENDED BY SECTION 53 OF THE 2014 ACT)** 4029

*Report dated 20<sup>th</sup> September was published on the Extranet prior to the meeting.*

On the **PROPOSAL** of Cllr. Carroll **SECONDED** by Cllr. Collins it was **AGREED** to approve reports on the activities and operation of the following bodies for the period June 2021 to May 2022 inclusive, in accordance with section 141 of the Local Government Act 2001 Act (as amended by section 53 of the 2014 act):

- (a) Lough Corrib Navigation Trustees
- (b) Northern & Western Regional Assembly
- (c) Athenry Heritage and Tourism Co. Ltd
- (d) Association of Irish Local Government
- (e) Irish Public Bodies Mutual Insurances Ltd

On the **PROPOSAL** of Cllr. M. Connolly **SECONDED** by Cllr. Roche it was **AGREED** to approve reports on the activities and operation of the following bodies for the period June 2021 to May 2022 inclusive, in accordance with section 141 of the Local Government Act 2001 Act (as amended by section 53 of the 2014 act):

- (f) Loughrea Heritage Committee
- (g) Local Authority Members Association (LAMA)
- (h) Western Inter-County Rail Committee
- (i) Galway & Roscommon Education & Training Board
- (j) Regional Health Forum Representation, West

On the **PROPOSAL** of Cllr. M. Connolly **SECONDED** by Cllr. Murphy it was **AGREED** to approve reports on the activities and operation of the following bodies for the period June 2021 to May 2022 inclusive, in accordance with section 141 of the Local Government Act 2001 Act (as amended by section 53 of the 2014 act):

- (k) Galway Rural Development Company
- (l) Comhar na nOileán Teoranta
- (m) Údarás na Gaeltachta

**ITEM NO.8. FILLING OF CASUAL VACANCY ON THE PLANNING, ENVIRONMENT, AGRICULTURE & EMERGENCY SERVICES STRATEGIC POLICY COMMITTEE** **4030**

*Report dated 20<sup>th</sup> September was published on the Extranet prior to the meeting.*

On the **PROPOSAL** of Cllr. Hoade **SECONDED** by Cllr. Curley it was **AGREED** to appoint Cllr. Herterich Quinn to the Planning, Environment, Agriculture & Emergency Services Strategic Policy Committee.

**ITEM NO.9. FILLING OF CASUAL VACANCY AS THE CHAIRPERSON ON THE COMMUNITY AND CULTURAL DEVELOPMENT STRATEGIC POLICY COMMITTEE.** **4031**

*Report dated 20<sup>th</sup> September was published on the Extranet prior to the meeting.*

On the **PROPOSAL** of Cllr. Hoade **SECONDED** by Cllr. Geraghty it was **AGREED** to appoint Cllr D. Connolly as the Chairperson on the Community and Cultural Development Strategic Policy Committee.

**ITEM NO.10 FILLING OF CASUAL VACANCY ON FORUM CONNEMARA CLG.** **4032**

*Report dated 20<sup>th</sup> September was published on the Extranet prior to the meeting.*

On the **PROPOSAL** of Cllr. Hoade **SECONDED** by Cllr. Finnerty it was **AGREED** to re-appoint Cllr. Walsh to the board of Forum Connemara CLG.

**ITEM NO.11 FILLING OF CASUAL VACANCY LOUGH CORRIB NAVIGATION TRUST** **4033**

*Report dated 20<sup>th</sup> September was published on the Extranet prior to the meeting.*

On the **PROPOSAL** of Cllr. Carroll **SECONDED** by Cllr. Collins it was **AGREED** to appoint Cllr. Reddington to the Lough Corrib Navigation Trust Committee.

**ITEM NO.12. 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).** **4034**

*Report dated 16<sup>th</sup> September was published on the Extranet prior to the meeting.*

On the **PROPOSAL** of Cllr. McClearn **SECONDED** by Cllr. Geraghty it was **AGREED** to authorise Cllr. Maher to attend AILG Module 3 '*Finalising your Development Plan – key steps and requirements from the Development Plan Guidelines*' at The Avalon House Hotel, Castlecomer, Co. Kilkenny on 18<sup>th</sup> June 2022. *(Retrospective Approval)*

On the **PROPOSAL** of Cllr. Herterich Quinn **SECONDED** by Cllr. McClearn it was **AGREED** to authorise Cllrs. Roche, O 'Curraoin, Maher and Hoade to attend AILG Module 4 '*Local Authority Audit Committees and the Governance and Oversight role of Elected Members.*' at The Allingham Arms Hotel, Bundoran on 23<sup>rd</sup> July 2022. *(Retrospective Approval)*

On the **PROPOSAL** of Cllr. Herterich Quinn **SECONDED** by Cllr. McClearn it was **AGREED** to authorise Cllrs. Kinane and Herterich Quinn to attend AILG Module 4 '*Local Authority Audit Committees and the Governance and Oversight role of Elected Members.*' at The Horse & Jockey Hotel, Thurles on 28<sup>th</sup> July 2022. *(Retrospective Approval)*

On the **PROPOSAL** of Cllr. Maher **SECONDED** by Cllr. McClearn it was **AGREED** to authorise Cllrs. Welby, King, Maher, Hoade and Roche to attend AILG '*Autumn Training Conference 2022*' at the Knightsbrook Hotel, Trim, Co. Meath on 14<sup>th</sup> to 15<sup>th</sup> September 2022 *(Retrospective Approval)*

**ITEM NO.13 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).** 4035

*Report dated 16<sup>th</sup> September was published on the Extranet prior to the meeting.*

On the **PROPOSAL** of Cllr. Roche **SECONDED** by Cllr. Hoade it was **AGREED** to authorise Cllrs. Roche and Reddington to attend the Tuam/Straubing Twinning day in Straubing, Germany on the 17<sup>th</sup> to 19<sup>th</sup> August 2022. *(Retrospective Approval)*

**ITEM NO.14 TO NOTE THE SUMMARY OF PROCEEDING OF CONFERENCES ATTENDED IN ACCORDANCE WITH SECTION 142 (5F) OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 2001 (AS AMENDED).** 4036

*Report dated 16<sup>th</sup> September was published on the Extranet prior to the meeting.*

On the **PROPOSAL** of Cllr. Roche **SECONDED** by Cllr. Hoade the Summary Of Proceeding Of Conferences attended in accordance with section 142(5f) of The Local Government Act 2001 (as amended) were **NOTED**.

**ITEM NO.15 TO CONSIDER THE MANAGEMENT REPORT – SEPTEMBER 2022 IN ACCORDANCE WITH SECTION 136(2) OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 2001 (AS AMENDED).** 4037

*Report dated 22<sup>nd</sup> September was published on the Extranet prior to the meeting.*

The Management Report – September 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, Herterich Quinn, Hoade, Charity, Collins, McClearn, Welby, Roche, Donohue, Dr. Parsons, Finnerty, Murphy and Reddington:**

- Compliment the Housing Team on the work on the Capital Housing Programme.
- Compliment the Arts Officer and all involved in Culture Night and Ceol an Fhómhair.

- Clarification sought on the deadline for submissions by relevant property owners following the revised valuations by the National Valuation Office.
- Welcome the reintroduction of pre-planning meetings. Queried if preplanning meetings can be arranged to discuss reasons for refusal for applications submitted without the benefit of a preplanning meeting during the pandemic.
- Regarding an Extension of Duration on planning approval, can an application be made on economic grounds. Clarification sought on the definition of "substantial works".
- Concerns were raised about the clarity of the reasons given for planning refusals.
- Preplanning meetings are sometimes the only option an agent can get a meeting to get clarification on the reasons for refusal.
- Clarification sought on the requirement of a landscaping plan for all one off houses.
- Compliment the Environment Section and Waste Enforcement Team on the recent enforcement checkpoints carried out in conjunction with An Garda Síochána.
- Can drone footage be used in the efforts to combat illegal dumping.
- Clarification sought on the occupancy requirement under the Croí Cónaithe scheme.
- Do we have the staff to administer the rural Croí Cónaithe refurbishment scheme?
- Concerns raised that many rural houses qualifying for the Croí Cónaithe scheme may not have the necessary wastewater treatment systems in place to allow them progress.
- Update sought on number of outstanding projects on Local Improvement Scheme.

**Members queries were responded to as follows by Mr. Hanrahan**

- The Croí Cónaithe Fund for rural properties will provide grants to the value of €30,000 or €50,000 to refurbish vacant properties for residential use. Applications will be accepted from November on.

- The properties must be owner occupied. The majority of queries to date are from people who want to renovate and rent. They won't qualify, the grant is aimed at owner occupied buildings. There is a claw back condition if the property is sold within 7 years.
- The properties will have to be in full compliance with planning and building regulations. Wastewater treatment systems and septic tanks will have to be working to the required standards.
- The Department will provide an allocation for staff to administer the scheme.

**Members queries were responded to as follows by Mr. Owens**

- Pre-Planning meetings are primarily intended to take place prior to the submission of a planning application. Where a planning application is refused the reasons for refusal are clearly outlined. Applicants and agents also have access to the planner's report which provides further details on the reasons for refusal.
- Priority for preplanning meetings must be given to applicants who have not already had the benefit of a decision or assessment of a planning application on the proposed site. In the context of resources available and in exceptional circumstances a pre-planning meeting may be facilitated where there is a significant and substantial change in a subsequent planning proposal following refusal.
- It is possible to apply for an Extension of Duration on planning if substantial works have been carried out on site. The basis of economic circumstances no longer applies.
- There is no legal definition of "substantial works". It is determined on a case-by-case basis. The cost of works already carried out on site is considered. It has been included in the Planning, Environment, Agriculture & Emergency Services Strategic Policy Committee. work programme to develop further guidance in this regard.
- Landscaping Plans are a requirement of the County Development Plan as per Development Management Standard 11. Since June all relevant planning applications must include a landscaping proposal for the site.

- A Planning Workshop to brief Planning Agents on the new County Development Plan and the e-Planning process is being organised for the 22<sup>nd</sup> November to assist them in their work.

**Members queries were responded to as follows by Mr. Pender**

- The second round of funding for the Local Improvement Scheme (LIS) will allow for 21 projects on the supplementary list to proceed. It is intended to have works completed by year end. There are 132 roads remaining on the LIS list.
- Any additional LIS funding received from the Department will be allocated to those already on this list, in order of listing. An invite to create a supplementary list will also be advertised.

**Members queries were responded to as follows by Ms. Ruane**

- The LGMA are developing a code of practice for the use of drone footage to combat illegal dumping. When completed, we can proceed to use the footage.

**Members queries were responded to as follows by Ms. Fenton**

- Proposed Valuation Certificates are currently going out to Ratepayers.
- Walk-In Clinics are organised to take place in a number of locations from the 3<sup>rd</sup> to the 7<sup>th</sup> October. Ratepayers will have the opportunity to discuss the Proposed Valuation.
- Where a ratepayer is not satisfied with the proposed valuation, they must request a review by 1<sup>st</sup> November 2022.

**ITEM NO.16. CHIEF EXECUTIVE'S BUSINESS & CORRESPONDENCE. 4038**

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

- Letter dated 27.05.22 to Minister Eamon Ryan, Environment, Climate and Communications. Resolution – Solar Panels.
- Email dated 18.08.22 from the office of the Minister for Communications, Climate Action and Environment, Eamon Ryan T.D. Response – Solar Panels.



- Email dated 07.09.22 from Anthony O'Grady, Private Secretary to Minister for Communications, Climate Action and Environment, Eamon Ryan T.D. Updated Response– Solar Panels.
- Letter dated 28.06.22 to Peter Burke T.D. Minister for Planning and Local Government. Resolution – Amendment to Section 254.
- Letter dated 03.08.22 from Peter Burke T.D. Minister for Planning and Local Government. Response – Amendment to Section 254.
- Letter dated 22.07.22 from Donegal County Council. Resolution – Review of the Rules on Inheritance Tax.
- Letter dated 26.07.22 from Wexford County Council – Provision for Long Covid Clinics is retained and expanded.
- Mayors of Peace Newsflash July 2022
- Mayors of Peace Briefing Paper 38
- Letter dated 06.08.22 from President of Mayors for Peace with Peace Declaration
- Speech dated 09.08.22 by Major of Nagasaki given at a Commemorative Ceremony in Nagasaki
- Mayors of Peace Newsflash August 2022
- Mayors of Peace Briefing Paper 39
- Comment by the President of Mayors for Peach in response to the outcome of the 10th NPT Review Conference
- Letter dated 16.09.22 from Tipperary County Council. Resolution –Additional funding for all Local Authorities in 2023
- Letter dated 16.09.22 from Mayo County Council. Resolution – Expansion of eligible criteria for Croí Cónaithe
- Letter dated 19.09.22 from Sligo County Council. Resolution – County audit of available disabled parking.
- Letter dated 19.09.22 from Sligo County Council. Resolution – Windfall tax on energy companies.

**ITEM NO. 17. CATHAOIRLEACH'S BUSINESS**

**4039**

Cllr. Thomas sought an update on the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage's €50 million scheme to help meet the wastewater collection and

treatment needs of villages and settlements without public wastewater services. In response Mr. Pender advised that two applications for Craughwell and Clarinbridge were submitted to the Department in advance of the closing date on the 15<sup>th</sup> September.

Cllr. Kinane suggested a letter from all Members in support of both villages should be submitted to the Department. Cllr. Murphy welcomed the selection of Craughwell noting it was Ireland's largest highest populated village without wastewater treatment. Cllr. Connolly stressed the amount of funding was totally inadequate for the number of wastewater systems that are required in other areas. Cllr. D. Connolly expressed disappointment that Kiltormer had not been selected. Cllr. Roche said the Council could not support two villages when so many villages were in need. He noted that any decision on selection should be based on need, in terms of pollution and not on political lobbying.

In response, Mr Pender agreed that the funding was inadequate. He clarified that the two schemes sent to the Department for consideration in county Galway were chosen based solely on a scoring scheme set out by the Department. Political lobbying played no part. He advised that only eight or ten schemes will be selected nationally. He noted there was a real possibility that neither of the Galway schemes would be selected.

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

*"that Galway County Council write to Minister Darragh O'Brien, Minister for Housing Planning and Local Government expressly stating its full support for the Craughwell and Clarinbridge wastewater collection and treatment funding proposal"*

#### **ITEM NO.18. NOTICE OF MOTION**

**4040**

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

*" To ask the Chief Executive to set out (1) the statistics on Galway County Council current housing stock that have single occupancy (2) what is Galway County Council age friendly policy in relation to "Rightsizing" (3) do Galway County Council have the housing stock in place for Rightsizing / Downsizing?"*

**The following reply issued:**

**“Statistics:**

Of the total of 2818 Galway County Council tenancies, 889 or 31% are single occupancy tenancies.

These 889 single occupancy tenancies are comprised of:

132 or 14.85% are classified as Older Persons Dwellings (OPD's)

396 or 44.54% other non OPD dwellings classified as having up to 2 bedrooms

337 or 37.91% dwellings classified as having 3 or more bedrooms

24 no information available (for example - rural properties built on family land)

Apart from the predominantly rural low population nature of the councils housing stock which may present difficulties to enable downsizing matching to take place, the biggest barrier to downsizing is the cost which would accrue through the repairing of the two properties involved.

Currently, Galway County Council only receives a fraction of the cost required to repair a vacant dwelling and to bring it up to the required standard. The maximum amount payable by the Department is €11,000 for each house turnover.

The Department also do not fund voids if the house has been funded within the previous 7 years. 52 voids were completed in 2021. The average shortfall in Departmental funding in 2021 was €17674.

If the average cost of a void leaves us with a €17674 shortfall then for a downsize to occur within existing stock this would potentially cost twice that as two dwellings would be involved within the process.

**Policy**

Galway County Council's Allocation Scheme was approved by the Housing SPC in Summer 2020 and at full Council in September 2020.

Section 9 of the scheme – Transfers - allows for downsizing to be considered for tenants. As per the above stats, transfers creates voids, which must be turned over/repared and this creates further budget concerns.

Section 15 of the scheme – Downsizing for Private Owners- allows for people over the age of 60 who are the owners of private dwellings that are too large for their needs to apply to the council for senior citizen tenancy accommodation. Under the scheme a financial contribution is made from sale the property held by the owner to the

Council in return for tenancy of a suitable council property. The acceptance into the scheme is based on the availability of suitable units to Galway County Council and the size of the current waiting list.

Galway County Council's Housing for All plan has committed to delivery of 1727 units for social housing between 2022 and 2026. Of the 552 units currently in the pipeline up to Dec 2024, 338 one- and two-bedroom units are planned for delivery by both the Council and the Approved Housing Body sector. The pipeline for 2025 and 2026 is being planned out.

There are 286 people over 65 on the waiting list with a 1-bedroom requirement and 61 with a two-bedroom requirement.

The Age Friendly Coordinator – Francis Kane, Age Friendly Ireland, has made over 200 home visits to older people who have been referred to him regarding supports for older people.

To date no one in the private sector has approached Galway County Council for down/rightsizing."

In response to a query from Cllr. Donohue Mr Hanrahan confirmed that there were 54 voids to date in 2022. He advised that the local authority only receives an allocation of €11,000 per property and a claim for voidance can only be made once in every seven years. He said the average cost of repairs on a void is €17,000. He noted a recent void cost €50,000 when electrical, water and a roof works all had to be completed. He advised the Council still only received the allocated €11,000 and the balance comes out of the revenue budget.

#### **ITEM NO. 19. VOTES OF SYMPATHIES/CONGRATULATIONS**

**4041**

**A resolution of sympathy was extended to the following:**

- Tom and Josephine Reilly, Clogherboy, Tuam, Co. Galway
- The Burke Family, Glentaun, Creagh, Ballinasloe, Co. Galway
- Nuala Loftus, Moylough, Ballinasloe, Co. Galway
- Triona Quinn, Springlawn, Mountbellew, Co. Galway
- Martina Donnellan, Gurteen, Ballinasloe, Co. Galway

- Paul Noone, Cregboy, Claregalway, Co. Galway
- Patricia O'Brien, Barnaboy, Turloughmore, Co. Galway
- Norina Hession, Coolarne, Turloughmore, Co. Galway
- Lena, Deirdre, and Cillian Donnellan, Headford, Co. Galway
- Bridie Corbett, Balrickard, Headford, Co. Galway
- Maise Holland, Ballynamanagh, Clarinbridge, Co. Galway
- Bridie Pettit, Ballinamana, Clarinbridge, Co. Galway
- Marion McGrath, Moyvilla, Oranmore, Co. Galway
- Aisling Fallon, Attymon, Athenry, Co. Galway
- Melissa Treacy, Mountpelier, Athenry, Co. Galway
- Alfie Deehan, Árd Aoibhinn, Athenry, Co. Galway
- Margaret Ruane, Beechwood Lodge, Prospect, Athenry, Co. Galway
- Karen Brennan, Laragh, Attymon, Athenry, Co. Galway
- Kevin Nolan, Ballydavid, Athenry, Co. Galway
- Mary Kelly, Captain's Lodge, Ballydavid, Athenry, Co. Galway
- Tony Burke, Cashla, Athenry, Co. Galway
- Christina McDonagh, Woodside, Cloonkeen, Athenry, Co. Galway
- Ellie Hynes, Knockbrack, Athenry, Co. Galway
- The Feeney Family, Knockbrack, Athenry, Co. Galway
- Michael Donnellan, Caherhugh, Belclare, Tuam, Co. Galway
- Gary Sice, Knocknacarrigeen, Belclare, Co. Galway
- Ann Murphy, Caherhugh, Belclare, Tuam, Co. Galway
- Pauline Glynn, Ballylee, Gort, Co. Galway
- Michael Mullins, Glenbrack, Gort, Co. Galway
- John Moylan, Rathwilladoon, Tubber, Co. Galway
- Kathleen Mannion, Árd Aoibhinn, Athenry, Co. Galway

## Chriochnaigh an Cruinniú Ansin

Submitted, Signed and Approved

Cathaoirleach: Michael Maher

Date: 24/10/2022