

COMHAIRLE CHONTAE NA GAILLIMHE
MINUTES OF COUNCIL MEETING OF GALWAY COUNTY COUNCIL
Held at Corrandulla Sports Hall, Cor an Dola, Co. Galway

Friday 17th September 2021 at 2:30pm

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. Connolly, M. Connolly, G. Cronnelly, D. Ó Cualáin, J. Cuddy, S. Curley, T. Ó Curraoin, Albert Dolan, G. Donuhue, G. Finnerty, D. Geraghty, M. Hoade, P. Hynes, C. Keaveney, D. Killilea, M. Kinane, G. King, P. Mac an Iomaire, M. Maher, E. Mannion, J. McClearn, A. McKinstry, P. Murphy, 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, Ms. E. Ruane, Director of Services, Mr. D. Pender, Director of Services, Mr. G. Mullankey, Head of Finance, Ms. V. Loughnane-Moran, Senior Planner, Ms. I. Martyn, Meetings Administrator, Ms. U. Ni Eidhín, Oifigeach Gaeilge, Ms. B. Ryan, Staff Officer, Ms. E. Hoffman, Clerical Officer, Mr P. Scannell, Clerical Officer, Mr R. Guilfoyle, Graduate Placement.

Thosnaigh an cruinniú leis an paidir.

Prior to the commencement of formal business, the Cathaoirleach thanked the Annaghdown Parish Council for facilitating the meeting at short notice following cancellation of the original venue at GMIT due to unforeseen circumstances.

Cllr. Kinane congratulated the Galway Senior Camogie Team on winning the All-Ireland Championship 2021. Cllr. Kinane **PROPOSED** that a civic reception be held for the team when appropriate. Cllr. McClearn **SECONDED** the proposal. The Cathaoirleach joined Members in congratulating the team and everyone involved.

Members put forward the names of a number of sportspersons who should be considered for any proposed Civic Reception. The Cathaoirleach advised that all names would be referred to the Corporate Policy Group for further consideration.

Cllr. M. Connolly sought clarification on reports that certain Ballinasloe Fair events would go ahead in October. Mr. Hanrahan advised that, regardless of social media reports, the decision taken by the Ballinasloe Fair Committee not to hold the fair this year stood. He noted that while Covid restrictions were being lifted, the details of proceeding with an un-ticketed event was unclear making it impossible to hold the fair within such a short time-frame.

ITEM NO. 1 CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES OF THE FOLLOWING MEETINGS

3825

(a) Minutes of Monthly Plenary Meeting held on 26th and 28th July 2021.

On the **PROPOSAL** of Cllr Killilea **SECONDED** by Cllr. Cuddy the Minutes of the Monthly Plenary Meeting held on 26th and 28th July 2021 were **AGREED**.

In response to a query from Cllr. Killilea, Mr. Hanrahan confirmed that plans for a development on the Weir Road, Tuam were going ahead. He advised the expected timeline was to get the project out to tender by the end of the year and award the contract early 2022 for delivery in 2023.

ITEM NO. 2 CONSIDERATION OF REPORTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS **3826**

(a) Minutes of Roads & Transportation SPC held on 29th March 2021.
On the **PROPOSAL** of Comh. Ó Curraoin **SECONDED** by Cllr. Donohue the Minutes of the Roads & Transportation SPC held on 29th March were **NOTED**.

In response to a request from Cllr. D. Connolly, Cllr. Roche agreed that the removal of the Bus Eireann X20 route would be included for discussion at the next Roads and Transport SPC meeting.

Cllr. Kinane sought an update on the "Love 30" Campaign and a motion passed in recent months regarding the introduction of 30km speed zones in towns and villages across County Galway. In response, Mr. Pender advised Members that the matter was being considered at a national level. He said he was awaiting the publication of guidelines which were due later in the year.

(b) Minutes of Corporate Policy Group held on 21st June 2021.

On the **PROPOSAL** of Comh. Ó Cualán **SECONDED** by Comh. Ó Curraoin the Minutes of the Corporate Policy Group held on 21st June 2021 were **NOTED**.

ITEM NO. 3 APPOINTMENT OF REPLACEMENT NOMINEES TO THE LOCAL COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE (LCDC) FOR PPN COMMUNITY REPRESENTATIVE. **3827**

Report dated the 30th August 2021 was published on the Extranet prior to the meeting.
On the **PROPOSAL** of Cllr. Thomas **SECONDED** by Comh. Mac An Iomaire it was **AGREED** to appoint the following as PPN Community Representatives to the Local Community Development Committee (LCDC):

- Ms Máirín Ni Chonghaile, Community and Voluntary
- Mr Gerard Costello, Community and Voluntary
- Mr Peter Gohery, Social Inclusion
- Mr Kevin Gavin, Social Inclusion
- Ms Venetia McEllin, Environmental

ITEM NO. 4 TO CONSIDER THE MANAGEMENT REPORT – SEPTEMBER 2021 IN ACCORDANCE WITH SECTION 136(2) OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 2001 (AS AMENDED)

3828

Report dated the 16th September 2021 was published on the Extranet prior to the meeting.

On the **PROPOSAL** of Cllr. Donohue **SECONDED** by Cllr. Byrne the Management Report – September 2021 in accordance with section 136(2) of the Local Government Act 2001 (As Amended) was **NOTED**.

Matters arising:

Cllr. Maher commended the Environment Department on their efforts to stop illegal dumping. He noted the main stumbling block in the campaign was the use of CCTV footage.

In response to a query from Cllr. Curley, Ms Ruane confirmed the waste enforcement team would be carrying out unannounced random door to door inspections as part of the enforcement of the Waste Management Bye-laws. Cllr. Broderick queried the necessity of house-to-house inspections for social tenants.

Mr. Hanrahan confirmed that all tenants must provide proof of waste disposal. He confirmed that tenants in the estates inspected were written to and a decision was made to do house-to-house inspections and not everyone has responded. He noted that house-to-house inspections provided the opportunity to ensure that people are maintaining their properties.

Regarding the County Development Plan, Cllr. Byrne raised concerns about the failure to take on board the new development plan guidelines. Cllr. Cuddy queried a submission by the Office of the Planning Regulator to include lands for housing in Oranmore, suggesting the lands in question were a floodplain. Cllr Carroll agreed and said climate change would have a huge effect on the area in question. Cllr. Welby

expressed concern about a submission from the Office of the Planning Regulator regarding Oughterard.

In response to a query from Cllr Carroll, the Chief Executive said that reports of a major multi-national Company locating to Oranmore was just speculation. He advised Members that if it did go ahead the process would take a number of years and the County Development Plan would be adapted.

Members raised concerns about the Town and Village Renewal Scheme - Streetscape Enhancement Scheme 2021 and in particular the very short notice and tight time-frames set out by the Department. The short lead in time puts huge pressure on Community Groups and Council staff resources.

Mr Hanrahan advised Members that applications for funding was made for six towns according to their size and the criteria set out by the Department. He considered the short lead time was not a big concern but rather that the funding has to be spent by the 5th November. This was a difficulty as most trades people are busy. In addition, he advised Members that all the applications were valid but there wasn't sufficient funding to meet the number of applications submitted. He advised that he will be seeking further funding from the Department.

The Cathaoirleach and the Members acknowledged the work of Mr. Hanrahan, Ms. Dolan and their team on the Streetscape Enhancement Scheme and their efforts to secure extra funding.

Cllr. Byrne expressed his disappointment over the recent rejection of a planning application for social housing in Moycullen by Connemara Municipal District. In response Cllr. Thomas said that each Municipal District makes decisions based on what is best for its own area. He stressed it was not a rejection of social housing and he suggested that there were flaws in the Planners report regarding a flooding issue on the site. Cllr Mannion clarified that not all Members of the Connemara Municipal District had voted against the planning application for social housing in Moycullen.

In response, the Chief Executive reassured Members that all reports submitted to the Municipal District meeting dealt with all areas of planning, were fully complete and professionally prepared. He rejected the suggestion that any of the reports were flawed. It was a decision for the Connemara MD Members to make.

In response to a request from Cllr. Cuddy that each Member should receive a hard copy of the draft plan and all submissions, the Chief Executive noted that in light of the huge public engagement and the volume of submissions received that this would be a huge undertaking logically for the Planning Department.

Cllr. Broderick raised the issue of submissions being made in respect of the County Development Plan using the names of people without their knowledge. Cllr. McClearn looked for clarification and said it would have profound consequences for the County Development Plan if the authenticity of submissions were called into question. Cllr. Murphy called for an investigation to establish the truth behind the allegations. Cllr. Ó Cualáin stressed that anyone who had submissions made in their name, without permission, should contact the Planning Department.

Cllr. Charity reminded Members that 'cut and paste' submissions were not unusual and would not be an issue as long as they had been signed by the named person. He advised that caution was necessary with such allegations when there was no evidence. If there was an individual case, he said it would need to be investigated.

In response, the Chief Executive advised Members that repeat submissions were not unusual. He noted that all submissions are acknowledged to identify any submissions made in another person's name. Such submissions would not be considered valid and would not be included in the Chief Executive's report.

In response to a query from Cllr. Killilea regarding the Quiet Man Greenway, Mr Pender advised Members that a letter of intent had been sent to the Consultants. They will carry out a feasibility study and an assessment of route options for a viable Greenway. The route required will need to be fully accessible for all, have the least gradient and the least land acquisition and links with other Greenways.

ITEM NO. 5 TO RECEIVE PRESENTATION REGARDING "A REDESIGNED REVENUE EQUALISATION FUNDING MODEL FOR LOCAL GOVERNMENT" BY ECONOMICS LECTURERS DR. GERARD TURLEY AND MR. STEPHEN MCNENA AT THE J.E. CAIRNES SCHOOL OF BUSINESS & ECONOMICS IN NUIG 3829

Dr Gerard Turley and Mr. Stephen McNena made a presentation to Members on Fiscal Equalisation and Local Government Funding based on their policy paper titled

"Equalisation Transfers and Local Fiscal Capacity: A New Methodology for Ireland", published in the Economic and Social Review, Spring 2021.

Mr. McNena outlined the problems with the current equalization model:

- based on historical baseline amounts.
- measures of revenues and expenditures
- tied to LPT. It creates problems and undermines the LPT.
- it is a small fund compared with countries providing equalisation funding.
- there are inequities in the allocations.

He said the objective of the research was to design a better fiscal equalisation model for Ireland. The research focused on three main points; the differences in potential revenue for each local authority, the overall size of the fund available and the formula for the allocation of the equalization grant.

Dr. Turley gave an overview of the new model.

- The objective of the model was revenue equalization not tied to historical baseline supports or the LPT. Fiscal capacity was selected as the most appropriate model. The expenditure needs/ costs of the LA were not included.
- The fiscal capacity of each local authority was based on the potential revenue each local authority could earn from the three revenue sources; LPT, Rates and fees for Goods and Services.
- The potential revenue was used instead of actual revenue. It was considered that the use of actual revenue may have unintended effect of incentivising local authorities not to raise funding in anticipation of higher grants/transfers.
- Where the fiscal capacity of a local authority was less than the standard (the national average of fiscal capacity estimates) the local authority would receive an equalization payment equal to this shortfall.
- The size and allocation of the grant fund in the model was based on the difference between the fiscal capacity of a local authority and the predetermined standard.

Dr. Turley advised Members that based on 2017 figures, a comparison of the existing equalisation model and the new model presented showed that Galway would have received €23.2m compared to the €2.9m received in 2017.

Dr. Turley summarised the results and the policy implications of the research and the new equalisation model presented.

- Greater equalisation as less fiscal disparities between local authorities.
- A bigger fund financed by central government was required.
- Recipient local authorities were more or less the same as the current model.
- The equalisation amounts for local authorities differed from current model.
- There are winners and losers in terms of the amounts
- Galway County is a big winner.
- All local authorities retain 100% of LPT.

The following queries and points were raised by Cllrs. Welby, Byrne, M. Connolly, Dolan, Charity, McKinstry, Sheridan, Donohue, Kinane, Cuddy

- Is it unusual the current equalisation model has not been reviewed.
- The model presented is a fairer equalisation model. The policy paper presents the information academically. It should form the basis of Galway County Council's negotiations with the Department.
- A submission should be made to the Department to have it implemented.
- A copy of the policy paper should be forwarded to Oireachtas Members.
- Would the model make Local Authorities more dependent on Government.
- The model works well for Galway, how can we get all Local Authorities on board.
- Has there been any interest from the Government or any interaction or any willingness from them to implement this new system?
- Would it require a Commercial Rate increase?
- Increasing rates is not an option.
- Why has expenditure not been included in the model.
- Regarding "potential revenue" some counties have a huge renewable energy potential should this be considered.
- Why is Galway so underfunded and why was the baseline set so low.

- The policy paper justifies, at the very least, a review by the Department.
- The onus is on the Oireachtas Members to come together to lobby for this.

Dr. Turley confirmed that the method of equalisation presented did not require an increase of rates in Galway. He explained that the model takes the average fiscal capacity of the 31 local authorities, this is the standard. Where the individual fiscal capacity for a local authority was below this, then the local authority would receive an equalization grant equal to the shortfall. He stressed that the calculations for fiscal capacity were independent of collection. Based on 2017 figures, he noted the standard fiscal capacity was €621 per capita while Galway's fiscal capacity was €492 per capita. The equalisation model presented would make up this shortfall.

Dr. Turley said we should ignore history, referring to the question of how Galway finds itself with such a low baseline. He noted if we were starting with a blank sheet, it required no knowledge of history, it's clear Galway was underfunded and are entitled to a bigger grant.

He confirmed the model would make the Local Authority more dependent on transfers.

Regarding how to get buy-in from other Local Authorities Dr. Turley noted the key was to argue for equalisation for all Local Authorities not just Galway.

He advised Members following the publication of the policy paper in spring, the findings were sent to the Department of Finance, the Department of Public Expenditure and Reform and the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage. A copy was also forwarded to the CCMA, NOAC, LGMA, and TD's of the Galway constituencies. Mr. Turley said it was now up to the Members and Citizens to push this Scheme.

In the context of the model presented, Dr. Turley clarified that term "potential revenue", was used to distinguish it from "actual revenue". He said "potential" did not relate to the future in the context of the model.

Regarding inclusion of expenditure and costs in the model, he advised that this would not necessarily result in more equity. For that reason, it was left out and what was presented was a revenue equalization model.

He confirmed that normal practice around the world was to include a sunset clause to any equalization scheme to review it every three to five years.

The Chief Executive thanked both Dr. Turley and Mr. McNena. He said the timing of this policy document was very important noting, the government were currently reviewing LPT and had indicated a review of the process. For this reason, he said the Department may welcome the new model presented. In addition, he noted that the model, while coinciding with Galway County Council's case, it was an independent and an in-depth assessment regarding equalisation funding.

Dr. Turley concurred it was good time to present the model to the Department and noted the simplicity of the model was an important feature of any equalisation model.

ITEM NO.6 TO AGREE A DATE AND VENUE FOR THE OCTOBER ORDINARY MEETING OF COUNCIL 3830

It was unanimously agreed to hold the October Ordinary Meeting on Monday, 18th October, 2021 at 11:00 am in Corrandulla Sports Hall, Cor an Dola, Co. Galway.

ITEM NO. 7 CHIEF EXECUTIVE'S BUSINESS & CORRESPONDENCE 3831
The following items of correspondence which were published on the Extranet prior to the meeting were NOTED:

- Letter dated 27.07.21 from Wicklow County Council – Resolution; New National Maternity Hospital
- Mayors for Peace News Flash – July 2021
- Email dated 30.07.21 from Private Secretary to Roderic O'Gorman, TD, Minister for Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth - Response to correspondence; counseling services for victims of domestic sexual and gender-based violence (DSGBV)
- Letter dated 05.08.21 from Donegal County Council – Resolution; LPT & Rate collection from properties affected by Mica, Pyrite and Pyrrhotite.
- Mayors for Peace News Flash - August 2021

The following Motions were submitted:

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

"That Galway County Council applies to Minister Humphrey's Department for an extra allocation to Galway County Council under the Street Enhancement Scheme due to the high uptake across all the towns in county Galway."

On the **PROPOSAL** of Comh Mac An Iomaire **SECONDED** by Comh Ó Cualáin the Members **AGREED**:

"With the investment of €1 billion which is going into wind farm offshore energy I am proposing the government sanction the money for the deep-water harbour Rossaveal, also this will create employment for 100 to 150 people."

On the **PROPOSAL** of Cllr. Byrne **SECONDED** by Cllr. Welby the Members **AGREED**:

"I propose that the Fiscal Equalisation and Local Government Funding Model, as presented, be submitted to the Department for implementation to ensure our county is treated fairly in the Equalisation Fund."

On the **PROPOSAL** of Cllr. Roche **SECONDED** by Cllr. Murphy the Members **AGREED**:

"I propose this council write to the Minister for Environment, Eamon Ryan, to fast track legislation to give effect to the Data Commissioners Report for the use of community "CCTV data" obtained to combat illegal dumping in our County."

Cllr. Curley submitted the following Notice of Motion:

"That Galway County Council supports the campaign of Epilepsy Ireland to address long-standing issues that continue to impact on people with epilepsy and their families in Ireland today, namely:

1. Access to Free Travel.

2. Provision of Reasonable Accommodations for State Examinations for students with epilepsy."

The Motion, if agreed, to be then sent to the Minister for Health, Stephen Donnelly TD, Minister for Social Protection, Heather Humphreys TD, Minister for Education, Norma Foley TD, Michael Moynihan TD (Chair, Oireachtas Committee on Disability Matters) and to other local authorities for correspondence purposes."

This item was deferred to the October Plenary Meeting as the maximum allowed time for the meeting had elapsed.

ITEM NO. 10 NOTICE OF MOTION

3834

Cllr. Curley submitted the following Notice of Motion:

"That Galway County Council calls on the Minister for Transport, Éamon Ryan, to reinstate the PSO bus service from Galway to Dublin which serves rural towns such as Loughrea."

The motion was amended to read:

"That Galway County Council calls on the Minister for Transport, Eamon Ryan, to introduce a PSO bus service from Galway to Dublin and vice versa to serve rural towns such as Loughrea."

On the **PROPOSAL** of Cllr. Curley and **SECONDED** by Cllr. McKinstry the Members **AGREED** the amended motion.

ITEM NO. 11 NOTICE OF MOTION

3835

Cllr. Finnerty submitted the following Notice of Motion:

"I propose that in future the debate on the LPT take place 3 months ahead of the decision date. This is to give all members the opportunity to discuss the pros and cons of varying the rate."

The Chief Executive advised a written reply would issue to Cllr. Finnerty.

ITEM NO. 12 NOTICE OF MOTION**3836**

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

"That a letter is sent on behalf of Galway County Council to both Minister O'Gorman and Minister McGrath asking them both to support a new deal for Early Years by increasing Government investment in Budget 2022 in order to deliver quality care and education for our children, our workers, parents and providers.

Rationale behind the motion.

The pandemic has shown us just how crucial Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC) is for parents, children and the economy. However, the sector is in crisis, high fees for parents and high staff turnover as services struggle to recruit and retain workers.

- Irish Government investment in the Early Years Sector lags far behind other European Countries
- Irish parents pay the highest fees in Europe. The average weekly fee for full-time childcare is €186
- The average hourly pay for Early Years Educators is €11.91
- The average staff turnover is 40% in full day services per year.

In Budget 2022, the Government can start the transformation of ECEC by increasing investment and implementing a new funding model so educators are paid a decent wage, that childcare is affordable for parents and these essential services are sustainable into the future."

ITEM NO. 13 NOTICE OF MOTION**3837**

Cllr. Mannion submitted the following Notice of Motion:

"I propose that Galway County Council contact Irish Public Bodies Mutual Insurance to ask them to provide cover for outdoor exercise equipment on community owned property across the County"

This item was deferred to the October Plenary Meeting as the maximum allowed time for the meeting had elapsed.

ITEM NO. 14 NOTICE OF MOTION

3838

Cllrs. King & Ó Cualáin submitted the following Notice of Motion:

" Given the success of the extended Beach Lifeguard working hours in 2021, We propose that going forward these extended operating hours of 11am to 7pm would be continued and kept in operation at the various beaches and lakes throughout Galway County. These extended operating hours will further enhance water safety throughout the County as was the case in 2021".

The following reply issued:

"I refer to your notice of motion requesting that the extended Beach Lifeguard working hours in 2021 be kept in operation in 2022. It isn't possible to make such a commitment at this point in time and the capacity of the council to meet this request will be determined by the budget provision made available for the service in 2022."

ITEM NO. 15 VOTES OF SYMPATHY / CONGRATULATIONS

3839

A resolution of sympathy was extended to the following:

- The Cribbins Family, Ros, Kingstown, Co. Galway
- Mrs. Mary Corban, Kingsland, Athenry, Co. Galway
- Mrs. Margaret Grealish, Frenchfort House, Frenchfort, Oranmore
- Mrs. Teresa Waldron, Moneyteige, Craughwell, Co. Galway
- Mr. Willie Killeen, Carraun, Athenry, Co. Galway
- Mrs. Ann Zonemblick, Farrablake, Athenry, Co. Galway
- Mary O Malley, Baronny, Annaghdown, Co. Galway
- Moira Coen, 7 Caheroyan Park, Athenry, Co. Galway
- Ester Reddington, Slievroe, Headford, Co. Galway
- Padraig Morris, Amy, Aoibhe, Alisha and Alan, Caltra, Belcare, Co. Galway
- John Mongan and Family, Derryinver, Letterfrack, Co. Galway
- Patricia Quinn and Family, Ballinamore, Abbeyknockmoy, Co. Galway
- Padraig Morris, Castlehackett, Caherlistrane, Tuam, Co. Galway
- Stephen Corless, Forty Acres, Tuams, Co. Galway

- Moira Coen and Family, Athenry, Co. Galway
- Paul Mellott, Lakeview, Moylough, Ballinasloe, Co. Galway
- Peggy Loughnane, Clonkeen, Killoran, Ballinasloe, Co. Galway
- Pauline Carty, Oldtaurt, Portumna, Co. Galway
- Sean and Maura Keane, Cahereeny, Tubber, Co. Galway
- Ita Scarry and Family, Annagh, Ballymackward, Ballinasloe, Co. Galway
- Paddy Burke and family, Carrabane, Athenry, Co. Galway
- Kitty Concannon, Killimor, Ballinasloe, Co. Galway

As the maximum allowed time for the meeting had elapsed the Cathaoirleach concluded the meeting.

Chriochnaigh an Cruinniú Ansin.

Submitted Signed and Approved

Cathaoirleach: Pete Heavney

Date: 18/10/21

