

COMHAIRLE CHONTAE NA GAILLIMHE

MINUTES OF MONTHLY MEETING OF GALWAY COUNTY COUNCIL

Held at ÁRAS AN CHONTAE, PROSPECT HILL

Monday, 19th February 2024 at 11.00am

CATHAOIRLEACH:

Cllr. Cathaoirleach Carroll

Cathaoirleach of the County of Galway

I LATHAIR FREISIN:

Baill:

Comh./Cllr. T Broderick, J. Byrne, I. Canning, D. Collins, D. Connolly, M. Connolly, J. Cuddy, S. Curley, T. Ó Curraoin, A. Dolan, G. Donohue, D. Geraghty, M. Hoade, P. Keaveney, D. Kelly, D. Killilea, G. King, P. Mac an Iomaire, M. Maher, E. Mannion, J. McClearn, K. McHugh Farag, A. McKinstry, PJ. Murphy, A. Reddington, P. Roche, J. Sheridan, N. Thomas, S. Walsh and T. Welby.

Baill ar líne:

Comh./Cllr. G. Cronnelly, S. Herterich Quinn, C. Keaveney, M. Kinane, Dr. E. Francis Parsons.

Oifigh:

Mr. L. Conneally, Chief Executive, Mr. L. Hanrahan, Director of Services, Mr. M. Owens, Director of Services, Mr. D. Pender, Director of Services Director of Services, Ms. Jean Brann, A/Director of Services, Ms. K. O'Connor, Head of Finance, Ms. L. Keady, Meetings Administrator, Mr. M. O'Donnchadha, Oifigeach Forbartha na Gaeilge, Ms. H. Riordan, Assistant Staff Officer, Ms. L. O'Donnell, Assistant Staff Officer, Ms. T. Ryan, Climate Change Co-ordinator.

Thosnaigh an cruinniú leis an paidir.

The Cathaoirleach began by conveying his congratulations to those involved in the Council's success at the recent Local Authorities Members Association (LAMA) awards. The Council won three awards: The Best Community Health Initiative 2024 Award for The Healthy Islands project, National Impact Award for BIA Innovator Campus Project and Best Energy Smart Initiative 2024 Award for Heat Pump Remote Access Project. The Council were also nominated for the Best Housing Regeneration and Urban Planning Award for Kinvara Village and Best Micro Start Up for Heptagon Houses Ltd.

The Members joined in the Cathaoirleach's congratulations following the success at the LAMA awards.

Tributes were paid to former Taoiseach John Bruton RIP. His work in reaching out to the Unionist community during his long career in politics. Sympathies were conveyed to his family. Also, to former TD John Connor.

ITEM NO.1 CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES OF THE FOLLOWING MEETINGS

4286

On the **PROPOSAL** of Cllr. Maher **SECONDED** by Cllr. Byrne the minutes of the Monthly Plenary Meeting held on 22nd January 2024 were **AGREED**.

Members raised the following points and queries:

- Clarification was sought on the Director's comments on page 14 of the January plenary minutes in relation to the Local Improvement Scheme (LIS).
- Clarification was sought on the eligibility requirements of the LIS. Concern was raised in instances when applications have been rejected due to the applicants not possessing two herd numbers.
- A timeline for the commencement of webcasting and a technical response was requested.
- A request for a timeline on the Council providing all forms online was made.

- The Chief Executive was asked to write to Ministers McConalogue and Ryan requesting funding to assist the Council in the removal of trees affected by Ash Die Back.
- Clarification sought whether Notice of Motion (NOM) monies can be used on a private road.
- A survey of trees infected with Ash Die Back was requested, to identify the trees that are in danger of falling, notably along the N84.
- Frustration was voiced at the lack of responses from Uisce Éireann.
- A call to reopen LIS applications was made.
- It was asked if the €250,000 for the Airport Masterplan is to be taken from this or next years budget.
- Cllr. McClearn wanted it noted that he did not attend the Association of Irish Regions conference on behalf of Galway County Council, as stated on page 6 of the January plenary minutes.
- The top of the hedges are not being cut when they are trimmed which is creating overhanging branches.
- A request to engage with the Gardaí in retrieving data on road traffic accidents that are a consequence of trees.
- Cllr. McHugh Farag thanked Steven McHugh for his work during her absence from the Council.
- Clarification was sought if there was one landowner with a herd number on a private road with a private dwelling, would the road qualify for the LIS scheme.
- The timeline for the Airport Masterplan was requested.
- If a road has received funding under LIS can a large pothole be fixed with NOM monies.
- If interested parties can make submission regarding the future of the airport.
- A response was requested to a previous query on the number of housing units to be offered in the Tuam area over the next six to eight months.
- If there are any plans for an affordable housing scheme in Tuam.

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

- A meeting with Uisce Éireann is schedule for next week and response times are on the agenda.
- Following severe weather emergency, incidences are recorded, and data is collected as part of the cleanup process.
- Taking in Charge of a road is a reserved function. Once the Members have decided to take a road in charge the Executive must maintain the road. Historically Members have pooled their allocation of NOM monies to bring the road up to a standard to enable it to be taken in charge. We have over 000 kilometers of road and €39 million funding to maintain them. With the €500,000 increase on 2023 we are making every effort to maintain the road network we currently have taken in charge.
- Up until 2022 under the LIS scheme, any road that received funding could not be taken in charge. He read the following:

‘Eligible road projects are those that involve the construction or improvement of non- public roads which provide access to parcels of land, of which, two or more are owned or occupied by different persons engaged in separate agricultural activities;

Applicants should provide current (within the current or previous year) documentation to verify that they are engaged in agricultural activities on the parcel of land accessed by the road project e.g. a herd/flock number and a copy of the maps associated with their Basic Payment Scheme application provided by the Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine, or equivalent documentation. The onus shall be on individual applicants to submit the required documentation in support of their eligibility. The Local Authority should demonstrate a degree of flexibility in relation to this requirement if alternative documentary evidence can be provided.

The following road projects are not eligible for funding under the Scheme:

A road serving only houses or buildings occupied or used by persons not engaged in agriculture.’

- A road with private houses is not eligible under the LIS Scheme.

- If a road was included in a LIS scheme last year going forward it will be eligible to be taken in charge.
- Public monies cannot be spent on a road that hasn't been taken in charge.
- The putting in place of a Dedicated Ash Dieback Team that will include for the mechanical dismantling of affected roadside trees that may be a major risk to human life is something the Council can support but would not be able to manage or administer. The expertise for such a team lies in other external agencies who have the relevant knowledge and experience, have the recognised qualifications and expertise in advising on the management of roadside trees. They also need to be able to work to recognised best practice standards. These external agencies would include the Department of Agriculture, Food and Marine and possibly the Tree Council of Ireland and Coillte.

The Council would indeed support any external agency tasked with this work in any way it could.

It is worth noting, land ownership normally extends to the centre of the road; therefore, it is the landowner – not the local authority – who is responsible for the trees and hedges beside the road.

The Roads Act 1993 requires owners or occupiers of land to take all reasonable steps to ensure that trees or other vegetation on their land are not a hazard to persons using a public road.

- He committed to bringing the concerns of the Members to the relevant departments and seek a response.

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

- Funding for the Airport Masterplan will be taken from next year's capital account with costs shared with Galway City Council.
- Financial support could potentially be received from Urban Regeneration and Development Fund, Western Development Commission, Regional Assembly or the Industrial Development Authority (IDA).
- The first part of the tender process is to finalise the technical document. The procurement to write the Masterplan will take three to four months. The writing of the master plan will take approximately nine months. The Master plan will then

come before the Members for adoption following public submissions. It will involve a variation of the County Development Plan.

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

- The Director of Corporate has been asked to prioritise the live streaming of meetings.
- The ambition is to have all application forms available digitally and on paper.
- He highlighted the success of the new online pre planning system that was launched before the plenary meeting. The aim is, to implement these types of online services across the organisation. He referred to the success of the ePlanning system. A Council Digital Strategy is being procured and live streaming of meetings will be a priority of the Strategy.
- He will obtain a technical report on digitisation.

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

- He will e-mail the Members the number of housing allocations to be offered in Tuam over the next six to eight months.
- There's no affordable housing scheme in Tuam at the moment. The matter will be on the agenda at the next Strategic Policy Committee (SPC) meeting.

ITEM NO.2 CONSIDERATION OF REPORTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS 4287

On the **PROPOSAL** of Cllr. Maher **SECONDED** by Cllr. Hoade the minutes of the Corporate Policy Group held on 15th January 2024 were **NOTED**.

It was agreed by the Members as per recommendation from the Corporate Policy Group that Galway County Council would hold a Civic Reception to honour St. Thomas Senior Hurling Team – 2024 All Ireland Senior Club Hurling Champions.

Members raised the following points and queries:

- A request was made that the Kilkerrin-Clonberne Ladies Senior Football team also be honoured at a Civic Reception, on winning their third All-Ireland final in a row.

- A discussion took place regarding a proposal to bring forward the time of the Civic Reception to 5pm.
- A request was made that as many Elected Members as possible attend the Civic Reception.

It was agreed by the Members that Galway County Council would hold a Civic Reception to honour Kilkerrin-Clonberne Ladies Football Team – 2023 All Ireland Senior Club Football Ladies Champions.

ITEM NO.3 (a) PRESENTATION BY MS. TINA RYAN, CLIMATE ACTION CO-ORDINATOR ON THE CHIEF EXECUTIVES REPORT OF SUBMISSIONS RECEIVED REGARDING THE LOCAL AUTHORITY CLIMATE ACTION PLAN 2024 – 2029.

(b) HAVING CONSIDERED THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE'S REPORT THE MEMBERS SHALL, BY RESOLUTION, MAKE THE PLAN WITH OR WITHOUT THE PROPOSED AMENDMENTS, EXCEPT THAT WHERE THE MEMBERS DECIDE TO ACCEPT THE AMENDMENT(S) THEY MAY DO SO SUBJECT TO ANY MODIFICATION TO THE AMENDMENT(S) AS THEY CONSIDER APPROPRIATE.

The resolution being pursuant to the provisions of the Climate Action and Low Carbon Development (Amendment) Act 2021 as it amends the principle Act of 2015, Galway County Council resolves to adopt the Galway County Council Climate Action Plan 2024-2029, having considered the draft plan, the contents of the Chief Executives report on submissions received during the period of consultation and the SEA and AA Reports and determinations, carried out in accordance with the requirements and regulatory provisions of the SEA Directive (DIR 2001/42/EC) and Article 6(3) of the EU Habitats Directive (Directive 92/43/EEC)

4288

A comprehensive and informative presentation was given by Ms. Tina Ryan, Climate Change Co-ordinator. She thanked all contributors to the draft plan, Public Participation Network (PPN) representatives, senior management team, staff and the public for their submissions. She informed the Members that they may either approve the draft plan as presented or

approve it with modifications. However, any modifications could only be minor as the draft report has already been assessed under the Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA).

The Chief Executive thanked Ms. Ryan and her team for preparing this strategic policy document. The Climate Action Plan provides a policy framework that will speak to other policy documents, including the County Development Plan. As a Council the Members provide leadership to the public. To achieve our CO₂ reduction targets, the Executive will upgrade the Council's fleet and public lighting on a phased basis, retrofit our social housing and, also ensure our assets are protected from flooding and storms. We need significant financial assistance from government Departments especially Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage and Department of Energy and Climate Change to implement this policy. He noted that a lot of work was undertaken to produce this Plan, that the public have been consulted, that Members have had workshops and then informed the Members that the draft Climate Action Plan is now ready for their consideration.

The Cathaoirleach informed the Members that the deadline for adopting the Climate Action Plan is Friday 23rd February 2024.

Cllr. McKinstry as chair of the Climate Change Strategic Policy Committee (SPC) proposed that the Plan be adopted. He was disappointed that Key Performance Indicators (KPI's) were not included in the plan but noted that this could be developed as part of the implementation of the plan.

Members raised the following points and queries:

- Attention was brought to a submission on page 24 of the Chief Executives Report and concern raised regarding the potential for biogas facilities to be located within 100 meters of houses.
- The team were thanked for facilitating the workshop that had taken place the previous Friday.
- Concern was expressed at the divisive nature that windfarms were having within communities.

- The effects of climate change was acknowledged but biodiversity was highlighted as being a more immediate problem.
- The figures in the plan on increases in CO₂ in the atmosphere and the level of human activity responsible for this, were questioned.
- Public buy in to the plan was essential for it to work.
- Lack of public transport in the county was raised.
- The consequences of the Mercosur deal were mentioned.
- The closure of the wind turbines in Derrybrien was raised.
- Cllr. McHugh referred to the amendment that she was proposing and highlighted the changes that have occurred in the size and scale of onshore windfarms since the national windfarm guidelines were last updated in 2006 and asked that a moratorium for the installation of windfarms be put in place in County Galway until the guidelines are updated.
- The resulting increase in paperwork and red tape in relation to retrofitting was not welcomed.
- A clear definition of 'European sites' was sought and the consequences for homeowners that live beside one.
- It was asked what affect the plan would have on the work practices of farmers.
- It was raised that the Electricity Supply Board (ESB) are not buying back surplus electricity from homeowners with solar panels.
- A request to focus more on hydro-electric power was made.
- The dangers of the increase in CO₂ levels were conveyed.
- Emphasis should be on providing energy from the sea not the land.
- The consequences of not having adopted the plan by Friday were queried and asked why the plan wasn't bought before the Members before this meeting.

The Chief Executive stated the Climate Action Plan is over 12 months in preparation and a significant number of workshops and SPC meetings have worked to put the draft Climate Action Plan together, that there is a legal requirement to make this Plan. As stated in the draft Climate Action Plan, the adoption of the Plan will not place additional obligations on farmers. He assured the Members that any applications for onshore windfarms will go through the normal planning process, which is underpinned by the Planning Acts and the

Galway County Development Plan (CDP). He agreed that the national wind energy guidelines should be updated.

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

- The Climate Action Plan is a policy document. Decisions on planning applications are made under the Planning & Development Act and the County Development Plan.

Cllr. Killilea proposed an amendment to the draft plan.

The Chief Executive advised that the proposed amendment was a significant amendment to the draft Climate Action Plan and assured the Members that if issues relating to terrestrial onshore windfarms arose, they would be dealt with through the planning application process. He added that there are certain areas in Galway identified in the Climate Action Plan as suitable for wind energy developments. He gave caution in making significant amendments and asked that any amendments should be minor in nature and be considered carefully as the draft Plan had already been through the public consultation process.

Following the advice of the Chief Executive, Cllr. Killilea proposed the following amendment to *replace the wording on pages 55-56 under Objective EB1 from "wind" to "offshore wind only"*. This proposal was seconded by Cllr. McHugh Farag.

The amendment was agreed.

Cllr. Welby proposed the following amendment to the Draft Climate Plan, which was seconded by Cllr. Broderick:

'Amend LN 1.1 as follows: LN 1.1 Support farmers in the shift toward low-carbon and climate-resilient agricultural practices, including innovative farming practices such as paludiculture. Work with relevant agencies to develop and implement a joined-up awareness/knowledge transfer strategy for the agricultural and food sectors. Develop a tool kit and training programme for engagement during routine farm visits.'

It was agreed to accept the amendment.

Cllr. Cronnelly proposed an amendment, which was seconded by Cllr. Reddington:

After discussion, the amendment was proposed with the following wording:

'Action CP 1.2: Establish a training, information and support programme for individuals, community groups and community event organisers on Climate Action and Biodiversity. Ensure that the programme takes into account the needs of persons with disabilities, vulnerable groups and those at risk from climate change. Carry out annual training programme.'

It was agreed to accept the amendment.

Members raised the following points and queries:

- If a decadal spatial plan would happen or was it an aspiration.
- Office of Public Works (OPW) maps are not available to the public.
- Query on who the 'relevant state agency' in Cllr. McKinstry's amendment referred to.
- Cllr. M. Connolly stated that he did not agree with Cllr. Welby's amendment.

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

- Clarified that minor amendments to the draft Climate Action Plan do not require further assessment.
- The relevant state agency is the OPW.

Cllr. McKinstry proposed an amendment, which was seconded by Cllr. Welby:

After discussion, it was agreed to accept the amendment with the following wording:

'Action AD 1.3 Ensure the continued incorporation of Flood Risk Management and Climate Change Sectoral Adaptation Plans into the spatial planning of the County, having due regard to the need to promote nature based solutions and Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems (SuDS), and environmental sensitivities at these locations. Galway County Council will carry out long term multi decadal spatial planning on flooding and sea level rise to inform settlement strategy and will seek technical advice from OPW.'

Cllr. Thomas wanted it noted that he objected to the adoption of the Climate Action Plan.

On the **PROPOSAL** of Cllr. McClearn **SECONDED** by Cllr. Maher it was **AGREED** to adopt the Local Authority Climate Action Plan 2024-2029 with amendments.

ITEM NO. 4 TO CONSIDER AND IF DEEMED APPROPRIATE ADOPT THE GALWAY COUNTY COUNCIL ANNUAL SERVICE DELIVERY PLAN 2024, IN ACCORDANCE WTH SECTION 134(a) OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 2001 (AS AMENDED).

4289

On the **PROPOSAL** of Cllr. Maher **SECONDED** by Cllr. Hoade the Galway County Council Service Delivery Plan 2024, in accordance with section 134(a) of the Local Government Act 2001 (as amended) was **AGREED**.

Members raised the following points and queries:

- If the funding for the new Galway City Fire Station and Headquarters would be shared with the City Council.

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

- The fire service is a joint service for Galway County and City, Galway County Council is the lead Authority. A number of proposed City Fire Station sites have been looked at. Both Chief Executives received a presentation and any proposed for the new fire station will come before the Elected Members in due course.

ITEM NO. 5 TO CONSIDER THE COUNTY GALWAY JOINT POLICING COMMITTEE ANNUAL REPORT 2023

4290

The County Galway Joint Policing Committee (JPC) Annual Report 2023 was published on the Extranet prior to the meeting.

Members raised the following points and queries:

- The need for widespread installation of Closed-Circuit Television (CCTV).
- Need for recycling bins to be provided in towns and villages.
- It was requested that the JPC ask the Gardaí why the text alert scheme is not being used. It was asked that the matter be put on the agenda of the next JPC meeting.

- The issue of the text messages was raised at a previous JPC where it was said that the use of WhatsApp and other forms of social media have taken over from text, along with the impact of GDPR. The Gardaí don't have the resources and signage needs to be updated.
- It was asked for the Council to seek additional funding for mobile CCTV units to enable the monitoring of litter black spots.
- It was asked if the Council have the resources to implement the new legislation and who would be responsible for monitoring the footage.
- The use of CCTV in anti-social behaviour instances was queried.
- Rubbish and illegal dumping along the N84 was raised.
- The Gardaí are committed to strengthening their numbers in rural areas once the new batch of recruits are received.
- Concern raised on the limited locations for the new plastic bottle return scheme in rural areas.
- Vehicle recognition crossing the River Shannon was called for.
- A call for it to be compulsory that pedestrians and cyclists wear high visibility vests including during daytime hours.
- It was asked that the matter of a Council employee being filmed and shared on social media be investigated and pursued.
- Resources should be put into reducing the speed of vehicles.
- Suggested that Local Authorities subsidise smaller shops in the €20,000 installation of return bottle machines.

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

- Since the last plenary meeting, the Minister has signed off on the codes of practice for the use of CCTV. It can now be used in enforcement of illegal waste dumping. The Local Government Management Agency (LGMA) is preparing guidelines on the code of practices for the Local Authority sector, which are expected shortly.
- The use of CCTV for anti-social behaviour has not yet been addressed in codes of practice
- He would raise the issue of bins and the return scheme with the relevant Director.

- He stated that the Minister would be written to requesting additional funding for mobile CCTV units.
- He would request an audit of the CCTV equipment and acknowledged the need for it to be mobile.
- Regarding antisocial behaviour element of CCTV. The Chief Executive stated that the Gardaí can request footage under their current powers. The Council requires codes of practices to be published, he did not have a timeline for when they would be issued.
- The local authority needs to use media to get the message to people to bring home their rubbish.

As the chairperson of the JPC Cllr. Cuddy thanked the two subcommittees and the administrative staff, as well as the Director of Service for their contributions. He made an assurance that the text alert issue will be included on the next JPC agenda. He raised his concerns on the introduction of the new policing model. He felt that it is a retrograde step to not have an Elected Member as a chair of a JPC going forward. He acknowledged that CCTV and litter dumping is a major issue.

On the **PROPOSAL** of Cllr. Cuddy **SECONDED** by Cllr. Hoade the County Galway Joint Policing Committee Annual Report 2023 was **NOTED**.

ITEM NO. 6 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). 4291

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

On the **PROPOSAL** of Cllr. Maher **SECONDED** by Cllr. McClearn it was **AGREED** to authorise Cllr. Maher to attend Celtic Conferences “*The Finance Act 2023*” at McKeivitt’s Hotel, Carlingford, Co. Louth on 12th – 14th January 2024. (*Retrospective approval*).

ITEM NO.7 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).

4292

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

On the **PROPOSAL** of Cllr. Maher **SECONDED** by Cllr. McClearn it was **AGREED** to authorise Cllrs. Sheridan, Maher, Roche, Walsh and Broderick to attend LAMA Building for Success at The Abbey Hotel, Donegal Town, Co. Donegal on 19th and 20th January 2024. (Retrospective Approval).

On the **PROPOSAL** of Cllr. Maher **SECONDED** by Cllr. Roche it was **AGREED** to authorise Cllrs. Hoade and Welby to attend AILG Module 1 'Elected Members Briefing: Annual Declarations, Donations, Code of Conduct and Local Representation Allowance Update.' at The Fairways Hotel, Dundalk on 25th January 2024. (Retrospective Approval).

On the **PROPOSAL** of Cllr. Maher **SECONDED** by Cllr. McClearn it was **AGREED** to authorise Cllrs. Collins and Maher to attend Association of Irish Regions Conference at The Woodlands House Hotel, Adare, Co. Limerick on 7th and 8th of February 2024. (Retrospective Approval).

On the **PROPOSAL** of Cllr. Maher **SECONDED** by Cllr. King it was **AGREED** to authorise Cllrs. Hoade and Dr. Parsons to attend AILG Annual Training Conference at The Arklow Bay Hotel, Arklow, Co. Wicklow on 14th & 15th of February 2024. (Retrospective Approval).

ITEM NO. 8 TO CONSIDER THE MANAGEMENT REPORT – FEBRUARY 2024 IN ACCORDANCE WITH SECTION 136(2) OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 2001 (AS AMENDED).

4293

Report dated 12th February 2024 was published on the Extranet prior to the meeting.

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

Members raised the following points and queries:

- The progress on the potential car parking site under the Gort Town Centre First Plan was welcomed.
- A request to obtain capital funding to address the continuous filling of potholes.

- Tributes paid to Brendan Dunne, Senior Executive Planner notably in his work on the County Development Plan, he was wished good luck in his new position.
- Page 40 referred to the planning and design of a new wastewater treatment plant at Eyrecourt. It was asked if there had been any local engagement conducted. A previous Management Report stated that outfall will be piped 5km to the Shannon. Concern was raised about this, and it was asked what level of public consultation had taken place.
- The availability of Activator Poles at the Tuam Library was welcomed. This will allow more people to access the new FitSticks Trail which was recently installed at the Palace Grounds.
- A request that Cathaoirligh of Municipal Districts be notified of events in the libraries within their Municipal District.
- The proposal to construct 4 houses in the Parkmore Estate, Tuam was welcomed.
- There was a request for more regeneration works to be carried out in Parkmore, Tuam to address anti-social behaviour.
- The Part 8 planning approval for the extension of the burial ground at Kilbannon was welcomed and the donation of lands from the Hoade & Morris families was complimented.
- The shortlisting of Gort Na gCloch, Clifden for the Irish Building and Design Awards and the National Property Awards 2024 was highlighted.
- It was asked if the Irish Drilling site investigation on the foreshore of the proposed terminal pumping station for the Roundstone Wastewater Treatment Plant will still be valid due to the delay with the ongoing judicial review.
- It was asked if the Clifden Regen team were adequately staffed.
- Concern was raised at the number of staffing vacancies at senior level within the Council and also the loss of staff to other Local Authorities.
- An update was requested on the Traffic Management Plan for Headford.
- The wastewater treatment plants in Ballygar and Mountbellew were acknowledged.
- Electors are confused when they cannot find their data on checktheresister.ie. A campaign to alleviate concerns was suggested.
- An update on the Wastewater Treatment Plant in Carraroe was sought.

- Installation of a Wastewater Treatment Plant was requested in Caltra.
- It was queried if a new site was being considered for Carraroe Wastewater Treatment Plant.
- It was queried why no Tuam school had qualified for Safe Route to School Scheme.
- The machines for the Deposit Return Scheme were criticised as inaccessible for people with disabilities.
- It was asked who complaints regarding the spreading of slurry should be made to.
- Acknowledgement was made to the staff that worked hard to rectify the water outage in January in Clifden and it was requested that pressure be put on Uisce Éireann to upgrade the pipework, as pipes were laid over ground temporarily.
- It was asked if the Corporate Services section received additional resources from the Department.

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

- This is the final year of the Multi Annual Works Programme. Guidance of the Members will be sought in preparing the new programme.
- There will be public consultation regarding Eyrecourt Wastewater Treatment Plant.
- The Irish Drilling site investigation on the foreshore of the proposed terminal pumping station for the Roundstone Wastewater Treatment Plant Works will be valid well into the future.
- Public consultation will be part of the process regarding the Headford Traffic Management Plan. It will be on public display at the end of Q1 / mid Q2. There will be a workshop in either Tuam or Headford.
- The Council have flagged the Tuam schools for inclusion in the scheme with the National Transport Authority and An Teagasc. However, the Council do not have control over the selection of schools. Round three of funding has not yet been announced.
- A new site selection report is being prepared for the Carraroe Wastewater Treatment Plant.
- He committed to bringing requirement for Wastewater Treatment Plant in Caltra to the attention of the Department.

- Representations will be made regarding water pipe works in Clifden.

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

- A presentation on the Strategic Workforce Plan is expected to be made to management team within weeks.
- The timing of the spreading of slurry is governed by the Department of Agriculture guidelines.
- Whatever resources are required by the Register of Electors team will be provided.
- Work is being carried out in Loughrea and Tuam to provide housing in infill sites.
- The Director will revert regarding Kilbannon cemetery.
- He conveyed his thanks to Brendan Dunne for all of his work and contribution to the Council and wished him well in the future.

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

- Clifden Regen Team have documents ready to lodge once the Destination Towns piece is completed.

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

- If an elector cannot find themselves on CheckTheRegister.ie they may need to broaden the search criteria. She invited Councillors to speak to her if they had specific queries.
- Additional funding has allowed an extra clerical officer be placed into the Register of Electors section.
- Undertook to ensure Cathaoirligh of Municipal Districts are issued invitations to library events.

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

- It is hoped that construction of the four housing units in Parkmore will commence by the end of the year.
- There will be engagement with the Elected Members regarding regeneration project.

ITEM NO. 9 CHIEF EXECUTIVE'S BUSINESS & CORRESPONDENCE.

4294

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

- Letter dated 30.05.23 to Mr. Eamon Ryan T.D., Minister for the Environment, Climate and Communications. Resolution – funding for local roads.
- Email dated 22.01.23 from Mr. Eamon Ryan, T.D., Minister for Transport. Resolution - funding for local roads. Response.
- Letter dated 16.01.24 to Bus Éireann School Transport Office. Resolution - School Transport Scheme.
- Email dated 16.01.24 to Bus Éireann School Transport. Resolution – Invitation to attend January Plenary Meeting. Acknowledgement.
- Letter dated 16.01.24 from Offaly County Council. Resolution - Support for Gaza.
- Letter dated 16.01.24 to An Taoiseach. Resolution - Support for Gaza.
- Letter dated 16.01.24 from Mayo County Council. Resolution - Provision of additional services for the communities, hosting refugees and international protection applicants.
- Letter dated 22.01.24 from Carlow County Council. Resolution – Funding opportunities for sport clubs in non-clár areas and bringing their carparks up to a good standard.
- Letter dated 24.01.24 from Wexford County Council. Resolution – War Crimes in Gaza.
- Letter dated 30.01.24 from Sligo County Council. Resolution – Effective laws on bicycles, electric bicycles and electric scooters.
- Letter dated 02.02.24 to Ms. Anne Rabbitte T.D., Minister of State at the Department of Health and the Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth with special responsibility for Disability. Resolution - Disability space funding for GAA Clubs.
- Email dated 07.02.24 from Ms. Anne Rabbitte T.D. Resolution - Funding for disability spaces. Response.

ITEM 10. NOTICE OF MOTION

4295

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

"I propose that Galway Co. Co. pay 'Red Alert' standby rates to our Fire brigade 1st responders staff to be 'ready to go' upon need in rare but more frequent red alert periods."

The following reply issued:

'Remuneration for the Fire Service is agreed nationally. Galway County Council is implementing the provisions of the WRC Agreement of 24th August 2023 which deals with terms and conditions including remuneration for Retained Firefighters.'

Members raised the following points and queries:

- Cllr. Sheridan was not satisfied with the response to his notice of motion. He stated that it is not a remuneration issue it is the provision of services issue.
- During red alerts it takes longer for fire service staff to get to the fire station. It is desirable that they will be in situ in the fire station when emergency calls are received.
- The firefighting staff are unsung heroes during red alerts. Other staff are stood down during a red alert, whereas retained firefighters are expected to go out.
- It was asked if the fire fighters work during red alerts.
- Many firefighters have a desire to be in situ to give a quick response.
- If the motion was passed can it be acted upon.
- It was stated that the motion is too vague on details and questioned if the fire fighters themselves are looking for this.
- It was asked what the financial impact would be if the motion was delivered on.

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

- The contents of the motion were noted by the Chief Executive. The Council follow national policy in relation to the pay and conditions of retained fire fighters. National pay deal negotiations are nearing conclusion and details need to be finalised. He

took on board the concerns. Staff and Union representatives can contact him directly with their concerns.

- He confirmed that all staff are stood down during a red alert, including firefighters. Firefighters are activated only if there is a threat to life. He suggested that this motion related to staffing matters within the Council and was an Executive function.

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

- The Severe Weather Assessment Team including the fire service, meet five to six hours before anticipated weather alerts.

The discussion concluded with agreement that the topic would be revisited following completion of the national negotiations. The Chief Executive committed to taking the comments and concerns of the Members to national level. Before any staff deployment takes place during a 'red alert' a proper risk assessment first takes place.

At 5:00pm Standing Orders were suspended in order to allow the meeting to continue.

ITEM 11. NOTICE OF MOTION

4296

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

'That Galway County Council will update and review the Disability Action Plan 2007-2015, taking regard for updates in National policy and legislation, and produce a new Action Plan on inclusion and disability services. The new action plan should be a live document and be aligned with the National Action Plan for Disability Services 2024-2026.'

The following reply issued:

'Galway County Council are committed to reviewing and updating the current Disability Action Plan, in line with the National Action Plan for Disability Services 2024-2026.'

ITEM 12. NOTICE OF MOTION

4297

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

I propose that GCC collaborate with the Health Services Executive as a matter of urgency in relation to adequate provision of accommodation for Healthcare Staff and their Families who are engaged in providing essential clinical and healthcare services in Portiuncula University Hospital and in nursing homes and home care services.

Ensuring adequate accommodation for essential healthcare staff and their families is crucial for the efficient functioning of healthcare services & the shortage of suitable accommodation poses a significant challenge in attracting and retaining essential healthcare professionals, particularly those from overseas on whom we significantly depend to staff our hospital and nursing homes and care roles.

The local authority has a responsibility to support and collaborate with health services to address this pressing issue. The importance of PUH to the county is contained in the GCDP.

I propose that GCC collaborates with Health Services Executive to ensure there is adequate accommodation available for essential healthcare staff and their families to facilitate the filling of essential posts, that it works closely with health services to identify suitable housing options, including rental properties, affordable housing developments, and temporary accommodations, to meet the needs of healthcare professionals;

including exploring potential partnerships with local housing agencies, landlords, and developers to expand the availability of housing options for essential healthcare staff and their families.

The accommodation lack is such that the establishment of a dedicated task force or committee comprised of representatives from the local authority, health services, housing agencies, and relevant stakeholders is urged to develop and implement strategies to address the accommodation needs of essential healthcare staff and their families and that GCC and HSE work on allocating necessary resources, including funding and staff support, to implement and monitor the effectiveness of the initiatives aimed at providing accommodation for essential healthcare staff and their families, and make adjustments to the accommodation strategies as needed.

The following reply issued:

'Galway County Council is fully committed to helping individuals and families meet their housing needs. The delivery of homes under Housing for All and the Galway County Council Housing Delivery Action Plan 2022 -2026 is a key priority for the Council. The Council has made significant progress in delivering new homes under the Housing Delivery Action Plan, increasing social housing, both directly by the local authority and by Approved Housing Bodies, resulting in an increase in the availability of accommodation in the rental sector.

The Galway Housing Task Force provides a forum for effective collaboration between the Galway County Council, the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage, Approved Housing Bodies and other agencies in responding to the challenges associated with delivering 1,717 new social homes in the County of Galway during the period 2022 – 2026 and delivering on the boarder ambition of Housing for All. In this context and further to the Notice of Motion, the challenge of ensuring adequate accommodation for essential healthcare staff will be raised for consideration at the next meeting of the Task Force.'

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

- He will raise the issue with the Housing Task Force at the April meeting and will notify Cllr. Dr. Parsons afterwards.

ITEM 13. NOTICE OF MOTION

4298

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

'This Council actively supports the Boycott, Divestment, Sanction campaign and commits to changing procurement policies by not purchasing goods or services, produced or provided, in whole or in part, (as practicable), from Israeli settlements in Occupied Palestinian Territory, and that any such contracts should cease as soon as allowed.

This Council calls for the enactment of the Control of Economic Activity (Occupied Territories) Bill (2018) as a matter of urgency.'

The following reply issued:

'This Notice of Motion should not have any significant implications on the day to day running of the Council's business, as we confirm that there are no known contracts or payments made to any Israeli Bank Accounts which would be impacted by the content of the motion.

However, as we are governed by the Central Procurement Arrangements, including the fact that Ireland is part of the Agreement on Government Procurement (GPA) means that no Local Authority have the capacity to exclude a customer on the basis of where they are from, to do so would be contrary to EU Law.

In terms of the enactment of the Control of Economic Activity (Occupied Territories) Bill (2018), this is a matter for the House of the Oireachtas, however if the council vote for a letter to be issued to the Department on this matter we can then address this at that juncture.'

ITEM NO.14 CATHAOIRLEACH'S BUSINESS

4299

Correspondence dated 1st February 2024 was published on the Extranet prior to the meeting.

A discussion took place following receipt of an invitation from the Galway Association of New York to the Cathaoirleach and Chief Executive, to attend the Annual St. Patrick's Day parade in New York on the 16th of March, which received the approval of the Corporate Policy Group to accept the invitation.

The potential benefits and networking opportunity to promote Foreign Direct Investment and tourism to Galway were noted. The meeting approved the acceptance of the invitation.

The Cathaoirleach referenced a letter that was received by the Members in advance of the meeting from the Gaelic Athletic Association (GAA), Ladies Gaelic Football Association (LGFA) and Camogie associations and their interest in using the airport site.

Members raised the following points and queries:

- It was asked if consultation will form part of the Masterplan process.

- If other organisations had expressed an interest in using the site.
- The site should be open for use by other sporting codes.
- The importance of maintaining the airstrip at the site was stated.
- If a contractor has been appointed to draw up the master plan.

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

- The airport is a key economic enabler site in the County Development Plan. The process of preparing a Masterplan for the site is underway, it will take nine to twelve months to prepare. Assistance has been sought from the IDA. The primary use of the site will be for employment and economic development purposes.
- Public consultation will form part of the Masterplan process. Its adoption will likely result in a Statutory Variation to the County Development Plan.
- Stage one of procurement process is underway. The consultant will prepare the brief, this will then go to e-tenders. The Masterplan will be completed 9-12 months later.
- Other than the GAA/LGFA/Camogie Association joint letter no correspondence or expression of interest has been received from any other sporting organisations, as of yet.

The following motion was **PROPOSED** by Cllr. McHugh Farag.

'Following on from the motion that was passed at Clare County Council I propose that Galway County Council Write to Minister Eamon Ryan to request that all windfarm development in Galway County is suspended until new guidelines are published.'

As per Standing Order 28, as the motion was proposed without notice 'it shall be necessary for a majority of the Members present to approve the taking of the motion and it shall be necessary for the passing of the motion that not less than 20 Members vote in favour.'

A vote was taken and a majority of the Members present voted to approve the taking of the motion.

Members raised the following points and queries:

- Cllr. McHugh Farag pressed the importance of suspending the granting of planning permission until the guidelines are updated, to take into account the size and structure of modern wind turbines and the potential affect on those living in the vicinity of them.
- There should be more emphasis on off-shore windfarms.
- Cllr. Killilea referred to his proposed motion on the topic.
- It was asked if applications for wind turbines go to An Bord Pleanála.

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

- He informed the Members that Minister Ryan does not have the function to suspend planning decisions. Decisions on planning applications lie with Local Authorities, An Bord Pleanála and the Courts. The Planning Authority makes decisions based on the legislation, the County Development Plan and Ministerial Guidance
- He suggested that the Council ask the Minister to issue the Section 28 guidelines on windfarm developments as soon as possible.
- He reiterated that the planning process cannot be suspended.
- If an application for a wind turbine is above a certain output, the application must be made as a strategic infrastructure development to An Bord Pleanála.

Members raised the following points and queries:

- Cllr. McHugh Farag amended the motion to include Minister Darragh O'Brien and requested that letters be sent to the two ministers on her motion.
- It can take up to two years from application for a wind turbine to start producing energy.
- Guidelines are not legislation. The planning application process cannot be stopped.

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

- The Ministers can be written to asking for the updated guidelines to be issued as soon as possible.

A vote was taken on the motion.

The following was the result:

For 10

Cllr. Cronnelly	Comh. Ó Curraoín	Cllr. Hoade
Cllr. P. Keaveney	Cllr. Kelly	Cllr. Killilea
Cllr. K. McHugh Farag	Cllr. Reddington	Cllr. Sheridan
Cllr. Welby		

Against 6

Cllr. Byrne	Cllr. Carroll	Cllr. Cuddy
Comh. Mac an Iomaire	Cllr. Maher	Cllr. McKinstry

Abstain 5

Cllr. Geraghty	Cllr. Herterich Quinn	Cllr. Kinane
Cllr. Thomas	Cllr. Walsh	

No-Voting 18

Cllr. Broderick	Cllr. Canning	Cllr. Charity
Cllr. Collins	Cllr. D. Connolly	Cllr. M. Connolly
Comh. Ó Cualáin	Cllr. Curley	Cllr. Dolan
Cllr. Donohue	Cllr. Finnerty	Cllr. C. Keaveney
Cllr. King	Cllr. Mannion	Cllr. McClearn
Cllr. Murphy	Cllr. Dr. E. F. Parsons	Cllr. Roche

The Cathaoirleach confirmed that the motion was not carried as it did not meet the threshold set out in number 28 of standing orders (20 Members).

The following motion was **PROPOSED** by Cllr. Killilea.

'I propose a moratorium be implemented to On-Shore windfarm developments in Co Galway LA area, where there are local objections, until such time as the criteria for such

development are updated by way of national policy and that are to be adopted at both local and national level. At present such developments are subject to out dated guidelines and self managed development standard going back to 2006 – 2013 Dept guidelines.

In 2019 There was a Public Consultation on the revised Wind Energy Development Guidelines and this has yet to be enacted by way of circular or law. In February this year, the department guidelines published "Irelands Draft National Energy and Climate Plan" and while it is important that we continue to grow our wind energy developments, not at the sacrifice of local communities. We should wait for the publication of this plan before proceeding with on shore wind energy projects.'

Cllr. Killillea expanded on his motion stating that this is an issue for every Municipal District. He is not against wind farms, the preference should be for offshore windfarms.

As the motion was proposed without the required notice, the Cathaoirleach referenced Standing Order 28. A vote was taken and a majority of the Members present voted to approve the taking of the motion.

A vote was taken on the motion.

The following was the result:

For 16

Cllr. Cronnelly	Comh. Ó Curraoín	Cllr. Geraghty
Cllr. Herterich Quinn	Cllr. Hoade	Cllr. P. Keaveney
Cllr. Kelly	Cllr. Killilea	Cllr. Kinane
Comh. Mac an Iomaire	Cllr. K. McHugh Farag	Cllr. Reddington
Cllr. Sheridan	Cllr. Thomas	Cllr. Walsh
Cllr. Welby		

Against 5

Cllr. Byrne	Cllr. Carroll	Cllr. Cuddy
Cllr. Maher	Cllr. McKinstry	

Abstain 0

No-Voting 18

Cllr. Broderick	Cllr. Canning	Cllr. Charity
Cllr. Collins	Cllr. D. Connolly	Cllr. M. Connolly
Comh. Ó Cualáin	Cllr. Curley	Cllr. Dolan
Cllr. Donohue	Cllr. Finnerty	Cllr. C. Keaveney
Cllr. King	Cllr. Mannion	Cllr. McClearn
Cllr. Murphy	Cllr. Dr. E. F. Parsons	Cllr. Roche

The Cathaoirleach confirmed that the motion was not carried as it did not meet the threshold set out in number 28 of standing orders (20 Members).

The following motion was **PROPOSED** by Cllr. Hoade **SECONDED** by Cllr. Curley:

"I propose we write to the Department to seek additional roads funding for Galway County Council, to address the situation regarding the condition of many of our roads."

The above motion was agreed.

ITEM NO.15 VOTES OF SYMPATHY / CONGRATULATIONS

4300

A resolution of sympathy was extended to the following:

- Mrs. Mary Finnegan, Cortoon, Tuam, Co. Galway.
- Mr. Oliver Fox, Ryehill, Monivea, Athenry, Co. Galway.
- The family of Kathleen Quinn, Ussey, Glinsk, Co. Galway.
- Mrs. Bridie Hussey, Patch, Glenamaddy, Co. Galway.
- Mr. Martin Codyre, Freeport House, Barna, Co. Galway.

Chrionchaigh an Cruinniú Ansin.

Submitted, Signed and Approved

Cathaoirleach:

Tom Curran

Date:

15/2/2024.