

**COMHAIRLE CHONTAE NA GAILLIMHE**  
**MINUTES OF MONTHLY MEETING OF GALWAY COUNTY COUNCIL**  
**Held at ÁRAS AN CHONTAE, PROSPECT HILL**  
**Monday, 22<sup>nd</sup> April 2024 at 11.00am**

**CATHAOIRLEACH:** Cllr. Cathaoirleach Carroll  
Cathaoirleach of the County of Galway

**I LATHAIR FREISIN:**

**Baill:** Comh./Cllr. T Broderick, J. Byrne, J. Charity, D. Connolly, M. Connolly, G. Cronnelly, D. Ó Cualáin, J. Cuddy, S. Curley, T. Ó Curraoin, A. Dolan, G. Donohue, G. Finnerty, D. Geraghty, M. Hoade, P. Keaveney, D. Killilea, D. Kelly, G. King, M. Maher, E. Mannion, J. McClearn, K. McHugh Farag, A. McKinstry, PJ. Murphy, Dr. E. Francis Parsons, A. Reddington, P. Roche, J. Sheridan, N. Thomas, S. Walsh and T. Welby.

**Baill ar líne:** Comh./Cllr. I. Canning, D. Collins, S. Herterich  
Quinn, C. Keaveney, P. Mac an Iomaire.

**Oifigh:** Mr. L. Conneally, Chief Executive, Mr. L. Hanrahan, Director of Services, Mr. M. Owens, Director of Services, Mr. U. Finn, Director of Services, Ms. E. Ruane, Director of Services, Ms. J. 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.

**Thosnaigh an cruinniú leis an paidir.**

The Cathaoirleach began by conveying his sympathies to Cllrs. Maher and Parsons on the passing of their mothers and to Cllr. Michael Connolly on the passing of his brother. Also to Ms. O'Grady, Arts Officer on the passing of her mother. He praised the valuable contributions by Mr. Terry Kennan RIP to the Council, and specifically to the Conamara area and offered his sympathies to his family members.

As a mark of respect to all the deceased, the Cathaoirleach adjourned the meeting for 5 minutes.

The Cathaoirleach informed the meeting that Galway County Council met for the first time on this day in 1899, the meeting was presided by Chairman John P. Nolan. It was also 25 years ago on this day, that the first meeting was held in the new Chamber, following the completion of the new County Hall. He informed the meeting that celebrations would be held to commemorate 125 years of Galway County Council, later in the year.

Cllrs. Michael Connolly, Parsons and Maher each thanked those that attended the respective funerals and offered words of condolence, describing the comfort and support received by the gestures.

Cllr. McClearn spoke on the opening of the new County Hall 25 years ago, as the only remaining elected representative still sitting on the Council.

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

**4317**

**Members raised the following points and queries:**

- The lack of bus service between Loughrea and Galway was raised. The need to reduce traffic into Galway and to provide transport for students working there was highlighted. It was asked that the matter be resolved before college returns in September.
- An explanation was sought on the lack of progress on webcasting Council meetings. Meetings should be recorded on Teams and uploaded to Sharepoint.

- It was stated that webcasting is a separate issue to the digital strategy.
- An update on the re-opening of the Local Improvement Scheme (LIS) was requested.
- A clarification to the March minutes was sought. The minutes recorded that the Castlerea Fire Station is without adequate fire service cover. Cllr. Geraghty wanted it recorded that the Castlerea fire station is actually closed and there is currently no fire service.
- An update was requested on the motion passed at the March meeting, to change roads maintenance practice from reactionary maintenance to preventative maintenance.
- Additional funding to address the poor state of the roads was requested.
- It was asked if a response to correspondence issued to the Minister for Transport requesting additional roads funding has been received.
- It was stated that there was confusion amongst constituents on the difference between public roads and private roads.
- An indication on the allocation for the Community Involvement Scheme (CIS) for tertiary roads.
- It was asked where responsibility lies for damage to cars caused by badly maintained roads.
- The ability of Irish Public Bodies to handle claims for cars damaged on badly maintained roads was questioned.
- The number of General Operatives in the Gort-Kinvara Local Electoral area has fallen from 25 to 9.
- It was asked when a road receives funding under the LIS scheme to bring it up to a particular standard, why the road is then not considered to be of a sufficient standard to be eligible to be taken in charge.
- It was asked why the Municipal District (MD) roads budget has been cut due to the cost of materials so soon after it was passed.
- The effect of the increase of rates on small businesses was raised.
- It was asked if a site has been identified for the new Fire Station. Whether the site is in the east of the city. If it is in the east, if the impact on the west of the County has been assessed.

- An update on the 2 Health Service Executive (HSE) properties in Gort was requested.
- The reply to the correspondence issued to the National Transport Authority was welcomed. A full response is eagerly anticipated.
- An amendment to the February Minutes on the proposed motion on baby changing facilities in County Hall was requested. The proposer of the motion was Cllr. McHugh Farag.
- It was queried why the Loughrea MD were told that there were no developments regarding the Greenway. Then the MD was informed that Westmeath County Council are the lead authority on the greenway between Portumna and Athlone, without notice.
- A survey or mapping system showing the roads that have not been taken in charge was requested.
- Disappointment was expressed that 5 years after Part 8 was passed, the road improvement and drainage works in Claregalway are not yet complete.
- The closing date for Development Contributions needs to be extended.
- Cllr. Maher informed the meeting that he recently completed a charity cycle to Lourdes which raised €12,500 for Hosanna House and Children's Pilgrimage Trust, to bring sick children to Lourdes.

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**Members Queries were responded to as follows by Mr. Finn:**

- The Members will be advised when the LIS funding for 2024 is received, the scheme will then re-open.
- While there is room for improvement on bus services between Loughrea and Galway, he felt that the route is adequately serviced by Healy's Bus and Citylink services. As far as he is aware the route that was discontinued was between Eyrecourt and Dublin via Ballinasloe.
- National Oversight Audit Commission (NOAC) provide good indicators on the condition of roads in the country. County Galway is rated high on the pavement survey. Patching is a temporary method used until a particular road is included in the Roads Programme. A case for extra funding was made to the Department Inspector during their recent visit.

- One consideration on the location of a Fire Station is a measurement of the length of time it takes Retained Fire Officers to travel to the Fire Station.
- The Greenway project is a large project necessitating two framework tenders and two different consultants.
- The taking in charge of a road that has received LIS funding is not a straightforward process. The landowner will not always agree to it taken in charge.

**Members Queries were responded to as follows by Mr. Ruane:**

- The Taiden system was intended to be used to webcasting meetings. She will investigate Cllr. McKinstry's suggestion to record using Teams.

The following motion was **PROPOSED** by Cllr. McKinstry:

'I propose that plenary meetings, including this one, be recorded via Teams and the recording be available by Sharepoint to Councillors until full webcasting is implemented.'

The Ms. Ruane advised she would consider this proposal in terms of options available to record using Teams and revert directly to Cllr. McKinstry. Cllr. McKinstry indicated he would defer the motion while awaiting update from the Director of Services.

**Members raised the following points and queries:**

- The pavement survey is a flawed system. The roads themselves need to be examined.
- It was enquired as to the number of electricians and plumbers that are employed by the Council. Also, if the Municipal Districts could have their own trades staff to provide assistance in emergencies.
- It was asked why after additional funding was received by the Council, the condition of the housing stock so poor. Is the money being spent or are there not enough housing personnel.

- The presence of dampness and mould in older houses that have been retrofitted was highlighted.
- Concern was raised at the length of time housing maintenance issues are waiting to be addressed.
- A survey on the condition of older housing stock was requested.
- A queue system for housing maintenance requests was suggested. This would set realistic expectations on response times and provide transparency.
- Tenants lack of clarity on their responsibilities regarding housing maintenance.
- If following a housing rent review, a reduction in rent due is backdated.
- If the Just Transition Officer was now in place in the Ballinasloe MD.
- Allocation of LIS funding should be provided at budget time.
- Clarification was sought if the LIS scheme will be re-opened once funding is received.
- If the standard of works under the LIS scheme was less than the standard required for the road to be taken in charge.
- If there is an estimated timeframe for the site for the Fire Station to be decided.
- It was asked if roads to beaches in Conamara could be considered under the LIS Scheme.

**Members Queries were responded to as follows by Mr. Finn:**

- There can be local anomalies with the Pavement Surface Condition Index (PSCI) as they are carried out on a rota basis and may have been carried out 1-3 years ago. Local assessment is a better assessment, however the PSCI provides a good indication and helps to formulate the draft roads programme.
- A percentage of the costs of the LIS scheme must be paid by the applicant. The cost and other considerations such as the presence of gates and future maintenance costs must also be taken into account.
- It is hoped that LIS funding will be received within the next two weeks and that the LIS Scheme will be re-opened in the next month.

- LIS and Taking in Charge are two different funding streams. The broad public use of the road and future maintenance requirements for the network are factors to be considered.
- We do not maintain roads that have not been taken in charge. There are over 6,600km of roads in the County.

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

- An offer based on the HSE's valuation of the two houses in Gort, was made to the HSE. The HSE have since requested a revised and updated valuation. The timeline for progress now lies with the HSE.
- The Housing Section do not have any plumbers or electricians on our staff. Maintenance works are carried out based on the availability of contractors.
- Confirmed that where the rate of rent is reduced the amount is either credited to the tenants account or refunded to them.
- The Housing Maintenance budget increased by €600,000 between 2023 and 2024. This will increase the number of maintenance crews in each MD. Additional staff for planned maintenance has been requested. There is a reliance on contractors to carry out works, as a result it is difficult to provide timelines for completion of works.
- He will re-circulate the information on the guidelines stating tenant responsibilities. All tenants are advised of their responsibilities.
- The Energy Retrofit team is available to assist with queries. It will take time for tenants to get used to the new systems, but staff are available to help.

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

- The Department have been contacted regarding the request for additional roads funding.
- There will be opportunities for staff that do not wish to transfer to Uisce Éireann, to be re-assigned to the Municipal Districts.
- The Just Transition Officer has been appointed and is undergoing training.
- We will improve the conditions for housing tenants through planned maintenance, house condition surveys and energy retrofitting.

- Housing rents are constantly under review and a full rent review will commence in 2024.

The amendment to the March minutes on page 27 is as follows:

*'Cllr. McHugh Farag proposed a motion that was seconded by Cllr. Parsons to install baby changing facilities in County Hall to be available for parents and guardians.'*

On the **PROPOSAL** of Comh. Ó Curraoín **SECONDED** by Cllr. Maher the amended minutes of the Monthly Plenary Meeting held on 25<sup>th</sup> March 2024 were **AGREED**.

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

4318

On the **PROPOSAL** of Cllr. Byrne **SECONDED** by Cllr. McHugh the minutes of the Corporate Policy Group held on 19<sup>th</sup> March 2024 were **NOTED**.

On the **PROPOSAL** of Cllr. McKinstry **SECONDED** by Cllr. Parsons the minutes of the Climate Change & Biodiversity SPC Meeting held on 26<sup>th</sup> May 2023 were **NOTED**.

On the **PROPOSAL** of Cllr. McKinstry **SECONDED** by Cllr. Parsons the minutes of the Climate Change & Biodiversity SPC Meeting held on 22<sup>nd</sup> September 2023 were **NOTED**.

On the **PROPOSAL** of Cllr. McKinstry **SECONDED** by Cllr. Parsons the minutes of the Climate Change & Biodiversity SPC Meeting held on 25<sup>th</sup> October 2023 were **NOTED**.

On the **PROPOSAL** of Cllr. Maher **SECONDED** by Cllr. Mannion the minutes of the Housing SPC Meeting held on 5<sup>th</sup> April 2023 were **NOTED**.

On the **PROPOSAL** of Cllr. Mannion **SECONDED** by Cllr. McClearn the minutes of the Housing SPC Meeting held on 7<sup>th</sup> June 2023 were **NOTED**.

On the **PROPOSAL** of Cllr. Mannion **SECONDED** by Cllr. McClearn the minutes of the Housing SPC Meeting held on 6<sup>th</sup> September 2023 were **NOTED**.

On the **PROPOSAL** of Cllr. Byrne **SECONDED** by Cllr. McClearn the minutes of the Housing SPC Meeting held on 15<sup>th</sup> November 2023 were **NOTED**.

On the **PROPOSAL** of Cllr. Mannion **SECONDED** by Cllr. Byrne the minutes of the Housing SPC Meeting held on 1<sup>st</sup> March 2024 were **NOTED**.

**Members raised the following points and queries:**

- The number of Housing Strategic Policy Committee (SPC) minutes brought to the meeting today was due to an administrative oversight.
- The importance of the first SPC meetings not being delayed following the election of the new Council. There was a delay in 2019 due to the appointing of Public Participation Network representatives.
- The lack of delivery of Affordable Housing in Ballinasloe was raised.
- The absence of an Affordable Housing Scheme in Conamara was also raised.
- The Affordable Housing Scheme is not working because the grants are linked to density of dwellings per hectare. The scheme should be based on household income. Inflation increases are not accounted for in the scheme, it is an outdated policy.
- Local people cannot afford to buy houses and are not granted planning permission to build.
- The department should be asked to increase the funding limit for Galway County Council to €100,000 under the Affordable Housing Scheme.
- The circular governing the current Affordable Housing Scheme is 3 years old and does not factor the increase in inflation costs. It should be reviewed every twelve months.
- If the funding limit for the Affordable Housing Scheme is based on the Metropolitan Area Spatial Plan (MASP) data or the County data.
- It was said that the Council appear to be over delivering on Social Housing but under delivering in Affordable Housing.

- Applicants need to repay the 20% equity under the Affordable Housing Scheme. A state-run mortgage scheme is required. The amount that applicants are currently paying in rent is not considered.
- The equity under the Affordable Housing Scheme, must be paid back upon sale, death or the property no longer being a primary residence.
- The Housing Section provide a Local Authority Home Loan.
- The National Planning Framework and depopulation of rural Ireland need to be addressed.
- An update on the Tesco development in Ballinasloe was requested, including the refusal rate of offers of housing.
- Objections to planning permission applications being lodged by people not from the area.
- The price to lodge a planning objection should be increased.
- A transparent policy for planning objections is needed.
- Details of an extension to the Development Contribution scheme until December will be issued soon.
- One off rural housing is not sustainable due to the costs of maintaining roads, subsidising broadband, it is also a reason for the most expensive electricity in Europe. The Taxpayer is subsidising people living in rural areas.
- Clarification was sought on the Green Party's position on rural housing.
- One off rural housing is required but should be the exception. The servicing of rural sites is a barrier and rural housing is a contributing factor to the condition of the roads.
- The importance of protecting rural Ireland, its people and culture through the provision of services, infrastructure and jobs was discussed.
- If the Economic Development and Enterprise SPC will meet before the Local Elections, to discuss the upcoming concerts at Galway Airport.
- An objection was raised on the disposal of the property listed at item 6 on the agenda.

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

- The SPC Scheme will be adopted once the new Council is elected and the new Committees will be required to meet as soon as possible.
- He congratulated the SPCs on the work undertaken to date and stressed the importance of the SPCs to ongoing Council strategic policy improvements and incorporating the PPN representatives and other stakeholder groups.
- Enforcement of planning decisions should remain a function of Galway County Council.
- We have brought the concerns regarding Affordable Housing funding thresholds to the Department and will continue to push the matter with the Minister.

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

- The County Development Plan is the guiding document for planning permissions. Pre-planning meetings are available for those seeking planning permission, where an application is refused valid reasons are given.
- Most planning applications do not receive a significant number of objections. Increasing the cost would mean that the ability for people to engage with the process would be reduced, for example where permission for windfarms is lodged.
- The number of planning applications granted and refused are contained in the April Management Report.
- There will be one more Planning SPC meeting before the end of May '24.

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

- The 38 unit Local Authority housing development in Ballinasloe is almost at full capacity. There were 19 refusals of offers, 8 of which were deemed unreasonable. 31 units have been allocated.
- The Affordable Housing scheme is for first time buyers, the local authority needs to secure or deliver a purchase price discount of 15% on open market

values. Only then can an application be made to the department for funding. The funding level is based on the scheme density, for which Galway County Council qualifies for the funding limit of €50,000. Following Cllr. Welby's motion the department have agreed to use flexibility and consider each application on a case by case basis. Galway County Council can apply for the funding limit of €75,000 where we meet the viability of 15% of the open market. The cost to delivering the scheme at current market prices is not viable nor affordable.

- The only variable in the Affordable Housing Scheme is the site cost, which is higher in MASP areas. Even lowering the site cost does not make the current scheme viable.

**ITEM NO.3 TO CONSIDER AND ADOPT THE UNAUDITED ANNUAL FINANCIAL STATEMENT FOR 2023.**

4319

*The Unaudited Annual Financial Statement for Galway County for the year ended 31<sup>st</sup> December 2023 was published on the Extranet prior to the meeting.*

**Members raised the following points and queries:**

- It was said that there appears to be three-tiered system for burial grounds. Larger grounds are funded by the Council, the second group by Community Groups and the third group by volunteers. The volunteer groups are carrying out the work in the graveyards but cannot afford the insurance cover. It was asked if this could be addressed by the Council.
- The uncollected rates for 2023 was highlighted.
- The Increase Cost of Business (ICOB) grant was welcomed.
- A public relations campaign was suggested to help recover unpaid rates.

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

- That the matter of insurance of graveyards be discussed with the Director of Services.

- The 86% collection rate shows a reduction in the total commercial rates outstanding at year end.
- Debt management is working. We will continue to exercise what discretion we can to recover funds however we pursue outstanding payments vigorously.
- Advertisements have been placed in newspapers. We are happy to engage where specific cases are brought to our attention.

It was **AGREED** to adopt the Unaudited Annual Financial Statement for Galway County Council for the year ended 31<sup>st</sup> December 2023:

On the **PROPOSAL** of Cllr. Finnerty **SECONDED** by Cllr. Maher it was **AGREED** to adopt the figures as detailed in the Unaudited Annual Financial Statement for Galway County Council for the year ended 31<sup>st</sup> December 2023 to formally close the accounts for 2023.

On the **PROPOSAL** of Cllr. Maher **SECONDED** by Cllr. Finnerty it was **AGREED** to approve the transfers to / from reserves as detailed in Note 14 of the accounts and to approve the over / under expenditure by division as noted in Note 16 of the accounts.

**ITEM NO. 4 TO CONSIDER REPORT UNDER SECTION 183 OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 2001 ON THE LEASE OF LAND AT NEW INN COMMUNITY CENTRE, NEW INN, BALLINASLOE, CO. GALWAY TO NEW INN PLAYGROUND DEVELOPMENT, BALLINASLOE, CO. GALWAY.** 4320

*Statutory Notice issued in accordance with Section 183(1)(b) and report dated 9<sup>th</sup> April 2024 was published on the Extranet prior to the meeting.*

On the **PROPOSAL** of Cllr. Maher **SECONDED** by Cllr. Broderick the lease of 0.5515 acres and 0.1609 acres at Knockbrack and Castlebin South, New Inn, Ballinasloe, Co. Galway in accordance with the terms of the Statutory Notice dated the 9<sup>th</sup> April 2024 for a period of 10 years was **AGREED**.

**ITEM NO. 5 TO CONSIDER REPORT UNDER SECTION 183 OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 2001 THE DISPOSAL OF PROPERTY NUMBERS 2 TO 21, INCLUSIVE, AT GORT MHAOILIR, ATHENRY, CO. GALWAY.**

4321

*Statutory Notice issued in accordance with Section 183(1)(b) and report dated 12<sup>th</sup> April 2024 was published on the Extranet prior to the meeting.*

On the **PROPOSAL** of Cllr. Dolan **SECONDED** by Cllr. Maher it was **AGREED** to dispose of properties 2-21 at Gort Mhaoilir, Raheen, Athenry Co. Galway in accordance with the Statutory Notice dated 12<sup>th</sup> April 2024.

**ITEM NO. 6 TO CONSIDER REPORT UNDER SECTION 183 OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 2001 THE DISPOSAL OF PROPERTY NUMBER 16 AT TULACH NA CORRAIGE, LOUGHREA, CO. GALWAY.**

4322

*Statutory Notice issued in accordance with Section 183(1)(b) and report dated 12<sup>th</sup> April 2024 was published on the Extranet prior to the meeting.*

**Members raised the following points and queries:**

- It was asked why this house was being sold and not used to house applicants on the housing waiting list.
- It was queried how long the house has been vacant.
- It was asked that the Housing SPC consider putting up site notices when dwellings are considered for sale under Section 183.
- It was asked if the Council could apply for the Croí Cónaithe grant.
- The cost of repairs could end up much higher than the estimate. It should be sold and the money used to buy a turnkey property.
- There are no turnkey properties in Loughrea.

- The decision to sell should be reconsidered as a landlord could purchase it and rent it back to the Local Authority. The money could be recouped in 5-6 years if we keep the property.
- More information on the property was sought and it was asked that the matter be considered again at the May plenary meeting.
- It was asked how long the property has been on the market.
- Selling the property is the best decision, a developer would be in a better position to fix the property.

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

- This property was acquired by the Housing Agency and transferred to Galway County Council in June 2019. It is a semi-detached property which requires significant structural works at a current estimated cost of €150,000. Consent from the adjoining property owner will be required to carry out these works.
- The Council have been advised that it would not be appropriate for a first-time buyer to acquire this property as they would not be in a position to access funding due to the structural damage.
- The maximum funding available to repair the property is €11,000, the balance of which would come from the Loughrea MD fund. It would cost approximately 50% of the remaining Loughrea MD maintenance budget to repair the property.
- A decision needs to be made as the purchaser may pull out if there is a delay.
- The estimated cost to address the issues in 2021 was €105,000 it now stands at €150,000.
- The house was purchased by the Housing Agency for €140,000, the Council have received an offer of €200,000.
- There is no guarantee that consent to carry out the works will be given by the adjoining property owner.
- The property has been on the market since 2023, approximately 6-9 months.

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

- Asked if the Council are willing to spend the necessary funds to repair the property and if so where the funds will come from.

- Re-emphasised the structural damage to the property and possible problems due to the house being semi-detached.
- Any funds received from the sale will go into the capital balance.

On the **PROPOSAL** of Cllr. Maher **SECONDED** by Cllr. Mannion it was **AGREED** to dispose of 16 Tulach na Corraige, Loughrea in accordance with the Statutory Notice dated 12<sup>th</sup> April 2024.

Cllr. Donohue requested that her objection to the passing of the motion be recorded.

**ITEM NO. 7 TO CONSIDER AND ADOPT THE ANNUAL REPORT 2023 IN ACCORDANCE WITH SECTION 221 (1)(A) OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 2001.**

**4323**

*The Annual Report 2023 was published on the Extranet prior to the meeting.*

On the **PROPOSAL** of Cllr. Maher **SECONDED** by Cllr. Broderick the Annual Report 2023 in accordance with section 221(1)(A) of the Local Government Act 2001 was **AGREED**.

The work of the staff in each section was acknowledged in the preparation of the largest Annual Report prepared to date.

**ITEM NO.8 TO CONSIDER AND IF DEEMED APPROPRIATE ADOPT THE GALWAY COUNTY COUNCIL VACANT HOMES ACTION PLAN 2024 – 2029.**

**4324**

*Draft Galway County Council Vacant Homes Action Plan 2024-2029 was published on the Extranet prior to the meeting.*

On the **PROPOSAL** of Cllr. Byrne **SECONDED** by Cllr. Maher it was **AGREED** to adopt the Galway County Council Vacant Homes Action Plan 2024-2029.

Cllr. Byrne as Chairperson of the Housing SPC thanked everyone involved in producing a fantastic vacant homes action plan. He acknowledged the work of the members of the SPC, Mr. Owens, Mr. Hanrahan and Ms. Connellan, the Vacant Homes Officer. He mentioned the importance of having yearly targets included in the plan. He informed that four new additional staff members will be joining the vacant homes team.

**Members raised the following points and queries:**

- If the Council would write to the Minister seeking stage payments under the Croí Cónaithe grant to replace payment at the final stage.
- That it could be more beneficial to knock and rebuild old houses to bring up the energy rating to avail of grants.
- The backlog of 14 weeks and anomaly of pre 63 buildings was raised.
- It was asked what resources the Council received under the Croí Cónaithe grant and if they were adequate.
- How many Croí Cónaithe grant applications were successful in Galway.
- What can be done to get an abandoned house back into viable use, where there is an ownership issue.
- The method for people to notify the Council of vacant houses.
- Will the framework for sub-contractors move to 4-5 weeks.
- If Community Wardens can assist in identifying vacant houses.

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

- Acknowledged the work of the Chair and SPC Members in the preparation of this strategic high-level plan and his appreciation to the housing staff.
- The department are fully funding the Vacant Homes Officer, the other additional staff will be funded by Galway County Council.

- The Management Report has further information on the grants, 156 of which have been approved. The remaining are either awaiting further information or the applications have been withdrawn.
- If a building is knocked and rebuilt it will not qualify for funding under the Refurbishment Grant.
- There is a new framework for inspections pre and post works.
- Acknowledge that properties built before 1963 did not require planning permission at the time. Provided there is not significant changes to the property will now not require planning permission, under planning exemptions.
- Vacant properties can be reported via [www.vacanthomes.ie](http://www.vacanthomes.ie) or directly to the Council.
- The Council have the option of Compulsory Purchase Order (CPO) for privately owned vacant homes where the owner is not willing to engage. The funding model will be before the Council in the second half of the year.
- There have been significant improvements and the inspections will be within 4-5 weeks.

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

- Thanked the SPC, Chairperson and Mr. Owens for the Vacant Homes Action Plan.
- He invited Members to bring vacant properties in their areas to the attention of the Housing Team.
- He confirmed that CPO and other legal powers will be used to get vacant properties back into use.

**ITEM NO 9. TO CONSIDER AND IF DEEMED APPROPRIATE ADOPT CHANGES  
TO THE GALWAY COUNTY COUNCIL HOUSING ALLOCATION SCHEME  
(TRANSFER POLICY FOR LOCAL AUTHORITY TENANTS) IN ACCORDANCE  
WITH SECTION 22 OF THE HOUSING (MISCELLANEOUS PROVISIONS) ACT  
2009 AND THE SOCIAL HOUSING ALLOCATION REGULATIONS 2011 (S.I. NO.  
198 OF 2011) AS AMENDED.**

4325

Proposed amendment to the Transfer Policy for Local Authority Tenants was published on the Extranet prior to the meeting.

On the **PROPOSAL** of Cllr. Mannion **SECONDED** by Cllr. Welby it was **AGREED** to adopt the amendments to the Transfer Policy for Local Authority Tenants in accordance with section 22 of the housing (miscellaneous provisions) act 2009 and the Social Housing Allocation Regulations 2011 (s.i. no. 198 of 2011) as amended.

Mr. Owens introduced the proposed changes to the transfer policy for Local Authority Tenants. He explained that an issue had arisen where Gaeltacht residents that accepted an offer of housing outside of the Gaeltacht were not eligible to apply for a transfer back to the Gaeltacht. This amendment will facilitate a move back once they comply with other standard requirements. This provision will strengthen the Irish language in the Gaeltacht area. It requires the approval of the Elected Members and the Minister.

**Members raised the following points and queries:**

- The amendment to the policy was welcomed.
- An enquiry of transfer on the basis of downsizing was made.
- If the 12 months ban on qualification for housing could be increased to a minimum of 3 years.

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

- Point 5 sets out the conditions to apply for a transfer on the grounds that applicants are under-utilising their current accommodation. This is applicable in private rented dwellings also.
- All prospective Council and Approved Housing Body tenants are subject to Garda checks. An offer of a Council house can be deferred by 12 months on this basis. The Garda check is then revisited and can be deferred for a further

12 months if warranted. A change to 3 years would require a change in national policy.

**ITEM NO. 10 TO CONSIDER THE APPOINTMENT OF REPLACEMENT NOMINEES TO THE LOCAL COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE (LCDC)**

- LOCAL ENTERPRISE OFFICE (LEO)
- KAREN MANNION CEO FORUM CONNEMARA CLG TO REPLACE TERRY KEENAN RIP

4326

*Reports dated 14<sup>th</sup> March and 10<sup>th</sup> April 2024 was published on the Extranet prior to the meeting.*

On the PROPOSAL of Cllr. Thomas SECONDED by Cllr. Mannion it was AGREED to appoint Ms. Karen Mannion a member of the Local Community Development Committee arising from the passing of Mr. Terry Keenan RIP and Ms. Caroline McDonagh as a member of the Local Community Development Committee arising from the resignation of Ms. Valerie Kelly.

**Members raised the following points and queries:**

- The new members of the LCDC were welcomed.
- Acknowledgements of the great contribution by Mr. Terry Keenan RIP were made.
- Sympathies were conveyed to the family of Mr. Terry Keenan RIP.
- The dedication to Conamara by Mr. Keenan RIP and his involvement in the establishment of Forum Conamara were commended.

**ITEM NO. 11 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)**

4327

*Report dated 16<sup>th</sup> April 2024 was published on the Extranet prior to the meeting.*

On the **PROPOSAL** of Cllr. Maher **SECONDED** by Cllr. Finnerty it was **AGREED** to authorise Cllr. Roche to attend The Celtic Conferences – A Practical Guide to Personal Taxation in Ireland at O'Donovan's Hotel, Clonakilty, Co. Cork on the 1<sup>st</sup> to 3<sup>rd</sup> March (Retrospective Approval)

**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).** 4328

*Report dated 16<sup>th</sup> April 2024 was published on the Extranet prior to the meeting.*

On the **PROPOSAL** of Cllr. Maher **SECONDED** by Cllr. Finnerty it was **AGREED** to authorise Cllrs. Hoade and Herterich Quinn to attend AILG WoMeN's Caucus Training & Development at The Custom House, Dublin on 5<sup>th</sup> March 2024. (Retrospective Approval).

On the **PROPOSAL** of Cllr. Maher **SECONDED** by Cllr. Finnerty it was **AGREED** to authorise Cllr. Hoade and Comh. Cualáin to attend AILG Module 2 'Local Election 2024 Preparation – A Briefing from the Electoral Commission at The Hodson Bay, Athlone on 23<sup>rd</sup> March 2024. (Retrospective Approval).

**ITEM NO. 13 TO RECEIVE A PRESENTATION ON THE DIGITAL STRATEGY FOR GALWAY COUNTY COUNCIL FROM EILEEN RUANE, DIRECTOR OF SERVICES.**

4329

Ms. Ruane, Director of Services gave a presentation on Galway County Council's Digital Strategy.

**Members raised the following points and queries:**

- The digital strategy is a separate project to webcasting. It was requested that meetings be recorded via Teams to enable Elected Members to take snippets to circulate through social media.
- Would the meeting minutes continue to be uploaded online.
- Request to see the expansion of a Broadband Connectivity Point Scheme (BCP).
- The importance of E read for the visually impaired was raised.

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

- Recording of meetings through Teams would be looked at as an interim measure.
- The minutes query would be looked at.
- Acknowledged that there is scope to expand the BCP.
- She will link with Cllr. Cronnelly regarding the accessibility concerns.

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

- His wish to ensure that broadband will reach as many of our citizens as possible and that the Council's services will be easily accessible to as many of our customers as possible.
- Acknowledged that the new website platforms created will only be as good as the content each contains. The content quantity and quality will be inputted by each Directorate staff and will dictate it's success.
- Need to be mindful of GDPR in the handling of personal data of our customers.
- The Members will be kept updated on the NEW Digital Strategy preparation progress and in time it's implementation.

**ITEM NO. 14 TO CONSIDER THE MANAGEMENT REPORT – APRIL 2024 IN ACCORDANCE WITH SECTION 136(2) OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 2001 (AS AMENDED).**

**4330**

*Report dated 16<sup>th</sup> April 2024 was published on the Extranet prior to the meeting.*

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

**Members raised the following points and queries:**

- A date for the Gort Local Area Plan was not included in the Management Report. The plan was extended for five years, this expired on 25<sup>th</sup> June 2023. What is the current statutory status.
- When the Kinvara Local Area Plan will be out of date.
- An update on the Gort Civic Amenity Centre. It is a strategic development for Gort. If there is a shortfall of funding, funding should be provided by the capital account or development contributions.
- When Uisce Éireann are selecting a new site for the Cheathrú Rua Wastewater Treatment Plant, they need to consult with the local people. This may avoid the project being tied up with another judicial review.
- Is the Gort Civic Amenity Centre in danger of not going ahead.
- What the approach to retrofitting of houses is. Which houses are being addressed first, the ones in the worst or best condition.
- The figures the Environmental Protection Agency are using for the emissions estimates are incorrect. The impact of this on the Climate Action Plan was queried.
- The updates on Wastewater Treatment Plants in the Ballinasloe MD are welcomed.
- Shearfest festival will be held in Mountbellew this summer, it is a significant event for the area. The festival would greatly benefit from any grant aid. It is hoped that it will become an annual event.

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

- There is a shortfall of €400,000 for the provision of the Gort Civic Amenity Centre. The prioritising of capital projects is being discussed by the Management Team.

In response, Cllr. Byrne proposed that 'Following the granting of planning permission for Gort Civic Amenity Centre and subsequent funding from Department tenders were sought. As there now is a funding shortfall, I propose that Galway County Council fund the balance through the Development Contribution Scheme or from capital funds.'

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

- Gave a commitment that the Gort Civic Amenity Centre will progress. A solution to the short fall will be investigated. The Section 48 Development Contribution Scheme will be part of a possible funding shortfall solution.
- Uisce Éireann have the jurisdiction over the site for the Cheathrú Rua Wastewater Treatment Plant. He will ensure that they are informed of the concerns of the Elected Members regarding the proposed location of water or wastewater treatment plant.
- Discussions on the EU Nitrates Directive are ongoing between the Minister and Irish Farmers/the Irish Farmers Association.

Cllr. Byrne indicated he was satisfied with the Chief Executives response and withdrew his motion in relation to this matter.

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

- Background work for the Gort Local Area Plan is currently being undertaken. However, the Forward Planning Team have been inundated with submissions for the Loughrea Local Area Plan.

As the Gort Local Area Plan is out of date, the County Development Plan is the fall-back guidance document until the new plan is finalised.

**ITEM NO. 15 CHIEF EXECUTIVE'S BUSINESS & CORRESPONDENCE.**

4331

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

- Letter dated 12.03.24 from Leitrim County Council. Resolution – Shannon Water Levels.
- Letter dated 12.03.24 to Mr. Darragh O'Brien T.D Dept Housing, Local Government & Heritage. Resolution - Wind Energy Development Guidelines.
- E-mail dated 27.03.24 from Dept of Housing, Local Government & Heritage. Resolution - Wind Energy Development Guidelines. Response.
- Letter dated 02.04.24 from Westmeath County Council. Resolution – Support for IFA campaign 'enough is enough'.
- Letter dated 15.04.24 to Paul Kelly, CE, Failte Ireland. Resolution - Regional Festivals Funding
- Letter dated 15.04.24 to Mr. Darragh O'Brien T.D Dept Housing, Local Government & Heritage. Resolution – Residential Zoned Land Tax
- Email dated 15.04.24 from Dept of Housing, Local Government & Heritage. Resolution – Residential Zoned Land Tax. Acknowledgement.
- Letter dated 15.04.24 to Mr. Michael McGrath T.D Minister of Finance. Resolution – Residential Zoned Land Tax
- Email dated 15.04.24 from Niamh Kavanagh Private Secretary to the Minister for Finance. Resolution – Residential Zoned Land Tax. Acknowledgement.
- Letter dated 15.04.24 to Mr. Darragh O'Brien T.D Dept Housing, Local Government & Heritage. Resolution – Septic Tank Grant
- Letter dated 15.04.24 to Anne Graham, CEO, National Transport Authority. Resolution – Multi-stop bus service between Ballinasloe & Galway.
- Email dated 15.04.24 from National Transport Authority. Resolution – Multi-stop bus service between Ballinasloe & Galway. Acknowledgement.
- Letter dated 15.04.24 to Mr. Eamon Ryan T.D Minister for Transport. Resolution – Multi-stop bus service between Ballinasloe & Galway

- Email dated 15.04.24 from Amanda Corley, Private Secretary to Minister Ryan. Resolution – Multi-stop bus service between Ballinasloe & Galway. Acknowledgement.
- Letter dated 15.04.24 to Mr. Darragh O'Brien T.D Dept Housing, Local Government & Heritage. Resolution – Additional roads funding.
- Email dated 15.04.24 from Niamh Redmond Private Secretary Minister Office, Dept Housing, Local Government & Heritage. Resolution – Additional roads funding. Acknowledgement.
- Letter dated 15.04.24 to Mr. Eamon Ryan T.D Minister for Transport. Resolution – Additional roads funding.
- Email dated 15.04.24 from Amanda Corley, Private Secretary to Minister Ryan. Resolution – Additional roads funding. Acknowledgement.
- Letter dated 15.04.24 to Mr. Stephen Donnelly T.D, Minister Office, Dept of Health. Resolution – Dietary supplement payment
- Email dated 15.04.24 from Eoghan Flynn Private Secretary. Resolution – Dietary supplement payment. Acknowledgement.
- Letter dated 15.04.24 to Ms. Heather Humphreys T.D Dept of Social Protection, Social Welfare Services Offices. Resolution – Dietary supplement payment.
- Email dated 15.04.24 from Caroline Kilkenny Private Secretary. Resolution – Dietary supplement payment. Acknowledgement.
- Letter dated 15.04.24 to Directorate – General for Agriculture & Rural Development. European Commission. Resolution - IFA 'enough is enough' campaign.
- Letter dated 15.04.24 to Mr. Charlie McConalogue T.D Minister for Agriculture, Food & the Marine. Resolution - IFA 'enough is enough' campaign
- Email dates 15.04.24 from John Thomas Walsh, Minister of Agriculture Office. Resolution - IFA 'enough is enough' campaign. Acknowledgement.
- Letter dated 18.04.24 to Mr. Paschal Donohoe T.D. Resolution Notice of Motion relating to Palestine
- Mayors for Peace News Flash April 2024

**ITEM 16. NOTICE OF MOTION**

**4332**

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

*'I propose that where need has been identified and a qualifying applicant has been approved by Safe Home Ireland, that Galway County Council will allocate one age-friendly property per year (in each of the Council's electoral areas) to a returning Irish emigrant and that a copy of this motion is distributed to the other local authorities. The proposed applicant must have their housing needs assessed by the Local Authority and be approved for inclusion on the social housing waiting list.'*

**Background Information - About Safe Home Ireland**

*Safe Home Ireland (Safe Home) is a not-for profit national registered charity. The organisation was set up in 2000 to facilitate the desire for older Irish born emigrants abroad to return home. After much advocacy and publicity at that time, Safe Home succeeded in highlighting their circumstances and this recognition was reflected in the granting of the Amendment to the Capital Assistance Scheme (CAS) in November 2001 (see below). The Amendment gave qualifying Irish born emigrants a realistic chance of realising their dream of returning home to Ireland by allowing them to be considered for housing in Ireland. This recognition continues to this day, primarily facilitated by Local Authorities and Housing Associations throughout the country. Over the years, Safe Home has evolved from simply facilitating a housing option for older Irish born emigrants. It now provides a targeted range of services to Irish emigrants abroad, regardless of age or circumstances, who desire to return home, as well as supporting those who have recently made the journey back home.'*

**The following reply issued:**

The Galway County Council Housing Allocation Scheme informs the allocation of housing for eligible applicants on the basis of their housing need. The proposal to afford priority to a returning Irish emigrant by means of allocating one age-friendly

property per year (in each of the Council's electoral areas) will require an amendment to the Housing Allocation Scheme.

The profile of the housing need of returning emigrants and in particular their preferred areas of choice may not require the allocation of one age-friendly property per year per electoral area. In addition, in areas where such a need arises, the allocation of a property for this purpose, may afford a returning emigrant priority over existing housing applicants on the record of qualified households (housing waiting list) for a longer period of time.

Therefore, it is considered appropriate that the proposal and associated impacts is considered by the Housing Strategic Policy Committee in the first instance and thereafter for such consideration to inform the decision of Plenary Council.

Cllr. Parsons agreed to the matter being discussed at SPC level and requested that Ms. Karen McHugh be invited to give a presentation to the SPC. This request was widely supported by the Members.

The Chief Executive confirmed that Ms. Karen McHugh be invited to speak at the Housing SPC.

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#### **ITEM 17. NOTICE OF MOTION**

4333

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

*'We be presented with the current total of unfunded balances, and the allocation of the amounts to the relevant directorate? Can we also get a clear outline going forward of how this debt is to be dealt with.'*

**The following reply issued:**

The Annual Financial Statements (AFS) of a local authority provides details of capital income and expenditure in the capital account. Capital account balances are made up of debit and credit balances. One such category of debit balance is an unfunded

capital balance (relating to capital works projects which have no definitive source of funding).

Capital account balances include unfunded balances. All capital job codes/balances are included in Note 11 of the AFS which is a composite note consisting of Note 2 (net work-in-progress and preliminary expenses) and Note 10 (net capital balances). All unfunded balances are therefore included in the AFS. See analysis below of net capital debit balances (unfunded capital balances) extracted from the unaudited AFS and management quarterly reports:

<b>Summary by Service Division</b>	<b>Balance at:</b>	
	<b>31-Mar-24</b>	<b>31-Dec-23</b>
A Housing and Building	-8,521,815	-10,639,844
B Road Transport & Safety	-5,492,278	-5,461,954
<b>Total</b>	<b>-14,014,093</b>	<b>-16,101,798</b>

The value of the net unfunded balances as at 31 December 2023 was €16,101,798. These relate to housing and roads. A comparison of this figure with the 31 March 2024 quarterly reports shows a decrease in this balance of 13%.

The finance team are in the process of reviewing the categorisation of unfunded and funded capital balances. The initial review of the factors giving rise to the unfunded balances on capital projects, identified two main reasons, being funding shortfall primarily due to timing differences and expenditure overruns.

To respond to the question on how this debt is to be dealt with, we will focus on the two main reasons for them and then highlight the intentions of the management team.

Firstly the main reasons and their primary contributors:

**1. *Funding shortfall primarily due to timing differences***

The primary contributors to these timing differences include:

- the potential recoupment from the relevant Government Department or state body relating to the project programme has not yet been received or applied;

- housing projects are not eligible for development contributions;
- potential transfers from the revenue accounts have not occurred yet due to budgetary constraints; and
- the sale of related assets are not yet completed.

## **2. *Expenditure overruns***

The primary contributors to the expenditure overruns include:

- potential additional technical works required post completion, which were unforeseen;
- certain legal contractual issues; and
- an increase in building controls and regulations and hence costings.

Each of the Directorates are working on a clear plan as to how to deal with the unfunded balances in the Capital Account, this is to include actions such as:

- a. management will continue to review projects to identify a source of funding or any reserves which may be available to reduce or eliminate debit balances;
- b. debit balances relating to the purchase of land/ industrial sites/ unsold affordable units will be funded from the potential future sales of these assets;
- c. for certain projects matching grant funding towards projects had been sought and is anticipated;
- d. post the full detailed review of the unfunded balances, borrowings may have to be sought (and secured with Department approval) to clear some unfunded balances. This would be brought in front of the council as part of the budgetary process;
- e. funding would be provided from the revenue account over a number of years, however given the financial constraints of Galway County Council this will take some time and again will be approved at the budget stage; and
- f. it should be noted that there are a number of funded balances which will be reviewed by management with a view to rationalisation and/or off-set within each program group to reduce the unfunded balances. Note: to do this, one would need the permission of the funding department where the job is in credit, unless the surplus funding came from the transfer from revenue account.

**Table 15.5 – Key Metrics to Deliver Abatement in Transport**

Theme	2025 KPI	2025 abatement (vs 2018) MtCO <sub>2</sub> eq.	2030 KPI	2030 abatement (vs 2018) MtCO <sub>2</sub> eq.	2031-2035 measures
<b>Avoid (encompassing a range of behavioural change and sustainable transport measures)<sup>118</sup></b>					
<b>Reduction in Total Vehicle Kilometres</b>	n/a	Abatement captured under 'Shift' measures below	20% reduction in total vehicle kms. relative to 2030 BAU scenario	Abatement captured under 'Shift' measures below	Continued application of AVOID – SHIFT – IMPROVE approach
			50% reduction in fuel usage		
<b>Shift (encompassing a range of behavioural change and sustainable transport measures)</b>					
<b>Increase in Sustainable Transport Trips</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Additional 125,000 sustainable journeys</li> <li>Roll-out of sustainable demand</li> </ul>	0.72	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>50% increase in daily active travel journeys</li> <li>130% increase in daily public transport journeys.</li> </ul>	2.09	Continued application of AVOID – SHIFT – IMPROVE approach

**ITEM 18. NOTICE OF MOTION**

4334

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

*'That Galway County Council provide an affordable housing scheme for Conamara North West housing area as a matter of high priority.'*

**The following reply issued:**

Galway County Council is committed to the provision of an affordable housing schemes in areas where the Council is in a position to deliver a scheme that is both viable and affordable. In order for the scheme to be deemed viable and avail of

financial support in the form of subsidy from the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage, it is necessary that local authority is in a position to provide the affordable home at a minimum of a 15% discount from the open market value of the home. In addition, following the application of the discount, which is retained by the local authority in the form of the equity stake in the home, the new home must be considered affordable to first-time buyers and buyers that qualify under the government's 'Fresh Start' principle. Based on current construction costs and market values, an affordable housing scheme for Conamara North West is unfortunately not considered viable. The Council is conscious of the requirement and benefit of delivering affordable housing in Conamara North West and across the County and accordingly the viability and affordability of a scheme is kept under ongoing review based on the current affordable housing scheme, construction costs and market prices.

**ITEM 19. NOTICE OF MOTION**

**4335**

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

*'That Galway County Council support a motion to request that the Irish Government immediately expel the Israeli ambassador for Ireland in light of the horrendous and dehumanizing activity by her Government in Gaza.'*

On the **PROPOSAL** of Cllr. Welby **SECONDED** by Cllr. Dermot Connolly the above motion was **AGREED** to write to the Minister for Foreign Affairs.

**ITEM 20. NOTICE OF MOTION**

**4336**

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

*'Given the legally binding ruling this week in the ECHR, a climate action plan must define targets as well as actions. This council will commit to add to the LACAP targets for each action for which KPIs are defined, and required in the Climate Act section 14 b(3), all such targets shall be consistent with the national climate action*

*plan; in particular for traffic, there will be targets to reduce car km driven to be consistent with national climate plans.'*

**The following reply issued:**

The Climate Action Plan (most recent draft CAP24), does contain key targets aimed at reducing greenhouse gas emissions, increasing renewable energy usage, enhancing energy efficiency and transitioning to a low-carbon economy. These targets are also designed to align with international agreements and commitments such as the Paris Agreement, and address specific sectors contributing to climate change.

The Climate Action and Local Carbon Development (Amendment) Act 2021 provides for an additional Section 14B (1) of the Climate Action and Low Carbon Development Act 2015 in relation to the role of local authorities. This sets out that each local authority shall prepare and make a plan (referred to as a Local Authority Climate Action Plan – LA CAP) specifying the mitigation and adaptation measures to be adopted for a period of five years.

We recognise the key role that Galway County Council as a Local Authority has to play in implementing measures to meet Ireland's national climate targets and in supporting and mobilising climate action at the regional and local levels. This role will increase with the development of Local Authority Climate Action Plans (LACAP). The Galway County Council LACAP was adopted by the members in February 2024 and it is consistent with the ministerial guidelines issued under Section 14B (8) of the Act. The GCC LACAP contains key actions, target dates and KPI's. Commitment to delivering the LA CAP will be demonstrated through a structured process of implementation with ongoing monitoring and progress reporting. Local authorities through the Climate Action Regional Offices (CARO) will devise an approach for the annual implementation of actions, track progress through KPIs, and report on progress at local and national levels.

In relation to the Key Target in the CAP 24 to reduce car vehicle km travelled. It needs to consider the very close relationship between the reduction in vehicle kilometres travelled, and the significant increases required in sustainable trips. The 20% reduction relative to business as usual, is not a stand-alone key target, but very much linked to a shift to Public Transport and Active Travel. This is further

emphasised in table 15.5 of the CAP24 (extract attached), where there is no Carbon Abatement attributed to the reduction in vehicles kilometres travelled, but the carbon abatement is attributed to the related shift to public transport (130% increase) and active travel (50% increase). The CAP24 recognises that the Key Target is a behavioural change shift to public transport and active travel.

Cllr. McKinstry stated that he was not happy with the response to his NOM. There are still no targets included in the plan and the Council are open to prosecution. Upon the advice of the Chief Executive, Cllr. McKinstry agreed to discuss the matter with Mr. Finn, Director of Services before the next plenary meeting.

**ITEM 21. NOTICE OF MOTION**

4337

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

*'That a clear time line as to when the appointment of a School Warden for Claregalway will take place. The parents and school management are very concerned as the danger that is presently there for children crossing the N 83 between the Church and Hughes Supermarket.'*

**The following reply issued:**

In response to your query in relation to providing an update on the recruitment of a school warden for Claregalway.

As you are aware, as a Local Authority, we are required to obtain sanction from the Department of Environment, Heritage, and Local Government before recruiting additional staff. I can confirm that an application for sanction has been submitted to the Department, and we are currently awaiting their response.

Once sanction is granted, our HR department will proceed with advertising the position and initiating the recruitment process. Taking into consideration the time required for sanctioning and recruitment procedures, we anticipate that a school warden should be in place by September.

Cllr. Cuddy was satisfied with the response to this NOM.

**ITEM NO.22 CATHAOIRLEACH'S BUSINESS**

**4338**

The following motion was **PROPOSED** by Cllr. Reddington:

*'That Galway County Council engages with the Minister for Housing, Local Government & Heritage, Darragh O'Brien and asks that the conditions for the Croí Conaithe Scheme be changed to introduce staged payments once the applicant has been approved for the scheme.'*

On the **PROPOSAL** of Cllr. Reddington **SECONDED** by Cllr. Mannion the above motion was **AGREED**.

The Cathaoirleach reminded the Elected Members of the Civic Reception that is following the meeting to honour Kilkerrin- Clonberne Ladies Senior Footballer team and St. Thomas's Men's Senior Hurling Team.

The Corporate Policy Group agreed to host a Civic Reception for Keith Finnegan to acknowledge his 34 years serving the people of Galway. The reception will take place following lunch at the May plenary meeting to be held in the Oranmore Lodge Hotel.

He also reminded the Members that the Cathaoirleach Gala Ball and Awards will take place on 16<sup>th</sup> May at the Clayton Hotel. The awards this year have attracted the highest number of nominees ever.

**ITEM NO.23 VOTES OF SYMPATHY / CONGRATULATIONS**

**4339**

A resolution of sympathy was extended to the following:

- Mr. Michael Connolly, Moylough more, Moylough, Co. Galway.
- Ms. John Joyce, Carramanagh, Oughterard, Co Galway.
- Josephine Lally, Ballyconnell, Kilbaccanty, Gort, Co Galway.

- Elaine Mullins, Drumin, Ballyturn, Gort Co Galway –
- Patrick Sammon, Anglers Rest Pub, Tullycross, Renvyle, Co Galway.
- The Keenan Family, Maam, Co Galway.

**Chrionchaigh an Cruinniú Ansin.**

**Submitted, Signed and Approved**

**Cathaoirleach:**

Niamh Ó Ceallaigh

**Date:**

27/5/2024