

COMHAIRLE CHONTAE NA GAILLIMHE
MINUTES OF COUNCIL MEETING OF GALWAY COUNTY COUNCIL
Held at GMIT, DUBLIN ROAD, GALWAY

Monday 26th July 2021 at 11:00am

CATHAOIRLEACH:

Cllr. Peter Keaveney

Cathaoirleach of the County of Galway

I LATHAIR FREISIN:

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

Oifigh:

Mr. J. Cullen, Chief Executive, Mr. L. Hanrahan, Director of Services, Ms. E. Ruane, Mr. G. Mullarkey, Head of Finance, Ms F. Holland, A/Director of Services, Mr. M. Owens, Director of Services/Meetings Administrator, Ms. I. Martyn, Senior Staff Officer, Ms. U. Ní Eidhín, Oifigeach Gaeilge, Ms. B. Ryan, Staff Officer, Ms. E. Hoffman, Clerical Officer, Mr P. Scannell, Clerical Officer, Mr R. Guilfoyle.

Thosnaigh an cruinniú leis an paidir.

Prior to the commencement of formal business Cllr. D. Connolly, with prior notice to and the agreement of the Cathaoirleach, raised the issue of Bus Eireann's recent decision to cancel the routes 20 and X20 between Galway and Dublin. He said it was a retrograde step for all communities along the route. The Cathaoirleach and Members were unanimous in their support for a reversal of the decision and the importance of a strong lobby on the issue.

ITEM NO. 1 CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES OF THE FOLLOWING MEETINGS 3812

(a) Minutes of Annual Meeting held 18th June 2021

On the **PROPOSAL** of Cllr. Finnerty **SECONDED** by Cllr. Maher the minutes of the Annual Meeting held 18th June 2021 were **AGREED**.

(b) Minutes of Monthly Plenary Meeting held on 28th June 2021

On the **PROPOSAL** of Cllr. Byrne **SECONDED** by Comh Ó Curraoin the minutes of the Monthly Plenary Meeting held 28th June 2021on were **AGREED**.

ITEM NO. 2 CONSIDERATION OF REPORTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS 3813

(a) Minutes of the Planning, Environment, Agriculture & Emergency Services SPC held on 28th April 2021.

On the **PROPOSAL** of Cllr. Killilea **SECONDED** by Cllr. M Connolly the minutes of the Planning, Environment, Agriculture & Emergency Services SPC held on 28th April 2021 were **NOTED**

ITEM NO. 3 TO CONSIDER VARYING THE BASIC RATE OF THE LOCAL PROPERTY TAX IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE LOCAL PROPERTY TAX (LOCAL ADJUSTMENT FACTOR) REGULATIONS 2014. 3814

Report dated the 20th July was published on the Extranet prior to the meeting.

Mr. Mullarkey informed Members of the recent legislative changes on the Local Property Tax (LPT). He outlined the main changes as follows:

- A reduction in the rate charged from 0.18% to 0.1029%

- A widening of the bands for calculating LPT liabilities by 175%
- Property valuations to be reviewed every four years
- New properties, which are currently exempt from the LPT, will be brought into the system each November, including properties built since 2013. In County Galway there were approximately 4,600 new properties since 2013.

He advised Members that the revaluation process may take months and as the yield per local authority was not available, the Revenue Commissioners had provided updated information based on the 2021 yield which formed the basis of pre-variation allocations for 2022. The LPT baselines and the equalisation contribution would also be based on 2021 figures. He advised that there was no change to the allocation model for 2022.

Mr. Mullarkey set out the financial effect of varying the rate. He noted that the estimated yield from Local Property Tax for 2021 for County Galway was €14.737m. A 1% variation would amount to €147k and a 15% variation would amount to €2.2m.

Referring to the financial position of the Local Authority he said the estimated deficit to the end of June 2021 amounted to €450k, reflecting the impact of Covid-19 and the anticipated reduction in goods and services income. He advised Members that the Council would retain 100% of the resultant additional income collected if the decision was made to vary the LPT basic rate in 2022.

He said the budget drafting process was at a very early stage but advised the estimated expenditure reflects an increase over the 2021 budget. He noted significant cost increases on many of the inputs to the operational programmes - road making materials increased 26%, energy 10% minimum increase, building products 20% to 40%. Supplier and contractor costs will also increase. He noted other expenditure commitments such as payroll, superannuation and related increases of €1.7m.

On the income side he noted the recoupment of increased road grant allocations of €1.9m, and 80% recoupment of the national pay award costs (not confirmed). He noted a reduction in income from the IPB dividend, PEL income, NPPR income, and other income headings which are less certain than before due to the impact of Covid on economic recovery.

Mr. Mullarkey advised Members that the preliminary estimates of expenditure and income for 2022 indicated an excess of expenditure over income of a minimum of €4.5m.

Noting the estimated budget deficit, the Chief Executive reminded Members that there was no increase in LPT since 2017 despite the increasing costs. He said the consequences of this was a reduction in the services the citizens of Galway get in addition to making it difficult to maintain services at the levels and standards required. He stressed that the Council fall further behind every time it refused to generate the revenue needed, affecting all areas from road maintenance, housing maintenance to planning enforcement and more. He noted that while there was a certain responsibility on national government to provide funding, local government must raise the revenue required to provide basic services.

In order to grow and expand the services provided he said it was his intention to use an increase in LPT, in part, to leverage additional funding, by providing matching funding for additional programs. In the past 2-3 years he noted Galway County Council brought in €29m million in this way. He advised Members that at rate of 10%, an additional €500,000 put into the budget for match funding would draw in €5m into Galway County Council to support a range of projects.

He advised Members that there was an endless range of investments required to take the council forward not least to maintain existing services and not let them deteriorate any further. He referenced a recent workforce analysis which indicated the staffing situation in the organisation was not sustainable. He advised that the council cannot deliver services to the desired level and standard with current staffing levels. Recruitment of additional staff was required in a number of priority areas including climate change, waste enforcement, planning enforcement, MDs, active travel, greenways among others.

He advised there was a considerable number of projects underway across the organisation aimed at improving services and achieving efficiency through technology. He noted Galway County Council would pilot the implementation of the e-Planning project from October. Other projects such as the modernisation of the fleet in context of

the green agenda and the modernization of parking to facilities with cashless payments etc required investment. He noted other areas such as burial ground provision and unfinished housing estates would also benefit from investment.

Regarding baseline funding and central government support, he acknowledged there was a structural weakness in the baseline funding since 2015. Across a broad range of indicators he noted, Galway County Council fare poorly in comparison with other local authorities such as Donegal, Mayo, Kerry and Tipperary, which are similar in terms of size and scale. He said it was not sustainable and would not be fixed by an increase in the LPT. He stressed a correction was required by central government and the current review of the LPT created an opportunity for central government to address this baseline issue.

He informed Members that the four comparator local authorities mentioned all increased their LPT in 2021. He noted Galway County Council was one of only four local authorities outside of Dublin who didn't increase LPT last year. He advised Members that increasing the LPT would offer the strongest possible case to get an increase on our baseline funding from central government. He recommended Members approve a variation of 15% in the Local Property Tax.

The following queries and points were raised by Cllrs. Byrne, Welby, Finnerty, Kinane, Carroll, Donohue, Dolan, Hoade, M. Connolly, McClearn, Sheridan, Charity, McHugh Farag, McKinsty, Canning, Thomas, Mannion, Reddington, Killilea, Broderick, Ó Cualáin & Ó Curraoin:

- We have been starved of funding due to the historical shortcomings in baseline funding. To increase the level of public services we have to play our part regarding the lack of funding.
- The time to discuss LPT is too short. It should be discussed in April or May to allow for a full and proper debate.
- A decision was made to increase the LPT in 2017 and we didn't get anything from government last time.

- We must not forget the proposed amalgamation of Galway City and Galway County. Why should Galway County penalise people at a difficult time when Galway City don't.
- The council has been deprived of staff for years. Members have to do their duty to protect the services across the county. Staff cannot continue to work under the stressful conditions they have been working under.
- There was no submissions or engagement from the public because the public notice wasn't simplified. The matter was raised last year. We need more clarity for the public.
- People aren't getting value for money for the LPT.
- This is a government problem; Galway County Council have not been adequately funded since 2012 leading to a shortfall in staffing and services.
- The sums of money are insignificant - to put the figures in perspective, the LPT increase equates to about €13 extra over 12 months.
- The LPT is a faulty fiscal policy.
- There is a pact agreement among Members not to increase LPT during this Council's term.
- It's discriminatory funding, other local authorities fare much better than Galway.
- It's not up to the Government to solve our problems. We need to raise the LPT, people depend on us to provide services that we cannot offer.
- We raised the LPT in 2017 and government didn't play their part. If they come up with the funds now, we can look at increasing LPT next year.
- If we increase LPT we are only balancing the books without offering extra services. The equalisation grant is inadequate, and the Minister is blackmailing Local Government into covering their shortfall.
- Members are always looking for more power, but we don't use the power we have. Members have to be responsible and make a decision to improve our services. If we don't support the management team and staff-we are undermining them.
- As it stands, hedge cutting is funded with Notice of Motion monies.
- There will be no tangible return for people with an increase in LPT.
- It's not €13 increase its €245 plus €13. People are struggling.

In response to a query from Cllr. Welby to outline the effect a 15% reduction on the LPT would have, Mr. Mullarkey said it would result in a €2.2m reduction in funds. He advised Members the estimated shortfall of €4.5m together with a further reduction of €2.2m would make balancing a budget impossible. With no increase in LPT he advised there would be a reduction in services by €4.5m.

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

- The decision on LPT has to be made by the 31st August. It is early this year but will revert to a later date next year.
- Leveraging of funding is central to increasing the LPT. If €500,000 was set aside, to provide matching funding, it would raise €5 million for extra projects.
- Without the increase we are seriously damaging our case for extra funding from Government. Other councils have all increased their LPT. It may appear that we are not helping ourselves.
- It is a huge disservice to the staff and to the council as a body to suggest that the public aren't getting services. Every constituent benefits from the services provided by Galway County Council across a wide range of areas including, the provision of social housing for 2,800 tenants, the maintenance of 7,000 kilometers of public roads, the planning process for both applicants and objectors and a wide range of groups across the county who are in receipt of Community grants provided by the Council.
- Members notice of motion money is put towards hedge trimming etc. because the revenue available to the local authority has been systematically rundown.
- When costs increase and revenue doesn't, the level of services provided will decrease.

During the course of the Members discussion motions were proposed and detailed as follows:

The first motion was **PROPOSED** by Cllr. Byrne and **SECONDED** by Cllr. Welby:

"to vary the LPT rate by an increase of 15%."

The second motion was **PROPOSED** by Cllr. Dolan **SECONDED** by Cllr. Sheridan
“to vary the LPT rate lower by 15%.”

Cllr. Charity in supporting Cllr. Dolan's motion gave notice of a counter motion in the event that Cllr. Dolan's motion is not carried. The motion was as follows:

“that there be no increase in the Local Property Tax and the standard rate maintained for the forthcoming year.”

Cllr. Cronnelly indicated that he would be seconding the motion notice of which was given by Cllr. Charity.

The Meetings Administrator advised that as two motions were proposed and with notice given of a further motion/amendment a vote was required to determine the substantive motion. He explained that a vote on the amendment proposed by Cllr. Dolan would proceed first to determine the substantive motion. In the event Cllr. Dolan's proposal was carried it would become the substantive motion, which would then be subject to the amendment/counter motion prior notice of which had been given by Cllr. Charity. In the event Cllr. Dolan's motion was not carried, Cllr. Byrne's Motion would remain the substantive motion which would then be subject to the amendment proposed by Cllr. Charity. In response to Cllr. Charity, the Meetings Administrator confirmed that Cllr. Charity could with agreement withdraw his motion following the outcome of the vote on Cllr. Dolan's motion.

To decide on the substantive motion the Cathaoirleach proceeded to take the vote on the following motion **PROPOSED** by Cllr. Dolan **SECONDED** by Cllr. Sheridan.

“I propose that we vary the LPT rate lower by 15%.”

The following was the result:

For 6

Cllr. Charity

Cllr. Cronnelly

Comh. Ó Cualáin

Cllr. Curley

Cllr. Dolan

Cllr. Sheridan

Against 26

Cllr. Broderick	Cllr. Byrne	Cllr. Canning
Cllr. Carroll	Cllr. Collins	Cllr. Cuddy
Cllr. Donohue	Cllr. Finnerty	Cllr. Geraghty
Cllr. Hoade	Cllr. P. Keaveney	Cllr. Killilea
Cllr. Kinane	Cllr. King	Comh. Mac an Iomaire
Cllr. Maher	Cllr. Mannion	Cllr. McClearn
Cllr. McHugh Farag	Cllr. McKinstry	Cllr. Murphy
Cllr. Dr Francis Parsons	Cllr. Reddington	Cllr. Roche
Cllr. Thomas	Cllr. Welby	

Abstain 6

Cllr. D. Connolly	Cllr. M. Connolly	Comh. Ó Curraoin
Cllr. Herterich Quinn	Cllr. Hynes	Cllr. Walsh

The Cathaoirleach confirmed the motion was not carried.

On the basis of the outcome of the vote, Cllr. Byrne's motion remained the substantive motion and accordingly the Cathaoirleach proceeded to take a vote on the following motion **PROPOSED** by Cllr. Charity **SECONDED** by Cllr Cronnelly:

"I propose that there be no increase in the Local Property Tax and the standard rate maintained for the forthcoming year."

The following was the result:

For 17

Cllr. Canning	Cllr. Charity	Cllr. D. Connolly
Cllr. M. Connolly	Cllr. Cronnelly	Comh. Ó Cualáin
Cllr. Curley	Cllr. Dolan	Cllr. Donohue
Cllr. Herterich Quinn	Cllr. Killilea	Cllr. Kinane
Cllr. King	Cllr. McHugh Farag	Cllr. Sheridan
Cllr. Thomas	Cllr. Walsh	

Against 16

Cllr. Broderick	Cllr. Byrne	Cllr. Carroll
Cllr. Collins	Cllr. Cuddy	Cllr. Geraghty
Cllr. P. Keaveney	Comh. Mac an Iomaire	Cllr. Maher
Cllr. Mannion	Cllr. McClearn	Cllr. McKinstry
Cllr. Murphy	Cllr. Dr. Francis Parsons	Cllr. Roche
Cllr. Welby		

Abstain 5

Comh. Ó Curraoin	Cllr. Finnerty	Cllr. Hoade
Cllr. Hynes	Cllr. Reddington	

The Cathaoirleach confirmed the motion was carried.

As the maximum allowed time for the meeting had elapsed, the Cathaoirleach with the agreement of the Members adjourned the meeting to reconvene at 10:00 am on Wednesday 28th July in GMT.

MINUTES OF DEFERRED COUNCIL MEETING OF GALWAY COUNTY COUNCIL

Held at GMIT, DUBLIN ROAD, GALWAY

Wednesday 28th July 2021 at 10:00am

CATHAOIRLEACH:

Cllr. Peter Keaveney

Cathaoirleach of the County of Galway

I LATHAIR FREISIN:

Comh./Cllrs. J. Byrne, L. Carroll, D. Collins, D. Connolly, M. Connolly, G. Cronnelly, D. Ó Cualáin, J. Cuddy, S. Curley, T. Ó Curraoin, Albert Dolan, G. Finnerty, D. Geraghty, S. Herterich Quinn, M. Hoade, M. Kinane, G. King, M. Maher, E. Mannion, J. McClearn, K. McHugh Farag, P. Murphy, A. Reddington, P. Roche, J. Sheridan, N. Thomas, S. Walsh and T. Welby.

Oifigh:

Mr J. Cullen, Chief Executive, Mr L. Hanrahan, Director of Services, Ms E. Ruane Director of Services, Mr G. Mullarkey, Head of Finance, Mr M. Owens, Director of Services/Meetings Administrator, Ms. V. Loughnane – Moran, Senior Planner, Mr B. Dunne, Executive Planner, Ms. I. Martyn, Senior Staff Officer, Ms. U. Ní Eidhín, Oifigeach Gaeilge, Ms. B. Ryan, Staff Officer, Mr P. Scannell, Clerical Officer, Mr R. Guilfoyle.

ITEM NO. 4 TO CONSIDER REPORT UNDER SECTION 183 OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 2001 ON THE DISPOSAL OF LANDS AT CLAREMONT, OUGHTERARD, CO. GALWAY - 0.035 HECTARES. 3815

Statutory Notice issued in accordance with Section 183(1)(b) and report dated 14th July 2021 was published on the Extranet prior to the meeting.

On the **PROPOSAL** of Cllr. Welby **SECONDED** by Cllr. Walsh it was **AGREED** to defer the consideration of the report under section 183 of the Local Government Act 2001 on the disposal of lands at Claremont, Oughterard, Co. Galway - 0.035 hectares.

ITEM NO. 5 TO CONSIDER REPORT UNDER SECTION 183 OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 2001 ON DISPOSAL OF LANDS AT LODGE, HEADFORD, CO. GALWAY - 0.1585 ACRES. 3816

Statutory Notice issued in accordance with Section 183(1)(b) and report dated 24th June 2021 was published on the Extranet prior to the meeting.

On the **PROPOSAL** of Cllr. Hoade **SECONDED** by Cllr. Reddington it was **AGREED** to defer the consideration of the report under section 183 of the Local Government Act 2001 on the disposal of lands at Lodge, Headford, Co. Galway - 0.1585 acres.

ITEM NO. 6 FILLING OF CASUAL VACANCY AS THE CHAIRPERSON OF THE PLANNING, ENVIRONMENT, AGRICULTURE & EMERGENCY SERVICES SPC. 3817

Report dated the 20th July 2021 was published on the Extranet prior to the meeting.

It was agreed to defer the filling of the filling of the casual vacancy as the Chairperson of the Planning, Environment, Agriculture and Emergency Services SPC arising from the resignation of Cllr. M. Connolly.

ITEM NO. 7 FILLING OF CASUAL VACANCY AS THE CHAIRPERSON OF THE COMMUNITY & CULTURAL DEVELOPMENT SPC. 3818

Report dated the 20th July 2021 was published on the Extranet prior to the meeting.

On the **PROPOSAL** of Cllr. Finnerty **SECONDED** by Cllr. Kinane it was **AGREED** that Cllr. Herterich Quinn be appointed as Chair of the Community & Cultural Development SPC.

ITEM NO. 8 TO CONSIDER THE MANAGEMENT REPORT – JULY 2021 IN ACCORDANCE WITH SECTION 136(2) OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 2001 (AS AMENDED) **3819**

Report dated the 23rd July 2021 was published on the Extranet prior to the meeting.

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

Matters arising

Comh. D. Ó Cualáin queried when the void units in the Connemara area would come back in to use. Cllr. Curley sought clarification on whether void units included all uninhabitable houses or all vacant houses.

In response, Mr. Hanrahan confirmed that the houses in Connemara were short term voids. He clarified that short term void units are secondhand properties which come back into Galway County Council's ownership when for example somebody passes away. The maintenance team will immediately start the turnaround of the property - rewiring, replumbing etc. At the same time the Housing Liaison Officers will start the re-allocation of the properties.

He advised the details provided in the Management Report relate to vacant voids only, new builds are not included in the list. He noted estates are opened up on a stage-by-stage basis as property cannot be allocating while construction is taking place on site. He advised there are 238 new properties approx. being built at the moment.

Cllr. Hoade referenced the notification from the Minister advising of the process relating to the extension of the Development Plan review process and advised of a motion to extend the process and the current public consultation period on the Draft County Development Plan. The Cathaoirleach acknowledged the motion and indicated that it would be considered under Cathaoirleach's Business.

ITEM NO. 9 TO CONSIDER AND IF DEEMED APPROPRIATE APPROVE IN PRINCIPLE THE POTENTIAL LEASE OF LANDS IN THE OWNERSHIP OF GALWAY COUNTY COUNCIL AND GALWAY CITY COUNCIL, INCORPORATING HANGERS (2) AND FORMER AIRPORT FIRE STATION, COMPRISING OF 4.4 ACRES (1.7 HECTARES) AT THE SITE FORMERLY KNOWN AS GALWAY AIRPORT IN CARNMORE, CO. GALWAY **3820**

Report dated the 8th July 2021 was published on the Extranet prior to the meeting.

The following queries and points were raised by Cllrs. Collins, Carroll, Cuddy, Murphy, McHugh, McClearn, Ó Curraoin, Welby, Geraghty Sheridan, Kinnane, Hoade, M. Connolly, Cronnelly, Byrne, Reddington & Ó Cualáin

- The development of the film industry was welcome but concern raised regarding the lack of a master plan for the site.
- Welcomed the investment. Danú are being backed by Údarás and the Western Development Commission with an investment in the region of over €3 million.
- Had a decision on the future of the site already been made without consultation with the elected members. Concern there was no reference to the Galway Flying Club in the draft County Development Plan. Had the emergency use of the airport been considered by Galway City and County Council. Concern raised that air ambulance cannot land there as a publicly owned airstrip, would commercial airlines be restricted in the airspace over the airport.
- The proposal was welcomed news for the graduates of GMIT and NUIG studying film and production.
- Massive opportunity to bring investment to Galway and to provide the skilled crew living in Galway an opportunity to live and work here.
- Was this proposal discussed by the joint CPGs? The City council had already approved the proposal.
- The airport is a huge loss to Galway. We need to hold onto the infrastructure we have.
- Shame to lose the airport considering what has been lost in Galway in relation to our railways
- Concern that the process to agree in principle to a lease may give Danú a veto over the Air club.
- The process of the lease is unclear. Other leases required in dept reviews. Members are here to discuss and raise issues not to rubber stamp agreements.

- A plan to develop aviation in Galway is needed. It should look at other suitable sites and preserve lands for an airport in the future.
- Appears to be a lack of communication between City and County Councils.
- It would be a great legacy of Galway 2020 to set up a film industry in Galway.
- Galway and the West has huge potential for offshore wind flotillas, and we have the key infrastructure in aviation which is required to access these installations. Galway may become the Aberdeen of the West - something to consider as part of any masterplan.
- If this brings half the success to the east of the county, as it has to Conamara, it will be very worthwhile

Members Queries were responded to as follows by Mr Hanrahan:

- The Law Agent advised there was no point in doing a section 183 and then negotiating a lease. The unique process had been developed to avoid bringing a prepared lease for signing without getting input from Members. It also provided the company with assurances for investors and in relation to their planning application. This approval in principle allows them to talk to investors and planners on what they require on the site.
- The site is only 4 acres out of 100 acres. Danú will only have access to that part of the site. They said the hangars would have to be soundproofed. They will have no say over other activities on the site. They will have no say over airspace commercial or otherwise.
- As joint owners of the site it was to be presented at both council's July meeting. Galway City Council's July meeting took place ahead of Galway County's July meeting, this is the reason they approved it first. A special meeting can be arranged if required.
- The site was purchased not as an airport, but as a long-term investment for future development beneficial for both the County and City. The long-term development was reviewed by Future Analytics who examined the potential uses for the site. Use of the site as a commercial airport was extremely limited. Galway County Council is a shareholder of Ireland West Airport, Knock.
- The airspace is controlled by the Irish Aviation Authority not by Danú.

- Future Analytics report was the first report on the site. The masterplan will be developed overtime following the county development plan process.
- It is not a rubberstamping exercise it is a reserved function. Approval in principle gives authority to engage further around the conditions of the lease.
- The investment of €3m is very good for the site, but it is just a start.

Mr. Hanrahan said he hoped to hold a workshop or teams meeting prior to next meeting to address any potential concerns.

On the **PROPOSAL** of Cllr. Collins **SECONDED** by Cllr. Carroll the Members **AGREED** to approve in principle the potential lease of lands in the ownership of Galway County Council and Galway City Council, incorporating hangers (2) and former airport fire station, comprising of 4.4 acres (1.7 hectares) at the site formerly known as Galway Airport in Carnmore, Co. Galway.

ITEM NO. 10 TO CONSIDER FINANCIAL REPORTS ON THE ACCOUNTS OF GALWAY COUNTY COUNCIL FOR THE YEAR 2021, INCLUDING FOR THE PERIOD ENDING JUNE 2021. **3821**

Report dated the 20th July 2021 was published on the Extranet prior to the meeting.

The Financial Report on the accounts of Galway County Council for the year 2021, including for the period ending June 2021 was **NOTED**.

Mr. Mullarkey advised Members that the expenditure to the end of June was broadly in line with expectations. Similar to Q1 the income from Goods and Services that were adversely affected in 2020 by COVID-19 continued to be impacted in 2021. He informed Members the Heads of Finance had made a submission to the Department similar to last year. There was no response to date, but he noted that it was the end of December last year when the Department finalised their figures. He confirmed the Rates Waiver Scheme will continue to the end of September for qualifying businesses.

Cllr. Curley sought clarification on the expenditure under the Roads Transport and Safety heading. He noted only 27% of the total budget for 2020 was spend and queried if the Roads program works would be completed. Mr. Mullarkey confirmed that the bulk

of the Roads program is completed in Q2 and Q3 and the figure is consistent with the position in previous years.

ITEM NO. 11 CHIEF EXECUTIVE'S BUSINESS & CORRESPONDENCE. **3822**

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

- Letter dated 24.06.21 from Meath County Council – Resolutions; German Sparkasse Community Banking Model & Transport Support Scheme.
- Letter dated 25.06.21 from Waterford City & County Council – Resolution; Labour Court Recommendation - Adult Education Tutors.
- Letter dated 25.06.21 from Clare County Council - Resolution; Fracking
- Letter dated 28.06.21 from Clare County Council - Resolution; Women's Health
- Letter dated 29.06.21 from Sligo County Council – Resolution; Wastewater Treatment systems
- Letter dated 5.7.21 sent from County Secretary to Eamon Ryan TD, Minister for Transport – Resolution; Designated Disabled Parking Spaces.
- Letter dated 6.07.21 sent from Wicklow County Council to Minister Darragh O'Brien TD, Minister for Housing, Local Government and Heritage – Automated External Defibrillators (AED's)
- Letter dated 7.07.21 from Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown County Council - Resolution; purchase of goods from illegally occupied territories.
- Letter dated 13.07.21 from Mayors for Peace – Vision for Peaceful Transformation to a Sustainable World.
- Mayors for Peace - News Flash - June 2021 /No.138
- Letter dated 13.07.21 from Clare County Council – Resolution; HVP Vaccination Programme.
- Letter dated 13.7.21 from Clare County Council – Resolution; Funding for Defibrillators and training
- Letter dated 13.07.21 from Limerick City & County Council – Resolution; Epilepsy Ireland campaign.

ITEM NO. 12 CATHAOIRLEACH'S BUSINESS. **3823**

The following Motions were submitted:

On the **PROPOSAL** of Cllr. Hoade **SECONDED** by Cllr. Finnerty.

“As part of the 2021 Planning Act in view of the disruption caused by the Covid 19 pandemic and particularly in view of the recent upsurge of the disease, due to the Delta variant , and the difficulties this has caused to having an in person public dialogue on the Galway County Development Plan in the normal way both with Council Officials and the Council Elected Members, Galway County Council now resolve under the powers on it through the enactment of the Planning and Development (amendment) no3 bill 2021 to extend the period of public consultation of the Galway County Council Draft Plan by 12 months max to ensure that despite COVID, the public, the elected members and the executive have the opportunity and time to enact a plan that best represents the ambitions and interests of the people of County Galway .”

That in view of the disruption caused by the COVID 19 pandemic and particularly in recent times by the rapid spread of the Delta variant, Galway County Council resolve to extend the period for public consultation on the Galway County Development Plan by 13 weeks from the 30/7/21 to 29/10/21 in order to facilitate a greater engagement with the public than has been possible heretofore because of COVID 19 pandemic.”

Cllr. Byrne sought clarification on the statutory guidelines regarding the extension of the County Development Plan. In response, Mr. Owens confirmed there was provision for an extension. He set out the steps to include as follows:

- Initiate the process to make a decision to extend the County Development Plan.
- A strategic environmental assessment (SEA) and/or an appropriate assessment (AA) may be required.
- A consultation process to give notice to the Minister, the OPR, An Bord Pleanála and others. Public notice of the proposed extension allowing four weeks for submissions. On receipt of submissions the Chief Executive would have four weeks to prepare a report to summarise the submissions.
- A special meeting would be held to decide to extend or not to extend the development plan up to a period of 12 months.

Mr. Owens advised Members that the final decision on whether to extend or not extend the development plan could not be decided at the meeting. He noted that the timeframe for the steps involved may vary if an SEA and/or an AA were required, however, given the extent of designations in the county, he expected the minimum timeframe required may be 28-30 weeks.

He advised the Members that they could not pre-empt the outcome of this process. He said therefore the only decision to be made by the Members at the meeting was in relation to initiating a process that may or may not result in an extension of the period of the Development Plan. He advised therefore that it was necessary that the current statutory timelines around the draft plan must continue in parallel to the extension process, if initiated by the Members. He stressed the public consultation period due to close Friday 30th July at 4:30pm would remain irrespective of any decision the Members make in relation to initiating the process allowing for the possibility of an extension. He advised that should the Members initiate the process for an extension only on the conclusion of the process and in the event of a decision to extend the timeframe could the existing statutory timeframe for the draft development plan be revisited and revised.

The following queries and points were raised by Cllrs. Cuddy, Dolan, Welby, Maher, Carroll, McClearn, Mannion, Roche, M. Connolly, O Cualáin, O Curraoin, Finnerty, Reddington, Kinane, Geraghty & Byrne,

- There is no point extending the plan. The Department hasn't drawn up the draft Rural Housing Guidelines.
- It's a disservice to the people if we don't initiate the process to extend the plan.
- The date is set we cannot extend the deadline date 30th of July.
- Every member had the opportunity to make submissions to the 30th of July. There is still an opportunity for members to make submissions.
- Reservations in relation to the cost elements of a possible SEA and/or AA report and their impact on timelines which may impact other plans.
- Extending the plan will achieve nothing but it may send out a wrong message that we can change things. The Members ability to influence the development plan has diminished due to constraints placed by national and European legislation.

- Compliment the work of the planning staff and engagement through workshops and social media. Radio interviews were a new and welcome initiative explaining how people could engage with the process.
- Its disingenuous to look for an extension as there was exhaustive discussion on the draft plan. A huge amount of work was done through the workshops and Members had the opportunity to discuss and debate the plan at length.
- There have been restrictions in terms of access to county buildings and libraries with Covid restrictions. The legislation allows an extension of the plan so no reason not to allow the public maximum opportunity to engage.
- Members of the public feel they weren't afforded the opportunity to engage fully. They weren't given adequate notice and may not have access to social media. Is there a potential of a legal challenge?
- The provision has been made that the Rural Housing Guidelines will ultimately form part of the plan. It is not possible to change them, we need to move forward.
- How much would the process cost.
- The development plan needs to be done properly and cost should not form part of the discussion.
- The draft process hasn't yet finished. The public can still come to the members.
- Would the proposal to extend the consultation period result in the Planning Department having only two weeks to prepare their report.

Cllr. Hoade acknowledged the work of planning staff to date but said she was looking for an extension of public consultation to allow the public to have proper engagement. She informed Members that other local authorities had put these motions forward.

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

- There was a legal provision to extend the development plan, it was a reserved function and a matter for the Members to decide on whether to proceed. The current statutory timelines around the draft plan must continue to be adhered to until such time as the process for an extension, if initiated, was concluded with a decision to extend the time period.
- The draft plan must be put on public display for a minimum period of 10 weeks. Following this, the Chief Executive Report must be prepared within 12 weeks.

Any extension of the public consultation period would reduce the period available for the Chief Executive to prepare his report.

- A decision to initiate the process to extend the development plan would have implications in terms of resources. In addition to the work on the draft plan, staff would have to devote time to the extension process, including a procurement process to engage consultants to prepare an SEA and/or an AA and a public consultation process with an associated with CE Report.
- There would be financial implications possibly in the region of €100k. The funding would come from the council's budget as there was no central funding available.
- Administrative processes are open to possible challenge by way of Judicial Review.

The Chief Executive said, in his experience of County Development Plans, the level of public engagement on the current draft plan was much greater than any previous plans. He noted the timeline for the Chief Executive's report following the closing of submissions was very short. He strongly advised Members not to interfere in the current process which he considered had been very robust.

The Meetings Administrator advised the motion proposed was being dealt with as urgent business relating to a function of the Council. In accordance with Standing Order 25 he advised that it was necessary for the majority of the Members present to approve the taking of motion. The Cathoirleach called for a vote. The following was the result:

For 12

Cllr. M. Connolly	Comh. Ó Cualáin	Cllr. Curley
Cllr. Dolan	Cllr. Finnerty	Cllr. Herterich Quinn
Cllr. Hoade	Cllr. Kinane	Cllr. King
Cllr. Sheridan	Cllr. Thomas	Cllr Walsh

Against 15

Cllr. Byrne	Cllr. Carroll	Cllr. Collins
Cllr. D. Connolly	Cllr. Cronnelly	Cllr. Cuddy
Cllr. Geraghty	Cllr. P. Keaveney	Cllr Maher
Cllr. Mannion	Cllr. McClearn	Cllr. Murphy
Cllr. Reddington	Cllr. Roche	Cllr. Welby

Abstain 2

Comh. Ó Curraoin

Cllr. McHugh Farag

The Cathaoirleach confirmed the majority of Members present did not approve taking the motion.

In the context of the decision under Item 6 to defer the filling of the casual vacancy as the Chairperson of the Planning, Environment, Agriculture and Emergency Services SPC arising from the resignation of Cllr. M. Connolly, on the **PROPOSAL** of Cllr. Finnerty **SECONDED** by Cllr. Hoade and Cllr. M. Connolly having rescinded his resignation notice as of the 26th July 2021; it was agreed "Cllr. M. Connolly remain as Chair of the Planning SPC for the remaining future".

ITEM NO. 15 VOTES OF SYMPATHY / CONGRATULATIONS

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A resolution of sympathy was extended to the following:

- Mary Gantley, Newtown, Tubber, Co. Galway.
- Ignatius Cahill, Glenbrack, Gort, Co. Galway.
- Nancy Cusack, Cloone, Gort, Co. Galway.
- Fiona O'Malley, Ballsbridge, Dublin.
- Fiona Kelly, Ros Rua, Cregcarragh Village, Cregmore, Claregalway, Co. Galway.
- Peter O'Flaherty, Doire Né, Costelloe, Co. Galway.
- Geraldine Tuttle and Family, Milltown Road, Tuam, Co. Galway.
- Helen Colleran and Family, Garracloon, Ballygaddy Road, Tuam, Co. Galway.
- Bobby Gardner, Northgate Street, Athenry, Co. Galway.
- Philip McLynn, Bawn, Glasson, Westmeath / Athlone, Co. Westmeath.
- The Cogavin Family, Mountbellew, Co. Galway.
- Cllr. Donagh Killilea, 171 Palace Fields, Tuam, Co. Galway.
- Mary Ward, Graveyard Road, Kilkerrin, Ballinasloe, Co. Galway.
- The Keane Family, Mountbellew, Co. Galway.

- Lisa Glynn, Insihroo, Kinvara, Co. Galway.
- Sean and Maura Keane, Carheeney, Tubber, Co. Galway.

As the maximum allowed time for the meeting had elapsed, the Cathaoirleach with the agreement of the Members closed the meeting with the remaining Motions deferred to the September Plenary Meeting.

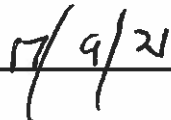
Chriochnaigh an Cruinniú Ansin.

Submitted, Signed & Approved: _____

Cathaoirleach:

_____

Date:

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