

COMHAIRLE CHONTAE NA GAILLIMHE
MINUTES OF MONTHLY MEETING OF GALWAY COUNTY COUNCIL
Held at ÁRAS AN CHONTAE, PROSPECT HILL
Monday, 27th November 2023 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. Collins, D. Connolly, M. Connolly, G. Cronnelly, D. Ó Cualáin, J. Cuddy, T. Ó Curraoin, G. Donohue, G. Finnerty, D. Geraghty, M. Hoade, P. Keaveney, D. Kelly, M. Kinane, G. King, P. Mac an Iomaire, M. Maher, E. Mannion, J. McClearn, S. McHugh, P.J. Murphy, Dr. E. Francis Parson, A. Reddington, P. Roche, J. Sheridan, N. Thomas, S. Walsh and T. Welby.

Baill ar líne: S. Curley, S. Herterich Quinn, D. Killilea, A. McKinstry.

Oifigh: Mr. L. Conneally, Chief Executive, Mr. L. Hanrahan, Director of Services, Mr. M. Owens, Director of Services, Mr. D. Pender, Director of Services, Ms. Eileen Ruane, Director of Services, Mr. Alan Farrell, Director of Services, Ms. K. O'Connor, Head of Finance, Ms. J. Brann, Meetings Administrator, Ms. S. Craughwell, Administrative Officer, Ms. L. Keady, Administrative Office, Mr. J. Neary, Tourism Officer, Mr. M. O'Donnchadha, Oifigeach Forbartha na Gaeilge, Officer. Ms. H. Riordan, Assistant Staff Officer, Ms. B. Reilly, Clerical Officer.

Thosnaigh an cruinniú leis an paidir.

ITEM NO.1 CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES OF THE FOLLOWING MEETINGS

4241

On the **PROPOSAL** of Cllr. Maher **SECONDED** by Comh. Ó Curraoin the minutes of the Monthly Plenary Meeting held on 23rd October 2023 were **AGREED**.

Mr. Hanrahan deputised for Mr. Conneally when he had to leave the meeting.

In response to a query raised by Cllr. Curley, Ms. Ruane said that the Council are waiting for the software to stream the meetings to be developed. This is expected in Q4 of 2023. She will update the members once she has further details.

Cllr. Kinane requested an update from the Director on the Kilcolgan to Clarenbridge cycleway, as referenced on page 12 of the October plenary minutes. Mr. Pender promised an update before the end of the week.

ITEM NO.2 CONSIDERATION OF REPORTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS **4242**

On the **PROPOSAL** of Cllr. Byrne **SECONDED** by Cllr. Roche the minutes of Corporate Policy Group held of Corporate Policy Group held on 17th October 2023 were **NOTED**.

On the **PROPOSAL** of Cllr. McKinstry **SECONDED** by Cllr. Kinane the minutes of Climate Change & Biodiversity SPC held on 12th April 2023 were **NOTED**.

On the **PROPOSAL** of Cllr. Hoade **SECONDED** by Cllr. Kinane the minutes of Economic Development & Enterprise SPC held on 19th July 2023 were **NOTED**.

On the **PROPOSAL** of Cllr. Curley **SECONDED** by Cllr. Hoade the minutes of Economic Development & Enterprise SPC held on 8th November 2023 were **NOTED**.

ITEM NO.3 TO CONSIDER AND IF DEEMED APPROPRIATE TO APPROVE COUNTY GALWAY TOURISM STRATEGY 2023-2031 AND ASSOCIATED ENVIRONMENTAL REPORTS.

4243

6 reports were published on the Extranet prior to the meeting.

The Cathaoirleach welcomed Mr. John Neary Galway County Council's new Tourism Officer to the meeting. He also introduced Ms. Ali Curran, Director CHL Consulting & Associates, who gave a presentation to the meeting on the County Galway Tourism Strategy 2023-2031.

Mr. Farrell thanked the members for their input on the strategy. He addressed the Natura Impact Statement of the Draft Strategy, which reviewed the impacts arising from the plan which found that, without the implementation of mitigation measures and recommendations, the plan would have the potential to impact upon the integrity of European sites. In response, mitigation measures and recommendations had been set out and are required to be implemented, where appropriate, into the Draft Galway Tourism Strategy. The examination of the Draft Galway Tourism Strategy and the potential adverse effects associated with its implementation has been completed with due regard to the content of the plan and identification of individual actions. Galway County Council has incorporated the finalised mitigation measures and recommendations into the Draft Tourism strategy and implementation of the strategy where appropriate and relevant. In light of this, he continued, it can be concluded that, for the purposes of article 6(3) of the Habitats Directive, the implementation of the Draft Galway Tourism strategy, alone or in- combination with other plans or programs, will not have adverse effects on the integrity of any European sites.

Ms. Curran thanked the members for their considerable amount of engagement and contribution to the strategy. She explained that Galway has a diverse topography which they wanted to capture in the plan. She outlined the project brief "an integrated and sustainable County tourism strategy to guide the future development, integration

and growth of the tourism sector across County Galway, encompassing all areas of the county outside of the municipal limits of Galway city". The presentation continued outlining the scope of the strategy, the strategic context, the consultation and engagement, the market characteristics and targets, explaining the strategic zones contained in the plan, strategic goals, implementation and finally the environmental screening. She touched on the key policy themes highlighting the following as distinct to Galway, an emphasis on green and blue infrastructure and associated amenities and experiences and enhanced recognition of the value of culture and the arts. She informed the meeting of the extensive consultation and engagement that has taken place since the process began in March. She explained the need to create sticking destinations to entice tourists to stay the night. The goal of the plan is to increase revenue by 30 million euro by 2030 and to increase visitors by 100,000.

Mr. Farrell added that the strategy assessment and mitigation measures align closely with those included in the Galway County Development Plan 2022-2028.

The Cathaoirleach thanked Ms. Curran for the comprehensive document and highlighted the importance of tourism as a huge finance generator.

Members thanked CHL for the inclusion of particular areas in the County Galway Tourism Strategy and for the considerable work that was carried out.

Members raised the following points and queries:

- A wish to see a greater promotion of East Galway.
- Capital investment needed for a visitor centre in Knockma.
- The absence of Burren Nature Sanctuary in the Strategy.
- The proposed increase of growth of 3% was considered very low.

- That Clare Geopark should be extended into South Galway.
- Importance of short-term letting to tourism in Kinvara and the constraints that the requirement of planning permission for Air BnB's creates in rent pressure zones.

Mr. Farrell said that the implementation of zones gives structure to the strategy, linking areas to towns. The Geopark is an important development which the Council are supporting. Hidden heartlands strategy and Destination Experience Development Plans are overarching documents that feed into it. This plan provides more detail. East Galway has been prioritised as an emerging tourism destination. The Council has made a commitment to provide additional resources to the tourism development team. Regarding the Burren Nature Sanctuary he said that the Council would be delighted to work with them.

Ms. Curran responded that not every site in Galway has been included as the data is not available. She acknowledged that the growth figure of 3% is a conservative one. The pandemic has increased the awareness of the possibility of non-predictable events and so it is best to have stable targets that are achievable.

Cllr. Charity thanked the team for the comprehensive document. However, he was disappointed that his area was overlooked. That Oughterard, the anchor town zone 4 has no real connection to Annaghdown or Claregalway. Furthermore Annaghdown and Claregalway were not mentioned in the strategy. He stated that it is four years since a motion was passed on the Greenway between Headford and Galway. Cong is strewn with rubbish and has been neglected in the plan. He stated that he cannot vote in favour of the plan as it does not represent his area.

Members raised the following points and queries:

- Ms. Curran and Mr. Farrell were invited to a meeting of Portumna Forest Park committee.
- Two Tourism Officers are required in the Council.

- Accessibility in the Conemara area, Galway City Ring Road, N59, wheelchair accessibility.
- Shoulder season needs to be supported.
- Resources are required for the Tourism Officer to put in place the goals of the strategy. Community groups require support and information.
- Day trippers need to be enticed to stay in the area.

Mr. Farrell responded to Cllr. Charity that there are several strategies in the plan which will be of benefit to the areas that he has mentioned and that he is willing to work with them. UNESCO focus on areas with heritage value, such as Knockma and he is happy to have further discussions. To Cllr. Kelly he responded that they are happy to meet the group. The Chief Executive is clear that this is a entire organisational strategy and he has committed additional resources to the Tourism team. Marie Mannion, Heritage Officer is a member of the Geopark steering group. One of the key themes of the strategy is to address how to lengthen the stay of visitors to an area. He added that John will be introduced to the partners and different networks in operation in the area.

Ms. Curran explained to Cllr. Charity that the zones are not intended to segregate the experiences of the tourists, but to widen what is offered in the area. Not everything can be named in the strategy. Ecclesiastical heritage is important and is being looked at nationally.

Members raised the following points and queries:

- Portumna suffers from a lack of bednights due to the lack of a hotel in the town.
- The recent impact of Storm Debi and sewage system in Clarenbridge.
- The report does not address the public transport deficiencies.
- Importance of person-to-person referral and tour ambassadors.
- Green tourism and sustainability and getting visitors to stay.

Mr. Farrell responded to Cllr. McClearn that collaboration is required between the Council and other agencies. The strategy is built around the community. It will be

strengthened with more resources and positive working relationships. Ambassadors are hugely important within Fáilte Ireland projects. The oyster has huge importance and we will work with the area to overcome the effects of storm Debbie.

Ms. Curran added that the public transport is linked with Fáilte Ireland and nationally the TII. Seasonal transport infrastructure is trickier to address as it is not necessary for residents, it does however support local employment and easier means of travelling.

Members raised the following points and queries:

- Wild Atlantic Way requires more facilities such as bins and picnic tables.
- The Summer Plan, beaches are lacking facilities such as, bins, toilets and cobblestones restrict access at Cleggan Pier.
- Works required at the Seaweed and Heritage Centre.
- R336 not fit for purpose.
- Cost of hotels and car hire.
- Extension into agri-tourism.
- Need to direct tourists to amenities.
- Queried if a Just Transition Officer has been appointed.
- Could short-term letting be addressed at the next Planning SPC meeting.

Mr. Farrell responded that he welcomed the comments from the elected members and emphasized the important role that they play. The facilities on the Wild Atlantic Way are being looked at, Summer Ready Plan is the next phase. The document is a collaboration project for the entire organization and all units will be involved in its delivery, along with the private sector. Where costs of services of high there needs to be a desire to ensure that the experience is good. Agri-tourism is an area that the BIA innovator campus would be involved. The strategy requires agencies to come together to unlock the potential. Projects will need to be prioritised, they will not be delivered overnight.

The Chief Executive said that tourism is an important area that will require a large amount of work and collaboration with communities. Regarding the Just Transition Officer, he explained that the Council have been unable to find a suitable candidate but have recommenced the recruitment process for the position.

On the **PROPOSAL** of Cllr. McHugh **SECONDED** by Cllr. Maher it was **AGREED** to approve the County Galway Tourism Strategy 2023-2031 and associated Environmental reports.

ITEM NO.4 TO CONSIDER A DATE AND TIME FOR THE DECEMBER PLENARY MEETING **4244**

On the **PROPOSAL** of Cllr. Maher **SECONDED** by Cllr. Geraghty it was **AGREED** to hold the December Monthly Meeting of Plenary Council on Monday 18th December 2023 at 11am.

ITEM NO.5 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). **4245**

Report dated 16th November 2023 was published on the Extranet prior to the meeting.

On the **PROPOSAL** of Cllr. McClearn **SECONDED** by Cllr. Hoade it was **AGREED** to authorise Cllr. Maher to attend AILG Module 5 'Elected Member Personal Security – Positive Home, Workplace and Mobile Security Practices' at The Kilmore Hotel, Cavan on 19th October 2023. (Retrospective Approval).

On the **PROPOSAL** of Cllr. Reddington **SECONDED** by Cllr. McClearn it was **AGREED** to authorise Cllrs. Broderick, Welby and Comh. Ó Curraoin to attend LAMA Training Seminar - "Climate Action, Sustainable Businesses and Balanced Regional Development" at The Ard Rí House Hotel, Tuam on 25th and 26th of October 2023. (Retrospective Approval).

On the **PROPOSAL** of Cllr. Reddington **SECONDED** by Cllr. King it was **AGREED** to authorise Cllrs. King and Hoade to attend AILG Module 6 'Road Safety – New Speed Limit Policy and Safeguarding Road Users' at The Clayton Hotel, Galway on 18th of November 2023. (Retrospective Approval).

On the **PROPOSAL** of Cllr. Reddington **SECONDED** by Cllr. King it was **AGREED** to authorise Cllr. Roche to attend AILG Module 6 'Road Safety – New Speed Limit Policy and Safeguarding Road Users' at The Tower Hotel, Waterford on 16th of November 2023. (Retrospective Approval).

ITEM NO. 6 TO NOTE THE SUMMARY OF PROCEEDINGS OF CONFERENCES ATTENDED IN ACCORDANCE WITH SECTION 142 (5f) OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 2001 (AS AMENDED).

4246

Report dated 20th November 2023 was published on the Extranet prior to the meeting.

On the **PROPOSAL** of Cllr. Hoade **SECONDED** by Cllr. McClearn the summary of proceedings at conferences attended were **NOTED**.

ITEM NO. 7 TO CONSIDER THE MANAGEMENT REPORT – NOVEMBER 2023 IN ACCORDANCE WITH SECTION 136(2) OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 2001 (AS AMENDED).

4247

Report dated 24th November 2023 was published on the Extranet prior to the meeting.

The Management Report – November 2023, in accordance with Section 136(2) of the Local Government Act 2001 (As Amended) was **NOTED**.

Members raised the following points and queries:

- Thanked the Executive for the comprehensive Management Report.

- Clarification sought on water utilities provision in Ballinasloe for the of units to be built for Ukrainian people displaced by war.
- Clarification sought on the 406 vacant properties in the report.
- Impact of Notices to Quit on the Tenant in Situ Scheme.
- No mention of a mix of affordable housing in the Bundle 7 of the Social Housing PPP Programme at Ballygaddy Road, Tuam and timeline for delivery of the houses.
- Funding of €55,000 toward Castlegrove Woods Tales & Trails Group acknowledged.
- Congratulations to Creggs Rural Development Group on being named overall winner in the Climate Action & Biodiversity category in the Pride of Place All-Island Awards.
- Congratulations to Gort River Walk Group that were nominated in the Community Wellbeing category in the Pride of Place All-island Awards.
- Congratulations to Williamstown Tidy Towns on being crowned national winner of the Heritage Award sponsored by the Heritage Council.
- Queried what enquiries are made to determine if a home is to be investigated to confirm vacancy.
- The expected timeline for works on the N83 now that the archaeology contract is completed. And a request for works to be carried out at night-time.
- No mention of N84 in the report, speeding is causing accidents at Clonboo, an update was requested.
- Request for overhanging branches to be addressed and information on the way they are cut.
- More clarification sought on the provision of modular homes.
- The work by Galway County Council staff in the aftermath of Storm Debi was acknowledged.
- Request for the toilets in Renville Park to remain open between October and Easter.
- Opening of the new Spiddal Waste Water Treatment Plant was acknowledged.
- Footpath on the Tismeáin Rd, An Cheathrú Rua was welcomed.
- Waiting time for Council tenants to have maintenance issues addressed.

- Clifden Sustainably Sourced Timber Pilot Project acknowledged.
- Concern on the Clifden Flood Relief Scheme
- An update on the Clifden Regeneration Plan requested.
- If the houses in Ballinasloe and Ahascragh will be allocated before Christmas. If they won't, the cost of securing them for the Christmas period was requested.
- If monies received from the Rent a Room Scheme by Council Tenants are disallowable for housing rent calculations.
- Applicants on the housing waiting list unable to get a home when there are some current tenants now in a position to buy their own homes, occupying Council houses.
- No traffic management budget allowed for in MD budgets. If no traffic management in place will the issuing of parking fines be affected.
- Asked why there is a high rate of planning enforcement in Connemara, 497 out of 1270 files open for investigation.
- Query if septic tanks need to be registered to avail of the new Wastewater Treatment grant. Request for information to be circulated to Members.
- Speed limit signs on R339 are faded.
- A request to not plant tall trees along roadside.
- If planning permission needs to be obtained for septic tanks to qualify for the new grant. If so, could applications be fast tracked.
- If sufficient funding was received to cover the cost of Storm Debi.
- Concern was raised on the unknown number of rotten trees in the County.
- If monies to cover Storm Debi can be recouped from the OPW.
- If under the new scheme an application can be made to get a septic tank inspection, unlike the old scheme of random selection.

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

- Thanked staff for responding to storm Debbie and meeting the ministers.
- Joined the members in congratulating Creggs and Williamstown on their awards.

- The Clifden regeneration program is ongoing. The Part 8 is currently being prepared. We are bringing all resources together to ensure that elements of Destination Tourism are incorporated and working with Active Travel regards signposting. He acknowledged that there are a significant number of planning enforcement files currently open, a number of which are being dealt with through retention. Retention applications cannot be dealt with until a planning enforcement file is open. Many enforcement issues relate people thinking that they do not require planning permission for septic tanks, percolation and gateways. This is an issue that requires attention.
- Once the FAQs for the Septic Tank Scheme have been received it will be circulated to the members.

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

- The Tenant in Situ Scheme is in operation when a private landlord wants to sell a rented property. They must issue a valid Notice to Quit in advance of selling the property. If the notice is not valid then it is not eligible.
- Bundle 7 of the Social Housing PPP Programme site in Tuam offers the scope for mixed tenure housing, to include affordable housing and the potential for cost rental housing, subject to design development and feasibility. Dublin City Council are the lead authority. The project is subject to part 8, it is not under Housing for All.
- In reference to vacant homes, he referred to the update on page 40 of the report. A survey is underway to confirm vacancy of 1727 properties. As of 16th November, 795 properties have been surveyed, 406 of which have been confirmed to be vacant, the rest of which are occupied.
- As regards maintenance, waiting times are affected by financial, labour and contract resources. He undertook to look at the maintenance requests that have been logged for over a year.
- It is intended that the houses in Ahascragh and Ballinasloe will be allocated before Christmas. It is the responsibility of the contractor to secure them until they are allocated.

- In the Rent a Room Scheme in a Local Authority property, from the 1st December income earned is tax free up until €14,000 and this income is included in calculations under the Differential Rent Scheme.

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

- He will include a comprehensive report on both schemes on the N84 in the December Management Report. Businesses will be engaged with and nighttime works will be considered
- He confirmed that overhanging trees are the responsibility of the landowner. NOM monies can be redirected to particular locations. He acknowledged the difficulties posed by Ash Die Back and said that he had no problem in trying to find a way forward.
- He undertook to include an update on the Clifden Flood Scheme in the December report.
- He informed that Specific Improvement Grants can only be considered at the end of the year. There will be a body of work to be done as it is an environmentally sensitive area.
- He is happy to discuss the traffic management and parking ticket situation.
- He will refer the faded signs to the MD.
- Policy has already been implemented to cease planting of tall trees at the roadside.
- The OPW are not responsible for funding the clean up after Storm Debi. The MD's have been requested to assess the costs incurred and submit them to his department, he will then seek recoupment. Confirmation has not been received from the department that they will reimburse any or all of the costs. Once information is collated and we have a final costing we will write to the department.
- The documenting of rotten trees has already begun.

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

- The outdoor recreation funding is expected to be approved in 2024. He is happy to talk to members regarding it.
- He acknowledged the projects in Oranmore and Knockma and how they tie into the masterplan for broader development.

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

- Confirmed that septic tanks do not need to be registered to avail of the grant under the new scheme.
- She undertook to issue the details of the scheme to the members once they are received.
- She will circulate information on the Waste water treatment grant once it is received.

ITEM NO. 8 CHIEF EXECUTIVE'S BUSINESS & CORRESPONDENCE. 4248

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

- Letter dated 28.06.22 to Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage. Resolution – Ash die back.
- E-mail dated 24.07.23 from Ms. Maria Rigney, Private Secretary in the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage. Resolution – Ash die back. Response.
- Letter dated 05.10.2023 to Ms. Norma Foley T.D. Minister for Education. Resolution – School Transport Scheme.
- E-mail dated 27.10.2023 from Mr. Stephen O'Brien, Private Secretary to Ms. Norma Foley T.D. Resolution – School Transport Scheme. Response.
- Letter dated 31.10.2023 to Mr. Darragh O'Brien T.D. Minister for Housing, Local Government and Heritage. Resolution – Housing Grants Funding..
- E-mail dated 01.11.2023 from Ms. Niamh Redmond, Private Secretary to Mr. Darragh O'Brien T.D. Resolution – Housing Grants Funding. Response

ITEM 9. NOTICE OF MOTION

4249

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

"That Galway Co Co ask the Minister for Housing, Local Government & Heritage to revise the terms originally set out in circular 23/2021 for the provision of affordable housing, specifically the section relation to densities and the monies allocated, to provide Affordable Housing as a right to our citizens.

Currently the densities are far too high and should be reduced to reflect the vastly lower densities in smaller zoned settlements throughout the County. Financial money must be increased and linked to inflation with annual increases. The €400k cap must be increased to reflect the increased cost of units."

Cllr. Welby asked that the executive write to the Minister regarding the Council's funding limit of €50,000 due to the density of the area being less than 35 dwellings per hectare, while other areas have access to funding up to €100,000.

Mr. Owens responded that he had recently received an update from the Social Housing Task Force. In which the department have given an indication that they will allow a higher-level maximum of €75,000 funding limit to Galway County Council. The ceiling subsidy cap will increase from €400,000 to 450,000.

When asked if the department will issue a new circular to replace Circular 23/2021, Mr. Owens responded that the commitment given relates to Galway County Council only. Cllr. Welby said that while he welcomed the increase an anomaly still exists where some citizens in the state are receiving more than others. Mr. Owens replied that the densities were based on the information in the County Development Plan.

On the **PROPOSAL** of Cllr. Welby **SECONDED** by Cllr. Broderick the above Notice of Motion was **AGREED**.

ITEM 10. NOTICE OF MOTION**4250**

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

"I propose that the income limits for applying for the Housing Adaptation Grant be increased.

Context:

Inflation has drastically increased the cost of adaptations. Additionally, for the parent(s) of a child with a disability needing the grant, €60,000 of a combined household income barely covers the costs associated with providing for a family, not to mind adapting a house to the needs of the child."

The following reply issued:

The income limits for Housing Adaptation Grants is set by the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage. It is a national scheme. It specifically states that the amount of money available depends on the household income for the previous year and only covers a percentage of the costs depending on the income received. These are shown in the table below.

Yearly household Income	Percentage of costs	Maximum grant for homes built more than 12 months ago	Maximum grant for homes built within the last 12 months
Up to €30,000	95%	€30,000	€14,500
€30,001 - €35,000	85%	€25,500	€12,325
€35,001 - €40,000	75%	€22,500	€10,875
€40,001 - €50,000	50%	€15,000	€7,250
€50,001 - €60,000	30%	€9,000	€4,350
Over €60,000	No grant payable	No grant payable	No grant payable

As you are aware, following a resolution at the October Meeting, a letter was sent to Minister O'Brien, requesting the amounts payable in the grants should be increased. I include a copy of his response overleaf. As you will note it includes a commitment to a review of both the housing grant amounts and the income thresholds.

Response received from the Minister on 1st November 2023

"I have been asked by Mr. Darragh O'Brien T.D., Minister for Housing, Local Government and Heritage, to thank you for your letter dated 31 October 2023, in connection with the Housing Adaptation Grants for Older People and People with a Disability scheme, in respect of private houses.

The Department's main focus in respect of these grants is in seeking to spread their benefits by further increasing the funding that is available at national level. In 2022, almost €86 million in funding was made available to facilitate the payment of over 12,000 grants which compares favourably to the target of over 10,700 grants. A provision of €83.125 million has been allocated to local authorities for 2023, and the recently announced budget for 2024 provides a further increase of €10 million, raising available funding to over €93 million with an aim to fund over 13,000 grants and also continuing the year on year increases since 2014.

Housing for All also commits to reviewing the grants scheme and a report on the review has been prepared by the Department. The review was informed by engagement with external stakeholders, including the Department of Health, the HSE, the Disability Federation of Ireland and the Irish Wheelchair Association. Written submissions were also invited and considered as part of this process. Among the areas which the review considered are both income thresholds and the grant limits.

On foot of Minister O'Brien's consideration of the Review report, Department officials have been directed to engage with the Department of Public Expenditure, NDP Delivery and Reform on the recommendations in the Review report, and this process is ongoing at present. The Minister will publish the review, including the agreed grant levels and income thresholds, once that engagement has concluded.

I trust this information will be of assistance to you."

ITEM NO.11 CATHAOIRLEACH'S BUSINESS

4251

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

"I proposed that there would be no upper limit put on the amount of concerts to be held in the Galway airport site.

The number of concerts needs to be agreed by the Galway County Council CPG, the Galway City Council CPG and all the relevant stakeholders including the promoter.

I further propose that a committee of both CPC's be set up immediately to further these events."

Cllr. Collins raised his motion in response to the City Council motion to limit the number of concerts to be held at Galway Airport next summer to six. He said as per our tourism strategy we need to create an environment for people to stay in the areas and that these concerts meet that strategy. He proposed no limit, if we place a limit the promoter could pull out of the whole deal.

Members raised the following points and queries:

- Concerns were raised on behalf of local residents regarding the times that the concerts will be held at.
- The amount of income that the Council will receive from the concerts.
- The Council should tender for the bar and the concert and that a value needs to be put on the value of our site.
- If an events licence is required.
- How the revenue generated from the concerts will be split between the City and County Councils.

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

Mr. Hanrahan responded that there is a Joint Planning SPC meeting to be held on Friday with the City Council and the airport is on the agenda for discussion. Cllr. Hoade will be in attendance at the meeting as Chair of the Planning SPC and confirmed that she will convey the views of the Chamber at the meeting. Mr. Hanrahan confirmed that the details of the events are managed by the Licensing Group which includes representatives from the HSE, Gardai and promoters. He also confirmed that an events licence is not required as the capacity will be under 5,000.

Cllr. Collins amended his motion to remove the word "upper".

Amended motion:

"I proposed that there would be no limit put on the amount of concerts to be held in the Galway airport site.

The number of concerts needs to be agreed by the Galway County Council CPG, the Galway City Council CPG and all the relevant stakeholders including the promoter.

I further propose that a committee of both CPG's be set up immediately to further these events."

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

A vote was taken on the motion

The following was the result:

For 26

Cllr. Broderick	Cllr. Carroll	Cllr. Charity
Cllr. Collins	Cllr. D. Connolly	Cllr. M. Connolly
Cllr. Cronnelly	Comh. Ó Cualáin	Cllr. Cuddy
Comh. Ó Curraoin	Cllr. Finnerty	Cllr. Geraghty
Cllr. Herterich Quinn	Cllr. Hoade	Cllr. P. Keaveney
Cllr. Kelly	Cllr. Kinane	Comh. Mac an Iomaire
Cllr. Maher	Cllr. Mannion	Cllr. S. McHugh
Cllr. McKinstry	Cllr. Dr. E. F. Parsons	Cllr. Reddington
Cllr. Walsh	Cllr. Welby	

Against 0

Abstain 1

Cllr. Curley

No-Voting 12

Cllr. Byrne	Cllr. Canning	Cllr. Dolan
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Cllr. Donohue

Cllr. C. Keaveney

Cllr. Killilea

Cllr. King

Cllr. McClearn

Cllr. Murphy

Cllr. Roche

Cllr. Sheridan

Cllr. Thomas

The Cathaoirleach confirmed that the motion was carried.

The following motion was **PROPOSED** by Cllr. Hoade **SECONDED** by Comh. Ó Cualáin:

"I call on the executive of Galway County Council in conjunction with the executive of Galway City Council to set up a steering group for the purpose of ongoing management of the Galway airport site. Pending receipt of the draft master plan for the property, the steering group to consist of equal representation from both authorities with Cllr. representation on the group."

Cllr. Hoade confirmed that she was happy for her motion to be deferred and to be discussed at the upcoming Joint Planning SPC meeting with the City Council on Friday

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

"I believe it is no longer tenable that the public toilets at Rinvilla Park, Oranmore are closed weekends, from the end of October to the following Easter.

I therefore propose that Galway County Council and Galway City Council joint owners of the park, allocate funding in their respective 2024 budget, to ensure that these much needed facilities are open at weekends all year round."

Cllr. Kinane expanded on the motion saying that the facilities should be open all year round and at a minimum on Saturdays especially as the Park Run is held there every Saturday. She requested that costings be calculated to provide the facilities.

The Cathaoirleach responded that the issue is a budgetary matter and requested that the Director provide the costings of the said proposal directly to Cllr. Kinane.

The following motion was **PROPOSED** by Cllr. Thomas **SECONDED** by Cllr. Walsh:

"I propose that we write to the Senators and Seanad Éireann to ask them to reject the hate speech bill in its current format, and to open up new discussions and debate on the bill to ensure that any bill that is passed is clearly and fairly defined."

Cllr. Thomas expanded on his motion outlining his concern that legislation is being rushed through the Dáil with minimum public discussion. He fears that it will erode the right to an opinion and is concerned that the bill does not provide a clear definition of hate speech, leaving it open to interpretation and abuse.

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

A vote was taken on the motion.

The following was the result:

For 18

Cllr. Broderick	Cllr. Charity	Cllr. M. Connolly
Cllr. G. Cronnelly	Comh. Ó Cualáin	Cllr. Cuddy
Comh. Ó Curraoin	Cllr. Finnerty	Cllr. Geraghty
Cllr. Herterich Quinn	Cllr. Hoade	Cllr. Killilea
Cllr. Kinane	Cllr. S. McHugh	Cllr. Dr. E. F. Parsons
Cllr. Sheridan	Cllr. Thomas	Cllr. Walsh

Against 7

Cllr. Carroll

Cllr. Collins

Comh. Mac an Iomaire

Cllr. Maher

Cllr. Mannion

Cllr. McKinstry

Cllr. Reddington

Abstain 3

Cllr. P. Keaveney

Cllr. Kelly

Cllr. Welby

No-Voting 11

Cllr. Byrne

Cllr. Canning

Cllr. Dolan

Cllr. Donohue

Cllr. C. Keaveney

Cllr. King

Cllr. McClearn

Cllr. Murphy

Cllr. Roche

Cllr. D. Connolly

Cllr. Curley

The Cathaoirleach confirmed that the motion was not carried.

The following motion was **PROPOSED** by Cllr. Parsons **SECONDED** by Cllr. Broderick:

"I propose that Galway County Council institute a stringent time limit for the acquisition of St. Brigid's Hospital Nurse's Home from the HSE which attaches the condition that in the event of non compliance with the time frame by a lack of progression from HSE, that the property will be listed on the Derelict Register of Galway County Council from which compulsory purchase procedures will be initiated by GCC with the aim of transforming the property into a critically needed public facility to meet the community's pressing and escalating needs for provision of a Domestic Violence Refuge.

This proactive approach aligns with GCC commitment to enhancing community resources and addressing identified essential public service needs and is supported

by legislation, county and development plans, identified gaps in county and regional provision and DSGBV strategy.

I propose that aforementioned time limit is set at six months."

Cllr. Parsons expanded on her motion, stating that 2022 was the deadliest year with regards domestic violence. That this building has been unused since 2009. There are far fewer refuge places than needed, we need 472 we only have 144. She referred to our obligations under The Istanbul convention.

Mr. Hanrahan informed the meeting that correspondence was received late last week from the HSE. In which the council were informed that the HSE are willing to sell St. Brigid's Nursing Home. Cllr. Parsons responded that we have been told this before and insisted that the time has come to initiate a time frame for action.

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

A vote was taken on the motion

The following was the result:

For 27

Cllr. Broderick	Cllr. Carroll	Cllr. Charity
Cllr. Collins	Cllr. D. Connolly	Cllr. G. Cronnelly
Comh. Ó Cualáin	Cllr. Cuddy	Comh. Ó Curraoin
Cllr. Finnerty	Cllr. Geraghty	Cllr. Herterich Quinn
Cllr. Hoade	Cllr. P. Keaveney	Cllr. Kelly
Cllr. Kinane	Comh. Mac An Iomaire	Cllr. Maher
Cllr. Mannion	Cllr. S. McHugh	Cllr. McKinstry
Cllr. Dr. E. F. Parsons	Cllr. Reddington	Cllr. Sheridan
Cllr. Thomas	Cllr. Walsh	Cllr. Welby

Against 0

Abstain 0

No-Voting 12

Cllr. Byrne	Cllr. Canning	Cllr. M. Connolly
Cllr. Curley	Cllr. Dolan	Cllr. Donohue
Cllr. C. Keaveney	Cllr. Killilea	Cllr. King
Cllr. McClearn	Cllr. Murphy	Cllr. Roche

The Cathaoirleach confirmed that the motion was carried.

Cllr. Broderick raised the matter of the Small Business Support Scheme. He asked if the matter could be examined.

Mr. Hanrahan responded that the Head of Finance will bring the matter to the Head of Finance network.

Cllrs. Geraghty and Peter Keaveney voiced their concerns on the signposts that have been damaged in north County Galway and if same could be reviewed.

ITEM NO.12 VOTES OF SYMPATHY / CONGRATULATIONS

4252

Cllr. Collins wished to congratulate the Lackagh U12 Céilí Band on their appearance on the Late Late Toy Show.

A resolution of sympathy was extended to the following:

- Richard & Thomas Geraghty, Main Street, Headford, Co. Galway.
- Bernie Divilly, Luimnagh, Corrandulla, Co. Galway.

- Mrs. Nan McDonagh (Stephen), An Cnoc, Lettermullen, Co. Galway.
- Richard Geraghty, Skeaghbeg, Headford, Co. Galway.
- Michael Gallagher, Moycullen, Co. Galway.
- Pearse Piggott, Ballyhugh, Gort, Co. Galway.
- Paul Hession, Mirah, Turloughmore, Co. Galway.
- Paula Rabbit, Cartymore, Turloughmore, Co. Galway.

Chriochnaigh an Cruinniú Ansin.

Submitted, Signed and Approved

Cathaoirleach:



Date:

22/1/2024

