

**Miontuairisci Chruinniú Choiste Polásáí Straitéisearcha Pobail, An Ghaeilge, An Ghaeltacht, Turasóireachta & Comhtháthú a tionóladh
Dé Luain, 15 Meán Fómhair trí Microsoft Teams @ 2pm**

Minutes of Meeting of the Community, Irish Language, Gaeltacht, Tourism & Integration Strategic Policy Committee held on Monday 15th September @ 2pm via Microsoft Teams

Members in Attendance online:

Cllr Seamus Walsh	Galway County Council
Cllr Alan Harney	Galway County Council
Cllr Michael Regan	Galway County Council
Cllr Noel Thomas	Galway County Council
Cllr Máirtín Lee	Galway County Council
Cllr Michael Leainde	Galway County Council
Chika Onyia	Social Inclusion Representative
Colleen Baxter	Business/Commercial Representative
Paul Carey	Development/Construction Representative
Paul Dillon	Community/Voluntary Representative

Staff in Attendance:

Michael Owens, Director of Service, Kieran Coyne Administrative Officer, John Neary Tourism Officer, Andrew McBride Sports Officer, Teresa Donoghue Administrative Officer, Máirtín O'Donnchadha Oifigeagh Forbartha Gaeilge, Loretta Raftery, JTF Activator, Charlene Mangan, Clerical Officer.

1. Welcome and Introductions

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting and thanked them for their attendance.

2. Adoption of Minutes

The minutes of the last ordinary meeting of the SPC and the special meeting of the SPC regarding the age-friendly strategy were proposed by Cllr. Michael Regan and seconded by Cllr. Seamus Walsh.

3. County Galway Tourism Strategy Update (2023-2031)

John Neary, Tourism Officer presented an update on the tourism strategy, highlighting Galway as a premier destination for both domestic and international visitors. The tourism team currently consists of John Neary, Tourism Officer, Chris Monaghan, Assistant Staff Officer Officer and Loretta Raftery, JTF Activator.

Key objectives include:

- Implementation of the tourism strategy.
- Development of partnerships with Failte Ireland and brands like the Wild Atlantic Way and Irelands Hidden Heartlands.
- Creation of a Destination Experience Development plan for East Galway.
- Create a world class tourism website and social media platforms.
- Extending the tourism season and promoting lesser-known areas.
- Preparing for significant events such as hosting Presidency for the council of Europe in 2026 and the Ryder Cup in 2027
- Seeking 2 new staffing positions to strengthen capacity.
- Budget Increase Request – Current 75,000 proposed budget 150,000

John also outlined the recent visit to Milwaukee and Chicago, Galway County Council was very well represented, great delegation and proud to show all that Galway has to offer. Galway Stand was a huge success.

Cllr. Michael Regan inquired about funding allocations, specifically regarding operational budgets for marketing and staffing. John Neary clarified that the budget would cover marketing efforts and support for additional staff. Michael Regan welcomed the Destination Experience Development Plan for East Galway and complimented the Tourism Officer on a very successful Milwaukee visit and going forward other destinations should be considered for marketing Galway.

Cllr. Alan Harney inquired in relation to the Just Transition Fund, how can we gain most of the remaining period of the Just transition role. John Neary replied that East Galway is getting a lot of attention as the opportunity is now there, working with the Hidden Heartlands team and the Development of the Destination Experience Plan. JTF activator has been working right across East Galway on network development. The activator under Scheme B has 1.2 million secured for the Ballinasloe MD and the focus is now on developing shovel ready projects for other funding streams that become available.

4. Galway Convention Bureau Presentation

Niamh Stack provided an overview of the Galway Convention Bureau's role in promoting business tourism. The Bureau supports international business events, offering services free of charge to local suppliers. Current pipeline projects expected to bring substantial

economic benefits to the region. Niamh requested funding support from Galway County Council to continue operations, noting that contributions would be matched by Fáilte Ireland under new agreements. The City Council contributes €40,000 annually.

The Chair thanked Niamh for the presented and stated that he had further queries and would contact her to discuss further during the week.

Cllr. Colleen Baxter complemented the Convention Bureau and commended the work they have done to date.

Cllr. Lee queried the amount of funding that the Convention Bureau was looking for from Galway County Council going forward. Niamh Stack replied that it would be match funding to what the City Council provides but is open to discussion.

Michael Owens outlined that this is a subject that will come back to the SPC as part of the budgetary process, but it is important that the committee has an understanding of the ask.

5. Age-Friendly Strategy Update (2025-2030)

Kieran Coyne gave a brief update on the Age-Friendly Strategy, which has undergone public consultation. A full presentation was presented at the last SPC meeting.

The draft strategy is complete. Kieran asked the SPC members to allow a recommendation for final adoption to Plenary council later this month.

Cllr. Seamus Walshe proposed, and it was seconded by Cllr. Regan and Cllr. Lee.

6. Guest Flags and Lighting Protocol

An updated draft protocol regarding flag display was presented by Michael Owens, Director, addressing concerns raised in previous meetings.

Key points included:

- National flags will be flown according to national guidelines.
- Previous decisions regarding flags (e.g., Ukrainian and Palestinian flags) are not impacted by this protocol.
- Provisions for flying flags of sister cities and guest flags were outlined.
- Applications for raising flags or lighting buildings must be submitted at least two months in advance for consideration by the Corporate Policy Group (CPG).
- Only registered charities, public sector, community, or non-profit organizations can apply; individual or commercial applications will not be accepted.
- The protocol allows for flexibility in listing buildings and features to accommodate future requests.

Members were encouraged to review documents circulated prior to the meeting. No further amendments were suggested. Document was proposed by the Chair and seconded by Cllr. Alan Harney to go forward to Octobers CPG meeting.

7. Development of Local Sports Plan for County Galway Overview

Andrew McBride presented on the development of the Local Sports Plan for County Galway. Galway Sports Partnership aims to create opportunities for sport and physical activity, focusing on participation, active spaces, and communication.

A budget proposal of €10,000 is requested from Galway County Council for the development of the Local Sports Plan. Current funding sources include Sport Ireland and other grants, but there is a need for additional funding to support local sports initiatives. Comparison with other local authorities highlighted disparities in funding available to sports clubs. Proposal includes €10,000 towards the Local Sports Plan and a community support scheme for sports organizations.

8. City of Film for Galway 2026

Michael Owens outlined to the committee that a request from City of Film regarding a presentation at the next SPC meeting related to Galway's EU presidency.

9. SPC Work Programme Development for 2026

Michael Owens outlined that the SPC will develop a work program for 2026, including updates on the Local Sports Plan, tourism initiatives, a disability strategy and an integration strategy. Members were invited to propose additional items for consideration.

AOB

Maírtin O' Donnchadha provided updates on four projects related to Irish language initiatives and place names. Emphasis was made on bilingual place names as per legislation.

Next Meeting

- Date to be confirmed in consultation with the Chair.

The meeting concluded with no further questions raised.