

**COMHAIRLE CHONTAE NA GAILLIMHE**

**GALWAY COUNTY COUNCIL**

**Ceantar Bardasach Bhaile Átha an Rí**

**Municipal District of Athenry**

**Minutes of the Meeting of the Municipal District of Athenry held via Teams , on Tuesday 13<sup>nd</sup> of April, 2021.**

**I LATHAIR:**

**BAILL:** Cllr. G. Cronnelly, (Cathaoirleach)  
Cllr. J. Cuddy,  
Cllr. L. Carroll,  
Cllr. J. Charity  
Cllr. S. Herterich Quinn  
Cllr. A. Dolan  
Cllr D. Collins

**OIFIGIGH:** Mr. M. McGovern, A/ Director of Service  
Mr. D. Mitchell, Senior Engineer,  
V. Loughnane, Senior Planner,  
Ms. P. Higgins, Senior Executive Engineer  
Mr P. Gavin, Executive Engineer  
M. Jordan, Administrative Officer  
Ms. G. Cooley, Asst. Staff Officer

**Apologies;** Mr G. Mullarkey, Director of Services

**To confirm minutes of the Athenry Municipal District Meeting held on the 2<sup>nd</sup> March, 2021**

**MD70**

On the PROPOSAL of Cllr. Cuddy, SECONDED by Cllr. Herterich Quinn the minutes of the Athenry Municipal District Meeting held on the 2<sup>nd</sup> March, 2021 were AGREED.

**It was agreed to take Item 4 next**

**Briefing on URDF**

**MD71**

Ms Loughnane gave a brief outline of funding received for the Athenry M. D. she said that Funding of €9.28 M for the Urban Regeneration Development Fund was announced for Galway Count Council with an additional €3 M match funding from the Department of Transport.

There are three main elements to the funding announced which is centred around the existing train station at Oranmore. Primarily the focus has been on approximately 60 hectares of land around Oranmore Train Station which are the subject of a comprehensive Urban Framework Plan (UFP). However, the benefits of the proposal as outlined would reach far beyond the UFP area.

1. Railway Infrastructure Upgrades to include a 1KM passing railway loop at the existing Oranmore Train Station; including additional platform and associated infrastructure
2. Design of the local centre and lands south of the train station to include a detailed design of the local centre, associated car park (existing), (architectural/structural engineering detail) and landscaping plan (for public use)
3. A study on the Design Development of Typologies to implement the Urban Framework Plan

Critical to the success of the Urban Framework Plan will be a high-quality rail service that is both dependable and frequent which reduces reliance on the private car. The existing single-track rail line between Galway and Athenry is over 20km long, and the single-track nature of the rail line limits the maximum frequency of trains to 3 trains per hour (every 20 minutes). A passing rail loop at Oranmore Station would improve this frequency to 15 minute intervals (4 trains per hour) at peak times. Subject to fleet availability, this would increase to 12 minute intervals (5 trains per hour) at peak times, which amounts to a 40% increase in rail capacity and an upgrade in the frequency of services to an almost “turn-up and go” railway service for commuters and other users.

The URDF funding application was submitted in May 2020 by Galway County Council in collaboration with Iarnród Éireann and we look forward to working with them to deliver this sustainable project.

Ms. Loughnane thanked the Forward Planning team for their work on the project.

Cllr. James Charity congratulated all the staff in forward planning and said that he hoped the project would give greater access for rural travel to the city.

In reply to a query from Cllr Cronnelly, Ms Loughnane said that funding for the passing loop did not require extra land and there is no need for rezoning which would make the project easier to deliver.

In reply to a query from Cllr Cuddy, Ms Loughnane said that following contact with Irish Water regarding waste water treatment for the area, a letter of support was received from them for this development.

Cllr. Carroll thanked the planning team and also paid tribute to the local business community and voluntary groups who advocated for investment in the area, and who were delighted with the announcement of funding.

## **To approve the Annual Report of the Athenry Municipal District Council 2020 MD72**

On the PROPOSAL of Cllr. Carroll, SECONDED by Cllr. Collins the Annual Report of the Athenry Municipal District Council, 2020 was AGREED.

### **Active Travel**

**MD73**

Mr. Mitchell said the announcement of active travel funding of €6.193 M was very welcome. The criteria set out in the NTA specified that works in urban areas must be carried out inside the speed limit zone and if proposed works were on a national road they must be taken out. All submissions from the members were put forward. There is a template in place for future funding requests and overall a lot of issues will be addressed when the plan is implemented.

The Members welcomed the funding and thanked the roads staff and acknowledged the workload involved.

In response to a query from Cllr Cuddy, Mr. Mitchell advised that the projects are listed individually on the plan which had been circulated. The traffic management plan now known as the mobility plan allows for funding under transport strategies. A new mobility plan will be done for towns, such as Oranmore, taking into account walking, cycling and driving. All issues in relation to one- way streets will be considered. A Consultant will be employed to draft the plan and elected members and the public will be able to view the draft plan which will come before the Athenry MD.

In reply to a query from Cllr. Carroll on the timescale for preparation of the mobility plan, Mr. Mitchell advised that the Council will go to tender shortly to appoint a Consultant and a timeframe will be agreed. It is proposed that it should be within this calendar year. Instigative studies have to be done taking into consideration traffic management, one- way streets, and safe routes to school. Mr. Mitchell advised that Consultants are needed due to their qualifications to carry out the works and the unspent funding can be rolled over at the end of the year.

In response to a query, Ms Higgins advised that schools in the area, including rural schools can apply for funding under the Green Schools initiative.

In reply to a query on staffing Mr Mitchell said that it is proposed that NTA are providing funding for staff to be made available, but no formal offer of staff has been received by Galway County Council to date. He acknowledged that more Technical Staff are required in all Municipal Districts to facilitate the carrying out of the works and he acknowledged that the staff in the Athenry MD are under pressure due to the workload.

**Cllr. Dolan submitted the following Notice of Motion:**

*"I Cllr Albert Dolan propose that Galway County Council conduct a safety audit for the route travelled from the Athenry Boys School to the Lady's Well of Athenry, this is the route travelled by many people on an annual basis but also on a daily basis it is a popular destination for active walkers and outdoor enthusiasts. Given the current climate I feel it is of paramount importance that people can safely access Lady's well by foot and would propose the council investigate if this is currently the case".*

**The Following was the Reply:**

*"There are many rural locations throughout the county where pedestrians are walking on a shared road space which is the accepted practise in rural situations. Galway County Council had made an application for funding to progress this scheme under the 2021 NTA Active Travel Measures but were unsuccessful in securing funding this year. This scheme will be included in future funding applications."*

Cllr. Cronnelly asked if a road counter could be put in place as children are back to school.

Cll. Herterich Quinn said this was an ongoing issue for some years. Speeding on this road is a concern. She said that a path and signage to alert motorists to slow down should be put in place.

**Municipal Districts Directors Business and Correspondence**

**MD75**

Mr. McGovern had nothing to report.

**Cathaoirleach's Business**

**MD76**

Cllr. Collins thanked the team for their hard work and acknowledged that huge investment for Athenry MD.

Cllr. Collins said that he wanted to raise the issue of thatched structures and he said that a thatch repair grant has been operated by the Council over the last number of years. However, thatched homeowners are facing difficulties due to the lack of materials, lack of thatcher's and very high insurance costs. He asked if Galway County Council could help to maintain the structures and liaise with GRTB to upskill people. He said that the lack of insurance companies to provide cover for thatch dwellings is the main problem. Only one company will quote for insurance for thatched houses in the country.

**The following proposal was made by Cllr Collins;**

*"I Cllr David Collins request that Galway County Council write to the Minister for Environment Heritage and Local Government Highlighting the issue of the cost of insurance for potential new and existing owners of Thatch premises."*

*It is important that we preserve our Heritage and I am proposing that the Department liaise with the insurance industry to ensure that there is competition in the area of Insurance for the owners of these dwellings."*

On the PROPOSAL of Cllr. Collins, SECONDED by Cllr. Carroll the motion was AGREED.

**The following proposal was made by Cllr Herterich Quinn and Cllr Cronnelly;**

" I will propose-

*That representatives of Irish Water would attend the next plenary meeting with a view to addressing concerns relating to the sewage pipeline capacity that was highlighted to Councillors recently, namely the Oranmore sewage pipe network.*

*That we receive an outline of the plans to provide waste- water services to East Galway that will facilitate the construction of housing.*

*It would be important to know what the short to medium term plans are given the suggestion that Irish Water have funding constraints for the next 5 years.*

On the PROPOSAL of Cllr. Shelly Herterich Quinn SECONDED by Cllr. Cronnelly the motion was AGREED.

Mr. Mitchell replied to a query from Cllr Charity in relation to the roads programme and said that tenders are currently being evaluated for the summer roadworks programme and following appointment of Contractors, the works could commence.

In Relation to a query on Notice of Motion works, Mr. Mitchell said that he understands the Councillors frustrations in relation to these projects, however, as funding for these works can be rolled over they are usually carried out at the end of the year. In 2020 the active travel works had to be completed by the end of the year despite the late funding allocation, and this had an effect on the completion of notice of motion works.

Cllr charity requested an update in respect of works being completed from Notice of Motion allocations for the May meeting.

Cllr. Dolan raised an issue regarding flooding at Gloves West. He said that he met with residents in Gloves West at this location and they informed him that a blockage in a pipe under the road was the cause of the problem. He requested the Council to examine the issue but the flooding has not been resolved. There are traffic cones in place at this location for over a year. He said that an acknowledgement was sent following a petition from the residents.

In reply Ms Higgins said that the landowner in question was no longer in a position to allow the water to flow onto his land. She said that permission is required from a landowner in this situation. She agreed to discuss options with Cllr Dolan further. She acknowledged that complaints have been received from residents in Gloves as far back as 2016 regarding the

flooding, and said that Council engineers have been investigating the options to resolve the flooding where the pipe is located.

Cllr. Cronnelly requested an update for the next meeting.

Mr Mitchell said that the matter of the fencing at curragh line is with the Chief Executive Officer.

In relation to a query by Cllr Cuddy, Mr Mitchell said that enforcement services are a matter for the Planning unit. However, in relation to unauthorized development this can be dealt with for up to seven years after completion of works and complaints can be made in writing to the Planning Department.

Cllr. Herterich Quinn thanked the Community and Enterprise section and area staff for securing funding and carrying out works at the Town Park in Athenry.

In relation to a query by Cllr Herterich Quinn on the bridge at Clarin College, Mr. Mitchell said that all documentation is in place and it will go to tender in the next couple of weeks and it is expected to have the bridge in place before the next school year.

Mr. Mitchell advised that there is no update on the private road at Oranmore and discussions will have to take place with the landowner if the Council wish to use it as a one-way system. The road may have to be taken in charge and substantial upgrade works are needed to bring it up to standard. Mr. Mitchell requested that the elected members liaise with Council staff in relation to issues raised by the local groups to minimize the volume of correspondence being sent to the Roads Department.


In reply to a query by Cllr Cuddy, Mr. Mitchell said that he will check the funding situation in relation to the traffic calming measures at McHugh's pub junction.

Ms Higgins advised that the MD engineers are working with landowners in Cloonacauneen to get a solution to the flooding problem there and that a submission for funding under the Climate Adaption Programme has been made.

The Cathaoirleach said that the next Meeting of the Athenry Municipal District Council was scheduled for the 11<sup>th</sup> May, 2021.

### **Criochnaigh an Cruiniu Ansin**

Approved By:

  
CATHAOIRLEACH

Date: 14<sup>th</sup> Sept. 21