

**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 in Aras an Chontae, on Tuesday 10<sup>th</sup> January, 2023**

I LATHAIR:

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

OIFIGIGH: Mr A. Farrell, DoS Economic, Rural & Community/Athenry MD  
Mr L. Hanrahan, DoS, Housing & Ukrainian Response  
Ms V. Loughnane, Senior Planner  
Ms Rachel Lowe, Senior Engineer,  
Mr. S. Whelan, Senior Executive Engineer  
Mr. P. Gavin, Executive Engineer  
Ms. M. Jordan, Administrative Officer  
Ms A. Power, Senior Staff Officer,  
Mr L. Ward, Graduate Planner  
Ms. G. Cooley, Asst. Staff Officer  
Mr. Brendan Dunne, A/Senior Executive Planner  
Mr. Brian Corcoran, Executive Planner  
Ms. Aoife O Moore, Assistant Planner

GALWAY Mr V. Lyons,  
COUNTY Ms. M. Mullens  
PPN

**To confirm Minutes of the Athenry Municipal District Budget Meeting held on the 8<sup>th</sup> November, 2022.**

**AMD 144**

On the PROPOSAL of Cllr Dolan SECONDED by Cllr Collins the minutes of the Athenry Municipal District Budget Meeting held on the 8<sup>th</sup> November, 2022 were AGREED.

**To confirm Minutes of the Athenry Municipal District Meeting held on the 8<sup>th</sup> November, 2022.** AMD 145

On the PROPOSAL of Cllr Charity SECONDED by Cllr Cronnelly the minutes of the Athenry Municipal District Meeting held on the 8<sup>th</sup> November, 2022 were AGREED.

**Declaration of a Road to be a Public Road – Section 11 of Roads Act 1993** AMD 146

The Cathaoirleach referred to the report, including map, which had been circulated to the Members and he read the Report to the meeting as follows:

**Municipal District: Athenry.**

**Description:** Radharc an Teampaill (Church View) ,Baile Chláir, Gaillimh

On the PROPOSAL of Cllr Dolan, SECONDED by Cllr Collins the Members AGREED the Declaration of Roads to be Public Roads under Section 11 of the Roads Act 1993 as outlined in the Report.

**Declaration of a Road to be a Public Road – Section 11 of Roads Act 1993** AMD 147

The Cathaoirleach referred to the report , including map, which had been circulated to the Members and he read the Report to the meeting as follows:

**Municipal District: Athenry.**

**Description:** Slí an Bhradáin, Baile Chláir, Gaillimh

On the PROPOSAL of Cllr Dolan, SECONDED by Cllr Collins the Members AGREED the Declaration of Roads to be Public Roads under Section 11 of the Roads Act 1993 as outlined in the Report.

**The review of the Athenry Local Area Plan 2012-2022 and the commencement of the new Athenry Local Area Plan 2023-2029.** ADM148

The Cathaoirleach welcomed the planning staff and explained that a presentation would be given by Ms Loughnane on the Review of the Athenry Local Area Plan(LAP) 2012 to 2022.

Ms. Loughnane advised that the review of the Athenry LAP 2012-2022 and the commencement of the new Athenry LAP 2023-2029 would be underway shortly. She said that on completion of the Galway County Development Plan 2022-2028, the five stand-alone Local Area Plans for the towns of Ballinasloe, Tuam, Loughrea, Gort and Athenry are required to be reviewed. The review of the Ballinasloe LAP was completed in 2022. Tuam

LAP is due to go on public display in February and this will be followed by Loughrea, Athenry and then Gort.

Ms. Loughnane advised that it was hoped that the Draft Athenry LAP would go on public display in Q2/Q3 of 2023 and the exact timescale would be dependent on completion of the Environmental Reports (SEA, AA, SFRA).

Mr. Ward then gave a presentation to the Members and highlighted the Local Area Plan timeframe.

The following points were made:

- The existing Athenry LAP came into effect on 25<sup>th</sup> June 2012, with a Deferral of Notice (May 2017) extending the lifetime of the plan to 22<sup>nd</sup> May 2022.
- It expired in 2022 and is now being reviewed in line with the Galway CDP 2022-2028.
- It is proposed that publication of the Draft LAP will be Q2/Q3 2023.
- Public consultation on the Draft LAP will be six weeks.
- Galway County Council will be utilising Social Media platforms to highlight the publication of the Draft LAP. The Consultation Portal ([consult.galway.ie](http://consult.galway.ie)) is a dedicated web page.
- The Chief Executives Report will be prepared and presented to Members in Q2/Q3 of 2023.
- The adoption of the LAP is expected to be in Q4 of 2023.
- Galway County Development Plan 2022-2028 came into effect on 20<sup>th</sup> June 2022 and assists with informing policy objectives for the Draft LAP.
- The population allocation and residential units to be delivered are set out in Chapter 2 Core Strategy, Settlement Strategy and Housing Strategy.
- Athenry LAP 2023-2029 comprises of three sections, Section 1 - written statement including narrative and supporting policy objectives: Section 2 - Land Use Zoning Maps and Environmental Reports and Section 3 - Local Transport Plan.
- The core Strategy sets out a significant level of growth in population within Athenry, of 1,350 over the plan period and a density of 25/ha. The additional population will be accommodated in 777 units provided on brownfield and greenfield sites.
- Land will be zoned in the Draft LAP to maintain and facilitate employment development.
- There are two additional Land Use Zonings in new Plan, namely Residential Infill and Tourism.

In reply to a query by Cllr. Herterich Quinn, Ms. Loughnane advised that this was the commencement of the review of the 2012-2022 Plan and some survey work had been done to-date. She invited Members to make any comments they wished on the Plan. She further advised that once the Draft LAP was prepared, it would be put on public display for a six-week period and submissions are then invited from the public during this period. In relation to a query on the Local Transport Plan, Ms. Loughnane advised that this was prepared by

the Roads Section in close collaboration with the Forward Planning Section. Policy objectives from the Local Transport Plan will be integrated into the LAP and the Traffic Management Plan will be determined from this.

In response to Cllr. Dolan's query on the number of houses to be constructed on the 21.8 h.a. of greenfield lands, Ms. Loughnane advised that these figures have been identified in the Core Strategy in the CDP. There is a population allocation of 1,350 over the lifetime of the Plan which will be accommodated by 544 residential units on greenfield sites and 233 units to be delivered on Infill/Brownfield Sites. She said that 21.8 h/a is the quantum of Greenfield land required for Residential Development and density is 25/ha. She advised that there were policy objectives in CDP with respect to higher density in appropriate areas in the town, i.e., there may be some slight flexibility for densities to be increased in town centres. In response to Cllr. Collin's query regarding extension of the Town Boundary, Ms. Loughnane stated that she did not expect there would be an extension. She advised that there were adequate lands within the current boundary to provide for R1 development.

Cllr. Herterich Quinn sought clarification in relation to 2016 Census figures. She stated that the Core Strategy figures in the CDP 2022-2028 had been agreed in advance of new Census figures being released and queried if they had potential to increase residential units and Core Strategy Allocation for Athenry based on figures that are out of date.

Cllr. Collins welcomed the fact that they were starting this process. He raised a query in relation to Housing Needs Assessment (HNA) for the County and the population growth that has happened in Athenry since the last Plan. He also referenced the new Community (Ukrainian Refugees) that has come into Ireland in the last few months and queried if the HNA would need to be increased to reflect this. In relation to employment figures, he queried if the newer businesses that have come into Athenry in recent years have been included in the Draft Plan.

In response to Cllr. Herterich Quinn's query regarding CSO figures, Ms. Loughnane advised that they had been given projected figures/growth figures by the Department which were not based on 2016 census and did not expect that there would be much of a differentiation. The Department had brought out ESRI figures in late 2021 which were incorporated into the County Development Plan (CDP). A review of the current CDP will be taking place in two years' time, and if required the new Census figures can be considered at that stage. She assured the Members that there were adequate population figures allocated in the Plan to cater for the housing requirements over the next six years.

In response to a query by Cllr. Collins, Ms. Loughnane advised that the Housing Needs Assessment figures are based on CDP. She advised that it was anticipated that the Public Consultation would commence in Q2/Q3 of 2023 and will be completed by Q4 of 2023.

Cllr. Herterich Quinn highlighted the huge issue of developing any lands in Athenry due to Wastewater issues and stated the upgrade required has curtailed development in the town.

In response to Cllr. Charity's query, Ms. Loughnane advised that there were 91.59 ha of R2 zoned lands in the 2012 Plan. She commented that the RZLT will possibly bring about a

reduction of R2 lands in the LAP and they had to be mindful that the sequential approach would have to come into play.

In relation to query on no. of private houses to be built, Ms. Loughnane advised that she did not have this figure to-hand but would revert to Cllr. Cuddy with this figure. In relation to his query on private housing estates, Ms. Loughnane stated that the Planning Authority's role was to grant/refuse planning permissions and what happened after that was outside the control of the Planning Authority. The role of the Planning Authority was to provide adequate zoned serviced land and she said that the purchase/ownership of sites thereafter was outside of its control. She stated there was no policy objective contained in the LAP that would limit the role of Housing Agencies and this was not an issue that could be addressed in the LAP. In relation to notifying landowners affected by zoning/rezoning, Ms. Loughnane advised that when the Draft LAP goes on public display for six weeks, it gives everyone an opportunity to make a submission on it. She advised that a webinar and face-to-face consultations would also take place during the public consultation period and that was the mechanism for all stakeholders to make submissions on the Draft Plan.

Cllr. Carroll stated that it was an ambitious Plan and concurred with Ms. Loughnane's comments regarding population figures being adequate over the duration of the plan. He referenced Athenry as being a Strategic Potential Town and stated that critical to that was the development of the rail system. He also referenced the Core Strategy Allocation figure of 1,300 and emphasised the importance of provision of public transport. He welcomed the figure of 777 new residential units to be built over the lifetime of the plan and stated that it was vital that Affordable Houses are included as part of this.

The Members thanked the Forward Planning Unit for their presentation and were advised that any queries in relation to the Plan can be made via [forwardplanning@galwaycoco.ie](mailto:forwardplanning@galwaycoco.ie)

### **Presentation by Galway County Public Participation Network(PPN) AMD149**

The Cathaoirleach welcomed Mr Lyons and Ms Mullin from the Galway County PPN.

Mr Lyons said that the primary purpose of the PPN is to enable the PPN member group to input into and have their voices heard within the formal decision-making structures of the local authority. It is the main way that local authorities connect with groups active in their area. The PPN works with "not for profit" groups active in the area and includes social inclusion, environmental and general community and voluntary groups. It aims to include minority or traditionally hard to reach groups.

He said that the PPN has 11 Members spread over the six Strategic Policy Committees. They also have representatives on other Committees and Boards ie. Local Community & Development Committee, Joint Policing Committee, Galway Sports Partnership, Galway Rural Development, Older Persons Committee, Childcare Committee, Galway Education and Training Board, Healthy Ireland, Western Region Drugs and Alcohol Taskforce and Fisheries Local Action Group. The PPN gives a voice to the community and are key partners in the

community. They help to improve decision making and the forming of more sustainable policies.

The Cathairleach and the Members welcomed the presentation and highlighted the importance of the PPN to the Local Groups and the County Council Members.

The Cathairleach highlighted that it is helpful for Community Groups to be a member of the PPN when accessing funds but it was not essential to be a member.

Mr Lyons thanked the Members for their comments, and he said that they were currently working on a plan for 2023. He said that their aim was to make the PPN even better and more accessible to all groups.

Mr Farrell said that the PPN was within his directorate and acknowledged the work being done for the past number of years. He said that the partnership approach was key to its success in Galway, and he complimented the volunteers and the staff in the PPN along with Mary Mc Gann, AO who plays a key liaison role.

### **Municipal District Director's Business & Correspondence.**

**ADM150**

Mr Hanrahan, Director of Service, outlined the housing need for the Athenry MD area and explained that there are currently 440 applicants on the list for the area. The Athenry MD area is made up of two geographical areas ie Athenry and Oranmore/Claregalway. The housing unit are examining the option of splitting the Oranmore/Claregalway area in two separate areas in 2023.

Mr Hanrahan said that the figures show that there are 441 households requiring rent supplement and that age profile is young due to the proximity to Galway City. Applicants to the City Council tend to choose one of these two areas as their area of choice.

In relation to construction, he said that the developments do not go through the Part 8 process as there are SACs in the area and Environment studies have to be submitted to An Bord Pleanála. The proposal includes the development of 90 units in Claregalway and the build time is approximately 18 months. The same will apply to a number of other sites in the MD.

Mr Hanrahan explained that the housing income threshold has been increased and that due to this an increase in applications is expected in the coming months.

The Cathairleach thanked Mr Hanrahan for his presentation and invited questions from the Members.

In reply to a query from Cllr Collins Mr Hanrahan said that the price of the affordable houses would be based on location and market value of the town and will allow for a discount of approximately €50,000 which will be funded by the Department. There will be a clawback of approximately 10 years whereby the purchaser cannot sell the property without paying back the discount on a phased basis depending on the number of years they live in the house. The criteria for qualification for the schemes is outlined in the scheme of letting

priorities for Social Housing and the criteria for the Affordable Housing Scheme outlines the criteria for Affordable houses.

In reply to a query for Cllr Herterich Quinn on capital funding Mr Hanrahan confirmed that the has been rolled over. The BER ratings will be B3 or B2, they will have air to water heating systems, no chimneys and the Department will set out guidelines for a clear set of building regulations and materials required.

The HAP criteria is set out Nationally. He said that landlords find the building regulations cumbersome and if they do not meet the criteria the works have to be carried out by law. This applies to all rented dwellings.

In relation to housing for applicants with disabilities all new social housing estates will have a number of units suitable for persons with disabilities. He said that in Claregalway the mix of dwellings will include bungalows and housing for the elderly.

### **Cathaoirleach's Business.**

**ADM 151**

In reply to a query from Cllr Herterich Quinn, Ms Lowe said that the Roads staff met some local residents on site in relation to the proposed pedestrian crossing in Oranmore village when inspecting the location. She said that she will liaise with Cllr Quinn on the matter.

In reply to a query on the upgrading of street lighting to LED this has been tendered at regional level. She said that Electric Skyline gave a presentation on lighting recently at the Loughrea MD and highlighted that 52% of the Council's lights are LED. She said that she will update the members on the timelines for regional contract by email following the meeting.

In relation to a query on dangerous overtaking at the N67 junction at Oranmore, Mr Whelan said that he will look at the road layout at this site.

In relation to the Specific Improvement Grant for Belville it was confirmed that the drawings are at discussion stage with the Contractor, and in response to a query on the roadworks at the Cregmore bridge Mr Whelan said he will discuss the traffic control measures to be put in place with the local residents.

Mr Farrell said that in relation to the burst mains in Athenry he had received a response from Irish water stating that the replacement of this pipeline is scheduled for Q3 but this timeframe will be examined in view of the ongoing issues. He said he would ask that this be expedited.

Cllr Dolan asked about the process in selecting the site for the proposed graveyard at Claregalway. He said that road was an issue and requested a report for the members at the next MD meeting. Cllr Charity asked when the proposal would be coming to Members of

the Athenry MD. Cllr Cuddy said that since 2008 the council were aware that a new cemetery was needed in Claregalway and only one landowner has come forward with a site. He said that it went to public consultation and that it was important that the views of the local community are taken into account. He said that it would be best to await the consultation process.

**Notice of Motion: Cllr Herterich Quinn**

**AMD 152**

*"I, Cllr Shelly Herterich Quinn wish to propose the continuation of the free parking in the Backlawn Car Park in Athenry."*

*The response was*

*"Galway County Council will provide free car parking at Backlawn Car Park for the year 2023. This will be reviewed in December, 2023."*

**Any other business (AOB).**

The Cathaoirleach thanked everyone and said that the next meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, 14<sup>th</sup> March, 2023 at 2.00

**Criochnaigh an crinniú ansin**

**Approved by:**



**CATHAOIRLEACH**

**Date:** 20.3.2023.