

**CEANTAR BARDASACH BHAILE LOCHA RIACH
MUNICIPAL DISTRICT OF LOUGREA**

**Minutes of Monthly Meeting of the Municipal District of Loughrea
held in the Council Chamber, Civic Offices Loughrea, on 8th September 2025**

I LATHAIR:

Cathaoirleach:

Cllr. P. Killilea

Baill:

Cllrs. I. Canning, G. Finnerty, L. Harney, D. Kelly,
M. Kinane, M. Maher, J. McClearn, M. Regan.
Cllr. G. Donohue (online).

Oifigigh:

Ms. E. Ruane Director of Services, Mr. D. Troy
A/Senior Engineer, Mr. E. Gallagher Senior Executive
Engineer, Mr. G. Haugh Senior Executive Engineer,
Ms. P. Higgins Senior Executive Engineer, Ms. V.
Loughnane Senior Planner, Mr. B. Corcoran Senior
Executive Planner, Mr. N. Kennedy Executive
Engineer, Mr. D. O'Loughlin Executive Engineer, Ms.
M. McGann Meetings Administrator, Ms. S. Cleary
Staff Officer

**1. OFFICIAL PRESENTATION OF THE CHAIN OF OFFICE TO THE CATHAOIRLEACH OF THE
MUNICIPAL DISTRICT**

LMD2439

Ms. E. Ruane, Director of Services, presented the Chain of Office to Cllr. P. Killilea, Cathaoirleach of the Municipal District of Loughrea. The Members welcomed the new Chain of Office and congratulated the Cathaoirleach.

**2. CONFIRMATION OF THE MINUTES OF MONTHLY MEETING OF THE MUNICIPAL
DISTRICT OF LOUGHREA HELD ON 14TH JULY 2025**

LMD2440

The Minutes of the Monthly Meeting of the Municipal District of Loughrea held on 14th July 2025 were approved by the Municipal District Members and signed by the Cathaoirleach on the **PROPOSAL** of Cllr. Maher and **SECONDED** by Cllr. Harney.

Matters arising from the Minutes:

Cllr. Maher requested an update on the traffic lights at the Westbridge, Loughrea. In response, Mr. Haugh advised that a contractor has been engaged for a number of weeks and while works had been delayed due to the nature and complexity of the works, it is envisaged that repair works will be completed within two weeks. Mr. Haugh further

advised that staff had met to discuss junction re-modelling options put forward by Systra to provide the best solution for traffic flow at this busy junction, and once all options will be fully explored. He will revert to the Elected Members with the emerging preferred option once the review is fully completed. Cllr. Regan stated that a mini roundabout is the best option at the location as the traffic flows better when the traffic lights are off. Mr. Haugh responded that it was important to assess the impact of all options on vulnerable road users to ensure that any option would not unintentionally create uncertainty regarding right of way and safety issues, hence it was important to await the professional assessment of options for the junction.

In response to a query from Cllr. Maher, Mr. Haugh confirmed that the Municipal District Office is working on identifying locations for planned works on the Dunkellin Drainage District, which will then require further consultations regarding landowner agreement.

Cllr. Maher stated that further measures were required to deal with speeding motorists and requested an update on location of speed cameras in the Loughrea Area. In response, Mr. Haugh clarified that this is a matter for An Garda Síochána and the role of the local authority is limited to undertaking speed surveys and forwarding results of same to An Garda Síochána. Cllr. Regan stated there was a need for a pilot scheme to install speed ramps on approach roads to towns and villages as current digital signage was ineffective as a deterrent to speeding. Cllr. Kelly stated that a 2-pronged approach was required to address speeding, with a combination of speed ramps and speed cameras. In response, Mr. Haugh stated that there is a process whereby locations can be reviewed for consideration in relation to the introduction of traffic calming measures, however, there would be a significant cost in rolling this solution out across the Municipal District. Loughrea MD has had limited success in seeking funding for schemes of this type under the Low-Cost Safety Improvement Scheme. Cllr. McClearn stated there was a need for a serious debate around speeding as it was a primary concern everywhere with speed limits being exceeded on a daily basis at approach roads, and it warranted being included as a separate item on the Municipal District agenda.

Cllr. Maher enquired if closing Dolphin Street to traffic is still being discussed, adding that he will not support this option as it will cause local businesses to close. Mr. Haugh responded that consideration is being given to reversing the traffic direction on certain roads and any proposals will be brought before the Members before implementation. Cllr. Kelly stated he was happy to allocate Notice of Motion (NOM) funding towards the planned works on Abbey Street.

Cllr. McClearn referred to the N65 at Heathlawn and the invitation which issued to TII (Transport Infrastructure Ireland) to attend the September Municipal District (MD) meeting and stated there was still a need for their attendance to explain delays in remediating this situation.

Cllr. McClearn **PROPOSED** the following motion:

"That TII (Transport Infrastructure Ireland) be invited to attend the October MD Meeting to discuss the ongoing situation on the N65 at Heathlawn."

Cllr. Canning **SECONDED** the motion which was **AGREED** by all Members.

In response to queries from Cllr. McClearn and Cllr. Kelly regarding the cost implications of temporary traffic management at Heathlawn, Mr. Haugh clarified that a separate claim for the recoupment of traffic management and staff overtime was submitted to TII and it does not impact on existing national road maintenance funding.

Cllr. Canning referred to his previous request to install push button controls on the pedestrian crossing at Main Street, Portumna, and requested a breakdown of the cost to install these lights. Mr. Haugh advised that he can provide costings for the upgrade of the pedestrian crossing, however, it would be unlikely to receive funding from TII, and there is generally more active and safer engagement between motorists and pedestrians where belisha beacons, or zebra crossings, are located. Mr. Haugh further clarified that beacons are generally installed where there are lower pedestrian/traffic numbers, whereas a push-button controlled crossing is installed for higher pedestrian/traffic numbers and the likely cost impact would be in the region of €55,000. Cllr. Canning reiterated his request for installation of push-button controls and lighting and requested costings to make the crossing safer for pedestrians.

Cllr. Donohue asked if the Municipal District had written to the Roads Strategic Policy Committee (SPC) requesting hedge cutting as an SPC agenda item, and the Cathaoirleach responded that an update is not yet available. Mr. Troy advised the members that he is working on a Hedge Cutting Policy for Galway County Council (GCC) and it is anticipated to have the draft completed by year-end, which should regularize processes across the Council and clarify them for Elected Members. The Cathaoirleach and Members welcomed the streamlining of processes including which roads are identified as priorities, and the responsibilities of landowners. In response to a query from Cllr. Regan regarding the scheduling of hedge-cutting and request for N.O.M. monies to fund same, Mr. Troy clarified that these issues would be clarified as part of the Hedge Cutting Policy. Cllr. Finnerty stated that he would review progress on hedge-cutting before committing further N.O.M. funding to same and stressed that all contractors should be on the ground by 1st September annually, as hedge-cutting was now urgently required at Lough Cutra School and along the R361 and R362. Cllr. Kelly also expressed concern at allocating N.O.M. funding towards hedge-cutting which has not been completed. Cllr. Kinane also expressed concern with the delay in commencing hedge-cutting and stated she would willingly allocate all N.O.M. funding if resourcing was the issue and asked for costings to be made available to inform Elected Members further. In response, Mr. Haugh advised that the MD Office have been hedge-cutting since July on selected priority national and regional routes, with some roads being selected for a second cut. He further advised that local hedge-cutting had commenced today, and that it would be an impossible task to carry out hedge-cutting on all routes in the MD from both an operational and financial perspective. In response to a query from Cllr. Harney, Mr. Haugh advised that landowner responsibility regarding tree and hedge maintenance is advertised annually in local newspapers. In response to a proposal from Cllr. Harney to engage Coillte to mark damaged or dangerous trees for removal, Mr. Haugh advised that he was unaware of any similar previous process but would make further enquiries.

Cllr. Kinane thanked Mr. Haugh for feedback provided to the Members following a presentation made by Ms. Katie Joyce. She stated it is hard to believe that there are 12

locations within the MD without audio devices at pedestrian crossings and urged the Council to contact TII as soon as possible to request funding to address this issue.

In response to a query from Cllr. Kinane regarding the status of speed limit submissions for the MD submitted two years previously, Mr. Gallagher confirmed that national guidelines are still being developed, and while all local submissions are logged and on hand, a full review will not take place locally pending completion of the national guidelines which will directly impact the outcomes of our review.

In response to a query from Cllr. Kinane regarding the process to submit a Motion to allocate LPT Discretionary Fund monies, Ms. McGann clarified that this is still being finalized by Senior Management, but it can be submitted as a Motion for discussion at the next MD Meeting and a draft form will be made available for this purpose. Following a further query from Cllr. Regan, Ms. McGann added that it is hoped to offer full clarification on the process to be used going forward at the next meeting.

3. CONFIRMATION OF THE MINUTES OF SPECIAL MEETING OF THE MUNICIPAL DISTRICT OF LOUGHREA HELD ON 29TH JULY 2025

LMD2441

The Minutes of the Special Meeting of the Municipal District of Loughrea held on 29th July 2025 were approved by the Municipal District Members and signed by the Cathaoirleach on the **PROPOSAL** of Cllr. Maher and **SECONDED** by Cllr. Finnerty.

Cllr. Regan advised that he was unable to connect to the online meeting on 29th July 2025 and wished to have this noted for the record.

In response to a query from Cllr. Finnerty's regarding the effective date for Gort Local Area Plan, Ms. Loughnane advised the Gort Local Area Plan will come into effect from tomorrow, and the full document and Local Transport Plan will be available in hard copy from the Gort Area Office and Council Headquarters and will also be available online. In response to a further query from Cllr. Finnerty, Ms. Loughnane stated that liability for RZLT (Residential Zoned Land Tax) is effective from 1st February 2025, however the RZLT will not be liable in Gort until the new revised maps are available which is 1st February 2026. Ms. Loughnane confirmed that people will have an opportunity to make submissions on the draft maps before that date.

4. FLOODING UPDATE

LMD2442

Mr. E. Gallagher confirmed that a report with additional information requested by NPWS (National Parks & Wildlife Service) was submitted by the project team on 23rd May. The Project Team received feedback on 14th July and are now preparing further updates to the report with NPWS having requested information on the assessments undertaken to identify the significance of ecological impacts that would result from the scheme being in place. This information would be contained in the project NIS (Natura Impact Statement)

and the environmental consultants are preparing these updates at present. The Project Team expect a response to issue to NPWS by early October.

Mr. Gallagher noted that this level of engagement with NPWS was not anticipated when the first meeting with NPWS took place in mid-January 2025, however, the queries and requests for additional information by NPWS are welcomed and hopefully will result in a reduced number of queries during the formal planning process.

A recent workshop between the project team and the OPW has identified additional lands adjacent to the scheme that would be suitable for re-use of surplus excavated material. The project agronomist will be visiting these additional landowners over the next month. The last in a series of bat surveys are to be completed this month.

In relation to the Oranmore to Kinvara Storm Debie Study, following data collection and the preparation of preliminary flood mapping for the event, 45 additional properties have been identified as being at serious flood risk during the event. Each property will be visited in the next week and the householder spoken to, or a letter left, asking them to contact the project team. The purpose of these interactions is to confirm the extent of flooding (if any) experienced by these households and to amend our mapping accordingly. A GPS threshold survey of each property will also be required, works that will be undertaken by an external third party. Mr. Gallagher confirmed that it is hoped that the Interim Report for this project will be available for the next meeting of the Loughrea MD, but this will be dependent on the availability of the surveying contractor.

In response to queries from Cllr Kinane and Cllr Finnerty, Mr Gallagher confirmed that the interim and final reports will identify properties that flooded or were at serious risk of flooding during Storm Debie. The data gathered to date on the project is extremely consistent with National Coastal Flood Hazard Mapping that is available on the OPW website and is already available to the insurance industry. Mr. Gallagher confirmed that it is not envisaged that any property will be identified in the study which will be outside the flood mapping envelopes already in existence and available to the general public.

5. ACTIVE TRAVEL OVERVIEW FOR LOUGHREA MUNICIPAL DISTRICT LMD2443

Ms. Paula Higgins, Senior Executive Engineer, made a presentation to the members on NTA-Funded Active Travel Projects 2025.

Ms. Higgins advised the Members that Active Travel works on Regional and Local Roads are funded by the NTA and generally for areas within 50/60 kph speed zones, whereas Active Travel Works on national roads are funded and managed by the TII. Ms. Higgins outlined the application process, the delivery process, and typical timeframes which can run up to 24 months. Typical costs for various types of Active Travel infrastructure were also outlined, in addition to the design standards which apply at national level.

Ms. Higgins outlined the Active Travel allocations relevant to the Loughrea MD. In relation to SRTS (Safe Routes to School), Ms. Higgins confirmed that three schools in the Loughrea

MD are included in Round 2 for which consultants have been engaged with designs being completed, following which these designs will be brought before the Members. Ms. Higgins advised that Ballinderreen SRTS project will take longer as it is located on a national road requiring TII approval and Road Safety Officer input. Ms. Higgins confirmed that 16 schools in the Loughrea MD were registered with An Taisce for SRTS and outlined schools under consideration for Rounds 3 and 4 of the schemes. Ms. Higgins further clarified that decisions on the opening and closing of the SRTS Scheme lie with An Taisce and are not a matter for Galway County Council. Ms. Higgins also advised the members of progress on the roll out of the Bus Stop Enhancement Programme, Active Travel Design Scheme, and a Local Transport Plan for Gort, and Community Transport Studies for Kinvara and Portumna.

In response to Cllr. Maher regarding lack of footpaths for the Loughrea Hotel Walking Tour, Ms. Higgins advised that this route has been identified in the Local Transport Plan but the other scheme was prioritized for funding as it generated more active travel and commuting trips to schools, businesses and housing estates. In response to a query from Cllr. Maher regarding the dangerous junction at St Brendan's NS Cross St, Ms. Higgins advised that this was included in SRTS Round 2 projects which would be going to planning and public consultation later in the year – Ms. Higgins confirmed that St. Brendan's NS Cross Street is part of this bundle of projects. Cllr. Regan welcomed the inclusion of Danesfort Road in the Active Travel design.

In response to a query from Cllr. Kelly regarding consultation with disability groups, Ms. Higgins confirmed that the Active Travel Team consult with advocacy groups and all online consultations are accessible.

Cllr. Harney stated that it was important to link Labane and Ardrahan with a footpath or cycleway as there are considerable trips generated through schools and sports clubs. Ms. Higgins advised that this had previously been estimated at over €1.6m which the NTA declined to fund, and therefore, it had not received further consideration. Cllr. Harney requested a breakdown of the estimated cost as it seemed excessive and stressed the necessity for this active travel measure. In response to Cllr. Harney and Cllr. Finnerty on the matter, Ms. Higgins advised that she will note the matter for discussions with TII and revert regarding detailed costings. Mr. Troy noted that providing footpaths for a distance of 1.6km would require the majority of the Active Travel County Budget and other improvements in both villages may be a higher priority.

In relation to a query from Cllr. Finnerty regarding reinstatement of a bus shelter in Labane, through an insurance settlement rather than national funding, Mr. Haugh advised that there can be considerable delays in receipt of monies from insurance claims, resulting in the Council completing the works from its own budget in advance of potential recoupment through insurance monies.

In response to Cllr. Finnerty and Cllr. Killilea regarding an update on a request for a bus stop on the Ennis Road, Gort, Ms. Higgins advised that the Active Travel team will engage with the NTA.

In response to a query from Cllr. Kinane whether SRTS projects will be affected by TII projects, Ms. Higgins advised that some SRTS designs have called for periodic speed limit reviews which will await national guidelines, but will not impact delivery of the SRTS scheme in the meantime. Cllr. Kinane stated she hopes the SRTS project at Killeeneen school will come to fruition. In relation to a SRTS scheme for Clarinbridge School, Ms. Higgins clarified that no scheme has been designated to date, but when it is, An Taisce will work with the school and all relevant partners in this regard.

In relation to a query from Cllr. Donohue about progressing funding for the 1.2km boardwalk on the N67 at Kinvara, Ms. Higgins advised that the Kinvara Transport Study will provide a solid basis for future funding proposals.

On behalf of the Members, Cllr. Killilea thanked Ms. Higgins for the very comprehensive overview of active travel funding and stated that he looked forward to definite progress on the Kinvara Community Transport Study.

6. MUNICIPAL DISTRICT OF LOUGHREA CATHAOIRLEACH'S BUSINESS LMD2444

Cllr. Killilea advised the Members that following discussions with Youth Work Ireland, it was agreed that the content of their documentary on barriers to accessibility was too long for a deputation, and the PPN (Public Participation Network) would instead invite them to present at a PPN Plenary Meeting.

7. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

LMD2445

Cllr. Maher sought an update on the amenity project at the Long Point Loughrea, and stated there was a concern about a lack of public consultation in this regard. In response, Ms. Ruane advised that she would seek an update from the Regeneration Team.

Cllr. Maher highlighted an ongoing issue occurring in Loughrea where people without disabled parking badges continue to park in clearly identified disabled parking bays.

Cllr. McClearn stated that the process for the CIS (Community Involvement in Roadworks Scheme) was frustrating for unsuccessful applicants and queried if schemes could be carried forward to future years like the process for Local Improvement Schemes. Mr. Troy advised that the new CIS Scheme is open this week, and the Roads Department will write to existing applicants and enquire if they wish to remain on the list. This change in the process was welcomed by Cllr. McClearn and other Members.

Cllr. McClearn stated that the Council has overreacted to the reeds in the Portumna Bathing area by erecting a red flag and signage to advise people not to swim in the area. Cllr. McClearn stated that it was vital that the Council find a solution to the growth of the reeds before next year's swimming season as he does not want the area to lose its Blue Flag status. Cllr. Canning reiterated that the Council needs to take responsibility for this issue and engage with the Office of Public Works (OPW) or Waterways Ireland to have the

reeds removed from the bathing area. Cllr. Kelly stated that the area used to be regularly cleaned, and if environmental screening is required to enable this to be done and clear the area, then this needs to be progressed.

Cllr. Kinane requested a status update on the proposed cycle lane between Oranmore and Clarinbridge for the October MD Meeting.

Cllr. Kinane requested cleaning of gullies and opening of water tables to combat flooding on roads and dangerous driving conditions.

Cllr. Canning requested more signage at the Green Door, Portumna, and engagement with landowners who were willing to give land to straighten this stretch of road.

Cllr. Killilea stated that there was an issue with campervans parking on the grass at Kinvara and blocking local access, which was frustrating for families in the area.


Cllr. Harney proposed that an invite issue to Uisce Eireann (UE) to attend the October MD Meeting and update Members on East Galway Main Drainage schemes.

VOTE OF SYMPATHY:

Cllr. McClearn proposed a Vote of Sympathy to the family of Ken Kelly, Ballinasloe (KPW) and the Cathaoirleach and all Members extended their condolences to the family at this time.

CHRIOCHNAIGH AN CRUINNIU ANSIN.


Cathaoirleach:


Date: /