

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF MUNICIPAL DISTRICT OF TUAM HELD AT
THE OFFICES OF THE MUNICIPAL DISTRICT OF TUAM, TUAM, COUNTY GALWAY
ON MONDAY 8th MAY 2023 AT 12:30 pm.**

CATHAOIRLEACH: Cllr. Keaveney

I LÁTHAIR FREISIN Cllr. Hoade, Cllr. Killilea, Cllr. Roche, Cllr. Sheridan & Cllr. Reddington. Cllr. McHugh Farag joined remotely via Teams.

AS LÁTHAIR

BAILL OIFIGH: Mr. Derek Pender D.O.S. - Infrastructure & Operations, Mr. Paul Connolly – Acting Senior Executive Engineer, Ms. Geraldine Byrne - Meetings Administrator, Ms. Sinéad Naughton – Staff Officer, Valerie Loughnane – Senior Planner, Brendan Dunne – Senior Executive Planner.

Cllr. Keaveney welcomed everyone to the meeting.

MDT220061

1. – Confirmation of the Minutes of Meeting of Municipal District of Tuam held 17th April 2023.

On the **proposal** of Cllr. Roche and **seconded** by Cllr. Killilea the minutes of the meeting of the Tuam Municipal District held on 17th April 2023 were **agreed**.

Matters Arising:

Cllr. Killilea commended a recent presentation from Tuam Tidy Towns. He also stated it is his hope that €70,000 is being ring fenced for provision of art sculptures on the main roundabouts and hopes this will progress over the coming months.

Cllr. Keaveney enquired about the maintenance of roundabouts on the approach roads to Tuam, stating it is critically important there is a plan in place.

Mr. Pender advised that there is a works process that needs to be followed and that TII will have input into what is planned with aspects such as site lines and visibility to be considered. Mr Pender will personally contact the TII regarding a plan for the maintenance of the roundabouts for the coming months to progress this matter.

Cllr. Roche thanked Paul Connolly, SEE who met with him and residents of the Dublin Road and made a request that they attend the next meeting to make a deputation.

Cllr. Reddington questioned why the active travel update originally on today's agenda was removed and Mr. Pender advised that due to unforeseen circumstances, personnel were not available on the day.

Cllr. Sheridan raised the issue of the outsourcing of teams for summer works programme and asked if there was a precedent in other local authorities. Mr Pender advised all contractors were entitled to register with E tenders and make submissions to which Cllr. Sheridan queried if this process had a GO code and applied for recruitment and Mr. Pender advised this process did not apply to Human Resources and staffing.

MDT220062

Municipal District of Tuam – 8th May 2023

On the proposal of Cllr. Sheridan seconded by Cllr. Killilea the following motion was agreed I propose; -

That our outdoor Engineering team, research the feasibility of augmenting existing staff members with external outsourced contractors with the view to maximising projects and value for money for limited time frame windows for projects. Example Summer Works Programme for Road Maintenance.

Cllr. Hoade requested an update regarding the staff shortages in Headford. Mr. Connolly advised that one staff member had returned temporarily and currently HR are finding it difficult to fill the two temporary positions.

Cllr. Keaveney queried if there was an appetite to make the role permanent when it is the lowest income package a temporary role maybe less appealing. Mr. Pender advised that he will be engaging with HR to make the role a permanent position.

MDT220063

2. – To discuss the format and content of the Chief Executives Report on submissions received on the Draft Tuam Local Area Plan 2023-2029.

Ms. Loughnane, Senior Planner, advised that the Chief Executive Report had been prepared within 6 weeks and that the members now had time to consider this report. She advised that the purpose of today was to give broad overview of the CE Report and submissions received. In addition, there was opportunity to discuss dates for proposed meetings and workshops with the Elected Members to facilitate the process.

Brendan Dunne, Senior Executive Planner, advised that 62 submissions and 2 late submissions were received on the LAP and there were 3 recommendations and 3 observations from the Office of Planning Regulator (OPR), and the CE had responded accordingly. He reiterated that the LAP is a land use plan, it can support the County Development Plan, but it is not an economic plan. He requested that the elected members recognise that the Local Area Plan and the Residential Zoned Land Tax are two separate processes, with different maps.

He advised that the CE has responded to the submissions received with clear recommendations. He advised that the Local Transport Plan (LTP) is embedded within the LAP, this is done in conjunction with the Roads and Transportation Department and after the plans are adopted there will be opportunities to seek funding for Active Travel. Mr. Dunne advised that he was available to answer any queries that elected members may have.

The elected members thanked the forward planning team for their work. Cllr. Keaveney sought clarification on the number of housing units proposed amid the current housing crisis. Ms. Loughnane advised that it was the plans ambition to have 1000 units over the 6 years. Cllr. Keaveney queried how Galway County Council can find the mechanism to acquire some lands for development when they are being used for cattle grazing and referred to the likelihood of owners holding on to R1 lands as the value increases. Ms. Loughnane advised that lands must be zoned sequentially, and that the Government's initiative of the Residential Zoned Land Tax (RZLT) has been introduced as a mechanism to bring land to the market. Cllr. Keaveney enquired in relation to the current Tuam LAP how many housing units were expected and what was delivered. Ms. Loughnane advised that Tuam was one of the few areas that reached its potential, it didn't reach the target but in terms of population allocation came close. She advised that this plan is different as Department requirements changed and it is now measured in units as opposed to people. Ms Loughnane also noted that the policy objectives of the plan encourage the

Municipal District of Tuam – 8th May 2023

development of Tuam as a key town, delivering units and sustainable places to live, work and have services in place to accommodate same.

Cllr. Roche enquired about agreeing in principle a dezoning request. Ms. Loughnane advised that in relation to zoning and rezoning there is a rationale given in relation to Chief Executives recommendation, and it is not a case that you ask, and it would be rezoned.

Cllr. Roche enquired if dezoning was considered in areas where flood mitigation was carried out, or if they can now be considered if no longer a flood risk. Ms. Loughnane responded advising that any works that have been done cannot be considered at plan making stage due to guidelines in place.

Cllr. Roche said he thought that we voted away the urban fringe and if that doesn't exist why are we talking of the town boundary. Ms. Loughnane responded advising the urban fringe is gone from the County Development Plan, as it was voted out by the members previously. Cllr. Roche advised that the members need to be prudent on decision making about such decisions.

Cllr. Killilea advised that he had made submissions and stated that the numbers are almost irrelevant as there was no new housing estate privately built since 2006. In last 3 years, a commitment of 280 units that have not commenced – therefore not reaching potential, as there are people who have their land zoned and don't want to sell it and people who want to develop and cannot. The elected members are here to work for the people of Tuam, something must change to enable people to buy lands that are available for the development of housing. Cllr. Keaveney called for the Elected members to have a side conference on the LAP, with their own ambitions for the town and see how they can align as sensitively as possible with the CEO's report.

Cllr. Hoade agreed with Cllr. Killilea stating that there are lands zoned on a continuous basis and may never come to the fore. She referred to Tuam's proximity to Athenry, the recent job creation announcement and the need to deliver housing as it is impossible to rent or buy a house in the Tuam MD at the moment. There needs to be a balance between delivery and being realistic and proposed a workshop as the Elected members need to have the time to make informed decisions.

Cllr. Reddington enquired as to what the process was if someone wants their land removed from the Residential Land Zoned Tax stating that anyone farming actively should not have their lands zoned. Ms. Loughnane advised that they are two separate processes. The RZLT will be significant 3% of value of land and it will be collected by Revenue.

Cllr. Sheridan questioned what percentage of the submissions made by the public were accepted by the CEO. Cllr. Sheridan recognised Tuam as a key town in jurisdiction that is being overlooked as we lack critical infrastructure. He queried why Cloon Cuane station was not even mentioned in the plan and there is not enough electricity in Tuam as well as the critical infrastructure of wastewater treatment only getting a little mention. He stated that to have a thriving town need to deal with the critical infrastructure and while it may be outside the realm of the red line it should be brought into it and that Climate action is not dealt with. In response Ms. Loughnane highlighted the various sections dealing with Climate change and water and wastewater within the plan

Cllr. Roche spoke of the need to be careful if extending the town boundary to facilitate a sporting facility, if dezoned it would be putting that group in a difficult position as if ministerial order placed on it would make future development difficult for them. Cllr. Keaveney added that in event of that happening Galway County Council should buy the land. Cllr Hoade impressed the need for a workshop and said she had huge concern with the finance of Galway County Council and would not like to give clubs or organisation's the idea that the Council have the finance available to purchase land.

Municipal District of Tuam – 8th May 2023

Cllr. Killilea referred to a previous councillor who had zoned lands outside the plans where now the JFC manufacturing facility is located, providing employment locally as well as generating a substantial amount of rates income for Galway County Council. He stated while we must be cognisant of what the authorities are stating.

Ms. Loughnane said she appreciated that members want to do what's right, and that the ministerial direction was consistent since 2016 and members can be advised on this. Mr. Dunne advised that all elected members are aware that zoning does not indicate planning permission on the land in question and it is important to address any concerns before engaging in workshops.

MDT220064

3. – To agree a meeting date to consider the Chief Executive's Report on submissions received on the Draft Tuam Local Area Plan 2023-2029.

The following dates were agreed by the Elected Members;

Thursday	18 th May	2.00pm	Workshop with Planning Officials
Monday	29 th May	2.00pm	Tuam MD Cllrs - private meeting
Wednesday	31 st May	1.00pm	Submission deadline for maps and motions
Tuesday	6 th June	2.00pm	LAP review meeting by Tuam MD members
Wednesday	7 th June	11.00am	LAP review meeting by Tuam MD members

MDT220065

4. - Municipal District of Tuam Director's Business

Mr. Pender recited an acknowledgement from the Minister of Social Protection regarding a motion made at the previous MD meeting requesting Galway County Council to lobby the Government for changes required to the RSS and TÚS schemes. This letter had been acknowledged and advised that a response would issue as soon as possible.

Mr. Connolly gave an update on works since the last MD Meeting. Highlighting progress on the Kilbannon project with the law agents receiving the first drafts of land acquisition documents. He thanked all the communities that took part in the Spring Clean initiative which was a remarkable success. He advised that further to Cllr. McHugh Farag's enquiry at the last meeting he was waiting for a quotation to come back regarding works required on the gates in Tuam cemetery.

Cllr. Sheridan requested an update on Milltown to Gortnagunne realignment. Mr. Pender advised that detailed design is ongoing. He commended all the work done using all inhouse resources and expertise. Cllr. Sheridan enquired if could get an indication of how much it saved Galway County Council. Mr. Pender stated that consultant commissions on similar size schemes could amount to €350-€400,000.

Cllr. Hoade requested an update on the Traffic Management Plan in Headford and queried if the Director would address concern with the NTA. Locals have queried the location of the park and ride at McGaugh's garden centre.

Municipal District of Tuam – 8th May 2023

Cllr. Roche expressed the concern of some of the residents of Corrandrum where Harringtons carried out considerable works on a stretch of road and advised there are now sections on this road where speeding has increased. Cllr. Keaveney enquired if there was a proposal and a process in place.

Cllr. Roche highlighted a sign displayed on a gable wall of Dublin Road depicting day old chickens produced and killed at birth with the message “go vegan”, which he said is causing huge offence locally. He enquired what policy Galway County Council have in place in relation to signage like this being erected. Mr. Pender advised a Section 254 licence may be required to erect such signage.

Cllr. Reddington presented the following information that he had received from the NTA in relation to Active Travel funding received and spent by Galway County Council, that in 2021, the council received €6.1million, drew down €4.5 million and sent back €1.6million. In 2022, the Council received €7,875,000 and sent back €2.66 million and in 2023, Galway County Council received €3 million in funding.

Mr. Pender advised that the €6.1million was allocated in 2021, €4.5 million was drawdown but €1.6 million was rolled over into 2022. The € 7,875,000 in 2022 included the €1.6 million rollover and some of the 2022 funding had rolled over to 2023. He advised the members that Galway County Council is not handing back money, but the funding has rolled over year on year. He advised the members to look at the NTA website for more details on scheme funding, where evidence of the roll-overs exist.

Cllr. Keaveney said that Cllr. Reddington was speaking with information that the rest of the members did not have at this time and suggested the matter be discussed further at the next meeting and requested Cllr. Reddington to circulate the information to all members so that they can make informed comments.

Cllr. Hoade declared that it is not helpful that any message go out that any money is going back and was glad the situation had been clarified.

Cllr. Sheridan asked out of courtesy that Cllr. Redington would withdraw his comment as he did not think it was helpful. Cllr. Keaveney advised that people have a right to be wrong and now the claim has been put on the table.

Cllr. Killilea wanted to place on record his appreciation to the team for works done on Active Travel adding that in 2014 you could not walk on footpaths or under light all around the town and active travel has paid a key role in providing these facilities

Cllr. Reddington advised that he had asked a Deputy to find out what money was allocated and drawn down. Cllr. Reddington asked if it was carried over to 2023 why there was as shortfall of €2.5 million. Mr. Pender responded advising that there is a shortfall, as the NTA have significantly moved the goal posts in 2023. Initially, the aim of Active travel funding provided during the Covid pandemic was to encourage the public to become more active, the NTA will now focus on a plan and policy led process, bringing people from place of home or work with less of an amenity aspect. He said GCC are pivoting to align itself with the new NTA approach i.e., Traffic Management Plans, Local Area Plans as it is these documents that will influence how the funding will be allocated going forward.

Cllr. Reddington agreed to circulate the details to the Elected members.

MDT220066

5. - Municipal -District of Tuam Cathaoirleach’s Business,

Cllr. Killilea commented on the shortage of IDA lands for development and the existing IDA park is utilised properly by Valeo in Tuam.

MDT220067

Municipal District of Tuam – 8th May 2023

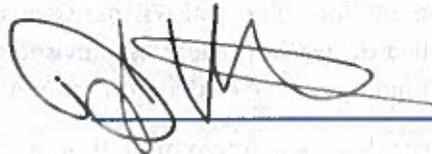
On the proposal of Cllr. Killilea seconded by Cllr. Sheridan the following motion was agreed I propose; -

That Tuam Municipal District members write to the IDA to express concern of the shortage of lands available for major developments in Tuam town and the municipal district.

Ms. Byrne meetings administrator confirmed that a Planning workshop would be held on 18th May 2023 with the members and advised that she would circulate the June dates & times regarding the agreed meetings in respect of the Tuam Local Area Plan

Chriochnaigh an cruinniú ansin @ 14:23 pm

Approved by:



Date:

12/6/23

Cathaoirleach.