

Municipal District of Tuam – 11TH OCTOBER 2021

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF MUNICIPAL DISTRICT OF TUAM HELD AT THE COUNCIL CHAMBER, COUNTY HALL, PROSPECT HILL, GALWAY ON 11TH OCTOBER 2021 AT 11.30a.m.

CATHAOIRLEACH:

Cllr. D. Killilea

I LÁTHAIR FREISIN

Cllr. Keaveney, Cllr. Sheridan, Cllr. Reddington, Cllr. Hoade, Cllr. Roche,
Cllr. McHugh Farag

AS LÁTHAIR

BAILL OIFIGIGH:

Mr. Pender D.O.S., Infrastructure & Operations, Mr. Coyle, A/S.E.E., Mr. P Connolly, Executive Engineer, Mr. Tom Regan, Executive Engineer, Ms. Eibhlin Curran, Meetings Administrator, Ms. Jennifer O'Neill, Mr. P. Flaherty - Technician

MDT210041

1. – Confirmation of the Minutes of the Meeting of Municipal District of Tuam held 14th September 2021.

On the **proposal** of Cllr Hoade and **seconded** by Cllr. Sheridan the minutes of the meeting of the Tuam Municipal District held on the 14th September 2021 were **agreed**.

Matters Arising:

Cllr. Roche referred to previous discussions regarding a Mayoral Chain in Tuam. In reply, Mr. Pender confirmed that this issue will be discussed again at the CPG meeting next week. Cllr. Mc Hugh Farag added that she felt Municipal District of Tuam deserved a chain and this would be recognised as a form of office.

MDT210042

2. – Consideration of the Draft Multi-Annual Roads Programme 2022-2024

Mr. Pender welcomed Mr. P. Flaherty, Tuam Office, to his first meeting of Tuam Municipal District.

Mr. Pender presented the Multi – Annual Restoration Improvement Programme 2022 – 2024, and thanked Mr. Coyle and his team for compiling the information.

In accordance with Circular RW 11/2021 Galway County Council has prepared a prioritised Restoration Improvement Programme for the period 2022 to 2024.

This provisional programme has been prioritised across the County taking account of the condition of the pavement (and associated drainage), traffic levels and with an emphasis on early intervention before major structural deterioration takes place.

The prioritised programme list is based on the following:

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Multi year programme for 2022, 2023 and 2024 with an annual budget estimate of 100% of Galway County Council's initial 2021 Restoration Improvement Grant allocation. The annual allocation for Tuam is €2,826,676.

Cllr. Roche queried if it was possible to swap certain roads and bring a specific road forward from 2023 to 2022. In reply, Mr. Coyle stated that it would be possible to pull forward a road if necessary, depending on funding allocation from Department of Transport.

Cllr. Roche referred to several vehicles currently parking near Annagh Hill on the N63 and queried if consideration could be given, when carrying out road realignment/reconstruction, to the possibility of designated set-down area to facilitate park and ride scheme or encourage more people to carpool and/or use public service transport. He requested this be brought up at the next SPC meeting.

Cllr. Killilea confirmed that the Council owns an area of land at Claretuam Junction which could be considered for such a purpose. He added that some of the large companies may be in a position contribute funding for a park and ride for their employees. Mr. Pender agreed he would be happy to attend a meeting with the Company Directors to discuss same.

Cllr. Killilea queried why funding for the Roads Programme comes at such a late stage in the year and if it was possible that the Roads programme could be prepared in Q4 and tenders received and ready to start in Q1. He questioned was the stumbling block with the Council or the Department.

In reply Mr. Pender stated that the best time to carry out works would be from May to August. The funding allocation announcement is usually February/March of a year, it then goes out to tender and with limited contractors available to carry out such work, quiet often the works are completed later into the year.

On the **proposal** of Cllr Roche and **seconded** by Cllr. Keaveney the proposed Multi-Annual Roads Programme 2022-2024 for the Municipal District of Tuam was agreed.

MDT210043

3. Municipal District of Tuam Director's Business

Mr. Pender gave an update on the following projects:

Covered outdoor market in Tuam Town Centre

Mr. Pender informed the meeting that Milestone Inventive were appointed to carry out a feasibility study for a covered outdoor market in Tuam Town. The report is near completion, and its findings will be presented to members in due course.

Cllr. Sheridan added that this covered outdoor area on the sun trapped site on the square would be a hugely beneficial amenity to the Citizens of Tuam. He added that we should have a shovel-ready project proposal that would be supported by the Department where funding is available for such schemes.

Tuam Town Hall

A part 8 planning application is currently being prepared for the internal renovation of the Tuam Town Hall. The project, once approved, will see vital repairs to the fabric of the building and its internal redesign to provide a Creative Enterprise/Remote Working Hub incorporating 14 no. desk spaces on the first floor. Tea making facilities, break out space and toilet facilities will exist on the same floor but in a separate space to the Hub to preserve a quiet working environment for users. The ground floor will contain a reception space opening on to the entrance lobby where use of the facility will be controlled via an access control system. Two private offices and a meeting room will be located adjacent to the entrance, as are 2 no. informal meeting pods.

Cllr. Mc Hugh Farag stated that this was fantastic news and hoped that this facility would be made accessible for community groups and public use. Cllr. Keaveney agreed with Cllr. McHugh Farag and he felt that the refurbishment works, should be the start of a council strategy for the future use of the Town Hall. He added that there is a growing demand in Tuam for a municipal space that can be used for gatherings for civil ceremonies such as non-traditional weddings.

MDT210044

4. Municipal District of Tuam Cathaoirleach's Business

Cllr. Killilea wished to thank Minister Catherine Martin who had worked hard with the Arts Council on the Creative Places Tuam and advised the members that the contract with Create who is managing the project is until January 2023, with the option to extend to 2024 if the need arises. Discussions are ongoing with Galway County Council's Arts office to build on the initial phase of Creative Places Tuam.

Cllr. Roche referred to the monies available from Smarter Travel and Climate action towards footpaths and queried if the separate allocation of 30K for footpaths could now be used for verge trimming and if this could be discussed at the next SPC meeting.

Mr. Pender advised the members that designated budget towards footpaths formed part of a resolution passed on the budget meeting last year and should be addressed at the upcoming plenary Budget 2022 meeting.

Cllr. Roche advised the meeting that more than 20 refurbished units in the Tuam MD is still waiting on tenancy allocation and questioned why there is such a delay in allocating houses. He also queried how many Housing Liaison Officer (HLO's) does Galway County Council have, comparable to other local authorities and if it was sufficient.

A no. of members expressed concerns regarding the staff shortages within the Housing Department & current operations;-

Cllr. Keaveney stated that lack of resources is causing delay in the processing of the Rebuilding Ireland Home Loan applications and applications under the Mortgage Allowance Scheme.

Cllr. Hoade added that she was aware that the public were contacting the local authority's Housing department with queries and were not receiving any response. She added that the staff were currently working to maximum capacity and making the best of the resources available, but it was imperative that we take the message back to the CPG that the shortfall in staff is having huge consequences in the section.

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Cllr. Reddington stated that on a recent visit to County Hall he had noticed there was a huge backlog of applications for the housing adaptation grants and whilst he complimented the existing staff, he reiterated that more staff was needed to deal with the workload.

Cllr. McHugh Farag added that the situation was shocking and people who were trying to buy property through the rebuilding Ireland scheme were being priced out of the market due to delays in their applications being processed. This scheme is the only opportunity some people will ever have to own their own home and with increasing house prices these delays are causing some applicants to lose out.

Cllr. Killilea informed the meeting that the Peter McVerry Trust had acquired 11 properties in Tuam which will be used as a homeless accommodation. He expressed serious concern over what tenant management will be like in this concentrated development, adding that there is a range of ongoing issues with tenants at existing properties in Tuam operated by the Peter McVerry Trust. He stated that he had arranged a meeting with the Director of Service, L. Hanrahan, after the municipal meeting and extended the invite to the member, should they wish to attend. Cllr. Sheridan requested to join Cllr. Killilea to attend the meeting.

MDT210045

After much discussion a on the **proposal** of Cllr. Roche, **seconded** by Cllr. Keaveney, a resolution was passed to invite Director of Services for Housing, Mr. L. Hanrahan to the next meeting of the municipal district meeting to address some of the issues raised.

Mr. Pender said he will request the attendance of Mr. Liam Hanrahan Director of Housing at the November meeting to discuss these concerns.

Cllr. McHugh Farag queried if there was a policy for mobile type concession stands serving coffee etc. Mr. Pender stated that he would make enquiries and revert.

Cllr. Reddington expressed his disappointment that he didn't see anything specific to the N84 in the National Development Plan. He added that there are numerous issues along the section from Headford to Shrulue and that farmers are willing to donate land to progress schemes in the area.

Cllr Hoade reiterated Cllr. Reddington's concerns in relation to upgrade works on the N84 adding that there are many issues with cars and buses leading to increased number of accidents at this location.

Mr Pender confirmed that the stretch on the N84 from Headford to Shrulue was included on a list of priority schemes sent to the T.I.I., he added that it was imperative that accidents were reported as a statistics-based analysis report would determine if works can be expediated.

Mr. Pender outlined that a major scheme on the N84 from Galway City to Clonboo was being managed by the NRPO. The Strategic Assessment is in draft format and is to be forwarded to Transport Infrastructure Ireland for approval and it is envisaged that this will be sent out by end of Q4.

Following a query from Cllr. Hoade, Mr. Pender confirmed that the dedicated Safety inspector based in the NRPO was responsible for the national roads network within the County Boundary and did not cover the city area.

Mr. Pender outlined that there was 1700Km of roads in Tuam and that if hedge cutting was to be carried out on all routes it would amount to a cost of €400,000. He advised that the Council does not have the financial resources to carry out this work on all routes, therefore works must be prioritised. He added that the rates have increased substantially with traffic management costs increasing seven-fold.

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Mr. Coyle confirmed that the contractor would commence hedge cutting on the National and Regional routes on 18th October 2021.

Cllr. Hoade queried if more money was allocated would more roads be cut. In reply Mr. Coyle said that we don't have a specific hedge cutting budget and this cost was borne out of local and regional road maintenance and some from R.I grants, with lack of funding being the primary issue regarding hedge cutting.

Cllr. Sheridan queried the status of the €180,000 allocation. In reply Mr. Pender confirmed that this was still available and could go beyond December 2021.

Cllr. Roche queried if additional costs borne by the Local Authority in relation to covid could be claimed back and he referred to the retrofitting of vehicles and the additional PPE required for compliance.

In reply Mr. Pender confirmed that all expenditure in relation to covid costs came out of our own resources and was not eligible to be claimed as only expenditure compliant with the Road Grant Memorandum can be claimed off the grant. He added that we can look to see if there is a possibility of seeking funding, however this is dependent on what resources are available from the Department at year end.

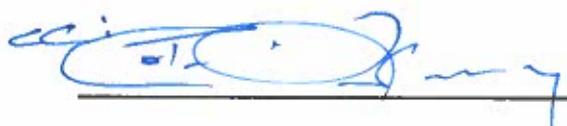
MDT210046

On the proposal of Cllr. Killilea, seconded by Cllr. Sheridan, it was agreed that a letter of condolences be sent to Ms. Bernie O Mara, wife of the late Jimmy O'Mara who served as a member of Tuam Town Commissioners from 1979 to 1994. The letter should acknowledge his commitment and dedication to the people of Tuam.

The meeting ended with a minutes' silence in recognition of the late Jimmy O'Mara.

Chriochnaigh an cruinniú ansin

Approved by:

 Date: 15/10/2021

Cllr. D. Killilea
Cathaoirleach