

COMHAIRLE CHONTAE NA GAILLIMHE

Ceantar Bardasach Bhaile Locha Riach
Municipal District of LOUGHREA

Minutes of Monthly Meeting of the Municipal District of Loughrea
held in the Loughrea Area Office on 9th January 2023 at 10.00 am

LATHAIR:

Cathaoirleach

Cllr. P.J. Murphy,

Baill:

Cllr. Geraldine Donohue
Cllr. Martina Kinane
Cllr. Jimmy Mc Clearn
Cllr. Declan Kelly
Cllr. Ivan Canning
Cllr. Shane Curley
Cllr. Joe Byrne
Cllr. Moegie Maher
Cllr. Gerry Finnerty

Oifigigh:

Ms. R. Lowe, Senior Engineer
Mr. G. Haugh, Senior Executive Engineer
Mr. J. Coyle, Executive Engineer
Ms. S. Cleary, Staff Officer
Ms. D. Byrne, Assistant Staff Officer

Apologies:

Ms. Eileen Ruane, Director of Service
Ms. Maria Finn, A.O. Environment

Presentations by:

Electric Skyline Ireland
Sean Corcoran, Bryan Fox,
Fergal Burke, Kuriakose Sebastian

Planning Department, Galway County Council
Valerie Loughnane, Senior Planner
Brendan Dunne, A/Senior Executive Planner
Brian Corcoran, Assistant Planner
Liam Ward, Graduate Planner
Jonathan Comer, Graduate Planner
Anne Power, Senior Staff Officer

Confirmation of Minutes of Monthly Meeting of the Municipal District of Loughrea held in the Loughrea Chamber on 12th December 2022 LMD2264

The Minutes of the Monthly Meeting of the Municipal District of Loughrea held on 12th December 2022 were proposed by Cllr. Maher, seconded by Cllr. Curley and agreed and signed by the Cathaoirleach.

The Cathaoirleach Cllr. PJ Murphy welcomed everyone to the meeting. Cllrs Murphy and Donohue expressed their sincere sympathies on the passing of Mr. Denis Willers RIP, husband to Bridie Willers, former Loughrea Municipal District Member.

Cllr. Murphy then welcomed any other items to be discussed before the meeting agenda progressed.

Cllr. Curley raised a point concerning a commitment given by the Executive which was discussed at the previous meeting in relation to Grange/Boggy Park. Mr Haugh noted that a commitment by the executive was given that this location would be reviewed again if the works currently proposed were not successful.

Cllr. Donohue requested an update from Ms. Lowe in relation to the Active Travel Scheme and queried as to when a presentation will be made and Cllr. Byrne expressed his interest in receiving an update on this matter also.

Ms. Lowe informed Cllr. Donohue that Ms. Paula Higgins, Snr. Exec. will attend the February meeting to update the members on the scheme. Ms. Lowe advised that due to the long agenda for today's meeting and in consultation with the Chair it was considered that sufficient time would not be available today.

Cllr. Canning queried the details contained in the minutes in relation to the overgrown hedging at the Old School House, Portumna. He felt what was reflected was not what he had interpreted on the day of the meeting. He felt it was a serious issue and highlighted that in the past a young boy was knocked off his bike in this area and stated the matter needed to be addressed immediately.

Cllr. Maher wished to express his appreciation and thanks to Irish Water, who were on call out on Christmas Day to fix a burst pipe.

Cllr. Kinane wished to acknowledge a tragedy which took place on Friday 8th January 2023 in Oranmore where sadly involved a constituent of the MD area. She wished to formally offer her condolences to the Creedon family in Oranmore, Cllr. Kinane pointed out that this incident was under Garda investigation and requested discussion of Active Travel later in the meeting under AOB.

Referring to the minutes of the last meeting and the major issue of road gullies and roads infrastructure, Cllr. Kinane pointed out the need to maintain and clear them especially in Maree and Kilcolgan. There was flooding over Christmas in Clarinbridge and the Stradbally North Road was almost closed on two occasions.

Cllr. Kinane also wished to express her appreciation and thanks to the Galway County Council outdoor staff for the hedge cutting over the Christmas period.

Cllr. Finnerty wished to formally express his sympathies to Ms. Bridie Willers, a constituent of the Gort Area, on the passing of her husband Denis Willers RIP and to the family of Coley Kearney RIP, Gort. Cllr. Finnerty reminisced on what a great person Mr. Kearney was. He expressed his sadness on his passing.

Cllr. Murphy wished to express his thanks and appreciation to the Galway County Council outdoor staff in the Gort Area, for all the hard work and rapid response from the Gort team on the extremely frost damaged and dangerous roads over the Christmas period.

Presentation by Electric Skyline

LMD2265

The presentation was opened by Mr. Sean Corcoran, Electric Skyline Ireland. Mr. Corcoran introduced team members, Mr. Bryan Fox, Mr. Fergal Burke, Mr. Kuriakose Sebastian and explained a brief presentation would take place and welcomed questions after.

Cllr. Donohue requested Mr. Corcoran to forward the presentation slides to her after as they were not very legible on the projector.

Mr. Corcoran proceeded to discuss the fault log sources, updates, timeframe for fixing lights, traffic management, LED lighting and cost saving - €75,000.00 in energy saving made by Galway County Council in 2022.

Cllr. Canning queried the 1740 LED lights installed and queried whether this figure was in the Loughrea Area only or all over the county.

Mr. Corcoran confirmed that the figure of 1740 related to Galway County and stated that he would forward the slides to all attendees after the meeting.

Mr. Corcoran referred to the matter of Taking in Charge (T.I.C), he stated that approximately 2000 lights or more were not T.I.C. He pointed out that a light fault on a pole cannot be logged if it is not T.I.C. In relation to the lights and T.I.C, he stated that there are 33 mandatory steps involved in the process which can be difficult and tedious. A survey needs to be carried out and there were historical difficulties with lights that are not fully checked or not compliant that are already T.I.C. In relation to faulty lighting on St. Laurence's Road walkway, he expressed his apologies as an email was missed.

Mr. Corcoran discussed patrol routes and walkways, where lights go on at dusk and off at dawn and explained that unfortunately there is no smart technology installed at these locations making it difficult to capture the status of the light fittings during the night patrols. Electric Skyline must identify the issue themselves or a member of the public must report it. He continued to discuss items such as ticket trends, KWatt hours, percentage of LED's which have now increased from 36% to 52% in 2022

Cllr. Murphy welcomed any questions from the members for Mr. Corcoran after the presentation.

Cllr. Donohue asked for clarification on ownership of 'Network Poles' versus 'Non-Network Poles.

Mr. Corcoran confirmed 'Network Poles' are owned by ESB and 'Non-Network Poles' are owned by Electric Skyline.

Cllr. Donohue also questioned the '104' open tickets on the presentation and how long are the tickets can potentially be open for?

Mr. Corcoran stated that tickets can be open longer than 4 days and pointed out that in certain circumstances ESB connections can take anywhere from 6 weeks to 2 months.

Cllr. Donohue referred to estates that are without lights for a considerable time. She also spoke about the existing fault log in place for customers and that she had used it herself and that it was good. She expressed her concerns about the 2060 lights not Taking in Charge, of those lights out in non -TIC estates, can the residents association contact Electric Skyline?

Cllr. Maher thanked Mr. Corcoran and the Electric Skyline Team for the presentation. His area of concern was the '5 day turn around' for fault repair which was referenced in the presentation. Cllr. Maher pointed out that this 5-day turnaround is not adhered to and that in some cases it is more than 10 days. He said Electric Skyline must work with the ESB to reduce the 10-day response. Cllr. Maher welcomed the presentation and hoped they can work together and that deadlines can be met in the future.

Mr. Corcoran agreed and acknowledged that there are communication problems. He gave his assurance that Electric Skyline will try to respond within given timeframes. He agreed there is room for improvement.

Cllr. Maher highlighted for example in terms of good communications, that Councillors have an email address for Irish Water for queries and that a method of communications is required for Councillors with Electric Skyline. Cllr. Maher also thanked Electric Skyline for contacting the members after their last meeting.

Ms. Lowe referred to the two housing estates under the Taking in Charge Process in An Struthán and Jardin Drive, Loughrea. She stated that works had been completed to bring the estate up to the relevant standard prior to bringing the matter before the MD meeting today and confirmed that this included the public lighting.

Cllr. Kelly queried as to whether there was a contractual time for repairs to be completed.

Mr. Corcoran confirmed the contractual time was 14 days.

Cllr. Kelly discussed a specific area near the church in Portumna where lighting was out in this area, the visibility was greatly reduced and very dangerous.

Mr. Corcoran agreed to examine the fault at this area and in relation to communications, agreed better communications and transparency of cases logged, repairs and updates are required.

Cllr. Mc Clearn thanked Electric Skyline for their presentation. His area of concern was a system failure before Christmas where the lights were out at Portumna/Killimor/Loughrea for 5-6 weeks. Cllr. Mc Clearn reiterated the need to improve the two-way communication

system between Councillors and Electric Skyline. He said his experience with Electric Skyline was not good and considered 'the service to be off in his experience' and enquired if the problem related to manpower issues.

Cllr. McClearn stated that there were lights out at Killimor, the fault was logged but there was no response from Electric Skyline at the time and they were left out of order. Since then, they have been fixed but Cllr. McClearn stated that Electric Skyline are in breach of contract if they are not responding and asked what went wrong here with this case?

Electric Skyline stated that to investigate they will need more specifics especially the failures in Killimor.

Cllr. McClearn pointed out that at the December Municipal District meeting there was a high level of criticism in relation to Electric Skyline and that the elected members were unhappy with the service.

Electric Skyline responded by highlighting that during the periods of October, November and the darker evenings, there is more public awareness of the lights that are out. They stated that there is no staff shortage, that there is no system failure but that it could be down to communication issues or, for example, an ESB connection causing an additional delay.

Cllr. Byrne informed the meeting that his experience was very good with E.S., very positive and acknowledged that the phone was always answered. He referred to the lights not up to standard in the TIC process and that must be to standard full stop. He stated that 2000+ lights in estates not TIC appears very high.

In relation to patrol routes, there are lights in the village of Nogra, Kinvara which are not on the route – 3 of the lights are LED and 3 of the lights are non-LED.

Cllr. Byrne has concerns over changing to LED lighting and the LUX levels on LED fittings e.g., in Gort Town, from O'Sullivan's to Centra, there is lighting on one side of the road only and it is inadequate and very dark. Elsewhere the lighting is staggered. He enquired about how the LUX light levels are assessed and can this be looked at. Cllr. Byrne has written to Galway County Council about the inadequacy of the lighting levels, but the response issued by GCC states the LUX levels meet requirements.

Cllr. Byrne enquired about the numbers on light poles. and requested an explanation as to why Bridge Street in Gort was in darkness for weeks?

Electric Skyline responded in relation to Bridge Street that there was a fault in the lighting that they could not find. When the fuse was initially replaced, it did not blow. The fault had to be revisited and the circuit isolated. This repair was not straightforward and required several attempts to isolate the fault location.

Cllr. Byrne stated that where there is a situation of lighting on a pole not working, there needs to be a proper communication process whereby the fault can be logged and that an update on the matter is then relayed from Electric Skyline to the local authority.

Cllr. Canning enquired in relation to Patrol Routes if the school flashing lights are included? Electric Skyline informed Cllr Canning that they were difficult to include as they only flashed during daylight hours whereas the patrols were carried out at night-time.

Cllr. Curley asked if Driver Feedback Signs were under the remit of ES, and he was informed that they were not. He enquired as to who is responsible for setting the TIC process and stated that it is drawn out. Electric Skyline informed Cllr. Curley that the TIC process was a Galway County Council document

Cllr. Curley stated it is complicated and needs to be simplified and streamlined.

Ms. Lowe advised that many estates in the taking in charge process are older and have some complicating features and difficulties associated with TIC – including legal issues, release of bonds, issues with wastewater infrastructure. The estates must be brought up to minimum standards. In response to a suggestion that the process be shortened in respect of standards Ms Lowe advised that the certification of lighting was important to ensure that the system is robust, and the Council would not want to see the standard lowered. She agreed it can be long process, but it is a tight process. Ms. Lowe referred to the two new estates to be TIC – An Struthán and Jardin Drive, Loughrea and explained that they are now up to standard, and the Councillors have a certain level of assurance when formally taking the estates in charge at the MD meetings those works have already been completed. This should help minimise future issues with lighting, footpaths etc.

Cllr. Curley enquired about the working relationship with Electric Skyline and the ESB.

Electric Skyline confirmed that they are dealing with several Area Offices and that there is a good relationship however the ESB are busy, and the lighting is not always a priority for example if there was a storm.

Cllr. Canning enquired about the process for logging faults that is in place. Electric Skyline confirmed that a logging system is in place.

The patrol routes were discussed and Cllr. Curley referenced the 7 Patrol Routes including Loughrea, Bullaun, Monivea and Athenry and enquired is that too much for the patrol officer in one night. Electric Skyline responded that no, the Patrol Officer is very passionate about his job and that he rings the engineers if required.

Cllr. Curley requested an email address for communications going forward. He also expressed his thanks and appreciation to Electric Skyline for their work on GCC faults, their honest and transparent information.

Cllr. Finnerty stated that he was at the last meeting and the current communications with Electric Skyline was good. He said in Gort, from the Bank of Ireland to the Credit Union was dark for staff leaving at night, he further stated that the lighting from O'Donnell's bar to the bridge was very dark and requested this be investigated.

Cllr. Finnerty discussed the area of Kilbeacanty that now has some LED lighting He asked can all lights not be done together and enquired what is the procedure where lights are covered by trees e.g., Killinahown and Kiltartan.

Cllr. Canning enquired if Electric Skyline have extra staff on board when lights go out on bad nights? He stated that statistics and regular updates are required, and good communications are key. He said that the lack of communication with Electric Skyline is causing frustration. He stated that going forward with respect to communicating with Electric Skyline he does not want an email address, but he wants a contact person to answer the phone and to give an

update on the matter. He stated it may only be a matter of a 10 second phone call. Electric Skyline informed Cllr. Canning that the direct contact person is Fergal Burke and there is an email group.

Electric Skyline stated they have employed 4 extra people to work on maintenance. They receive emails everyday with priority listing. In relation to staff training, a minimum of 6 months training is involved.

Cllr. Canning pointed out that since LED came in on National roads, they now need to review other roads.

Cllr. Donohue thanked Electric Skyline for the email of 23rd December 2022. She wished to clarify if the Electric Skyline email that was circulated to them, is for elected members only or also for members of the public? Electric Skyline confirmed it is for elected members only and members of the public can log faults on the Electric Skyline website.

Cllr. Murphy discussed the patrol routes and the areas of Ballymanagh and Peterswell . The information today answers his questions especially with respect to receiving calls from members of the public. He stated that at the start of autumn from Labane to Ardahan there were 6 lights in a row not working.

Cllr. Murphy reiterated Cllr. Canning's comment, that a call may only be 10 seconds, but that call is invaluable. Electric Skyline reconfirmed that once they receive a complaint, they will report back to GCC and notify them of the status.

The Cathaoirleach Cllr. Murphy then recommended the changing of the order of the agenda and following items be dealt with next:

- **Item 5** – The Proposed Taking in Charge of An Sruthán, Loughrea
- **Item 6** – The Proposed Taking in Charge of Jardin Drive, Loughrea

Proposed taking in charge – An Sruthán, Loughrea

LMD2266

The taking in charge of the road at An Sruthán, Loughrea was proposed by Cllr. Maher and seconded by Cllr. Curley and agreed by the Members.

Road commencing at its junction with L-4213 in the townland of Loughrea and extending northeast for a distance of 29m and turning northwest a distance 51m and turning east a distance 62m turning south a distance 28m turning southwest of 47m turning northeast at distance of 28m ending at point E in the townland of Loughrea. Point A-B-D-E on TIC Map.

Road commencing at its junction with B-E in the townland of Baunoge and extending east for a distance of 32m turning north for a distance of 54m turning east for a distance of 34m turning south for a distance of 51m ending at the point F in the townland of Baunoge. Point D-F on TIC Map.

Road commencing at its junction with A-D in the townland of Baunoge and extending south for a distance of 23m turning southeast for a distance of 27m ending at the point C in the townland of Baunoge. Point B-C on TIC Map.

Proposed taking in charge – Jardin Drive, Loughrea

LMD2267

The taking in charge of the road at Jardin Drive, Loughrea was proposed by Cllr. Maher and seconded by Cllr. Curley and agreed by the Members.

Road commencing at its junction with R-942 in the townland of Farranalynch and extending south for a distance of 131m to point B, turning east a distance 149m and turning south a distance 55m ending at point K in the townland of Farranalynch. Point A-B-K on TIC Map.

Road commencing at its junction with B-D in the townland of Farranalynch and extending west for 95m ending at the point F in the townland of Farranalynch. Point C-F on TIC Map.

Road commencing at its junction with C-F in the townland of Farranalynch and extending south for a distance of 28m and turning west a distance of 63m ending at the point G in the townland of Farranalynch. Point E-G on TIC Map.

Road commencing at its junction with A-H in the townland of Farranalynch and extending south for 55m ending at the point D in the townland of Farranalynch. Point B-D on TIC Map.

Road commencing at its junction with B-K in the townland of Farranalynch and extending south for 55m ending at the point J in the townland of Farranalynch. Point H-J on TIC Map.

Cllr. Finnerty wished to thank Ms. Edel Hourigan, Taking in Charge Unit, GCC for all her work over the last few years on TIC. Cllr. Maher also acknowledge the work completed by Ms. Hourigan's work and TIC staff and he stated that providing proper lighting in estates is protecting people.

Ms. Lowe confirmed there are 21 lights in An Struthán and 22 lights in Jardin Drive, Loughrea and welcomed the Taking in Charge of these estates.

Cllr. Mc Clearn stated that it is the estates that are around for 20+ years that are the problem, issues arise, the developers are gone, then who pays and maintains the lights and he enquired if there are pumping stations who looks after them? He expressed his opinion that it is wrong that the local authority is not prepared to take the estates in Taking in Charge when other services are in order. He receives calls from residents in estates that are not Taking in Charge and he stated he feels it is wrong where people must continue to pay for public lighting.

Cllr. Mc Clearn stated that there are bonds in place that are not getting drawn down, he stated that lighting is 95% of the issues, it is the main issue, and this issue of Taking in Charge needs to be revisited as it is grossly unfair to people living in these areas.

Cllr. Maher asked when all estates will be Taking in Charge and referred specifically to Danesfort Court and Danesfort Drive. He stated that a date is required for members of the public that are enquiring and he stated that Ms. Hourigan is doing her best. He stated some estates are waiting 10 years to be Taking in Charge and elected members need a list of all estates that are not Taking in Charge and confirmation of when will this matter be rectified.

Cllr. Curley referred to the matter of Bonds. He discussed past issues that arose such as estates where bonds were drawn down by Galway County Council and the developers were not notified. He enquired how long does Galway County Council have to wait to use a bond.

Ms. Lowe stated that she will send an updated list of the estates in the TIC process. She said that the process can be complex and can entail legal issues, she stated that communication is key to all councillors. Cllr. Byrne proposed a discussion should be held at the plenary meeting regarding the bonds and requested that it be put on the agenda.

Cllr. Mc Clearn stated that whether there is a bond in place or not, the onus is on GCC, the longer it is left, the more it costs and that is the reality of the matter. He stated, Galway County Council needs to sort it out, and cannot blame residents, he stated if bonds are not adequate, it is not the resident's fault, the book stops with the Council. He stated, if a developer already had 20 years to complete the estate, they are not going to do it now.

Cllr. Curley seconded Cllr. Byrne's proposal to put the item of Bonds on the agenda at the next Plenary meeting. Cllr. Byrne is to liaise with Ms. Lowe, a submission will be sent prior to the next plenary meeting.

Review of the Loughrea Local Area Plan (LAP) 2012-2022 and

LMD2268

Commencement of the new Loughrea LAP 2023-2029

Ms. Loughnane advised the review of the Loughrea LAP 2012-2022 and commencement of the new Loughrea LAP 2023-2029 would be commencing shortly. She advised 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 & Athenry are required to be reviewed. Review of 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 Draft Loughrea LAP would go on public display in Q1/Q2 of 2023 and the exact timescale would be dependent on completion of the Environmental Reports (SEA, AA, SFRA).

Mr. Corcoran gave a presentation to the Members and went through the Local Area Plan Timeframe.

The following points were made:

- The existing Loughrea LAP came into effect on 24th September 2012, with a Deferral of Notice (September 2017), extending the lifetime of the Plan to July 2022.
- Plan expired in 2022 and it was now being reviewed in line with the Galway CDP 2022-2028.
- 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) is dedicated web page.
- Chief Executive 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 20th June 2022 and assists with informing policy objectives for the Draft LAP.
- Population allocation and residential units to be delivered are set out in Chapter 2 Core Strategy, Settlement Strategy and Housing Strategy.
- Loughrea 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.
- Core Strategy sets out a significant level of growth in population within Loughrea, i.e., 1,400 over the plan period and density of 25/ha. The additional population would be accommodated in 806 units provided on brownfield and greenfield sites.
- Land will be zoned in the Draft LAP to maintain and facilitate employment development.
- Two additional Land Use Zonings in new Plan, namely Residential Infill and Tourism.

Cllr. Maher welcomed the commencement of Loughrea LAP 2023-2029. He advised that from discussions with various groupings in the town, there will be requests/submissions forthcoming for extension of the town boundary in new Plan. He stated that the Town was now so built up there were businesses located in the town that needed to move outside the town boundary to increase/expand their business. He stated that Loughrea was a thriving town and emphasised the importance of working with those businesses to achieve what was best for the town. He thanked Planning Staff for update.

Cllr. McClearn commented that this would be a very different Plan this time as Members would not be inundated with requests in getting lands zoned residential due to introduction of the Residential Zoned Land Tax (RZLT). He referred to a Business Meeting he recently attended in Loughrea where attendees were advised there was a shortage of skilled labour and a shortage of living accommodation for skilled labour in the town. He referenced a recent planning refusal of Strategic Housing Development (SHD) for Loughrea for 122 no. houses and stated one of the reasons for refusal was because the density was not high enough. He suggested that by confining density to 25/ha, they needed to be mindful that there was a huge demand out there for housing units. He advised that there is also an issue about commercial premises in the town as some businesses have outgrown their existing buildings and needed to be able to expand their businesses.

Cllr. Byrne stated that introduction of the RZLT would have huge implications for zoning of land and advised that it would be a very expensive venture for landowners who were not willing to develop serviced R1 lands. He stated that it also raised the question of zoning of R2 lands as in accordance with CDP, these lands cannot be developed during lifetime of Plan. He suggested that the density of 25/ha was not sufficient for Loughrea.

Cllr. Curley commented that there was a huge influx of housing in Loughrea since last Plan and highlighted the importance of provision of recreational amenities to complement this. He stated that there were only 2 playgrounds in the town – a small one in Garybreeda and one on the Gort Road which was undergoing renovations presently. In relation to transport, he emphasised the importance of provision of adequate Bus Stops and Shelters and adequate Disabled Parking Bays.

Cllr. Donoghue queried why the plan was deferred in 2017 and concurred with Cllr. Curley's comments on need for provision of more recreational/amenity facilities, including playgrounds. She queried about looking at different more suitable locations for Bus Stops in the town.

Cllr. Murphy referred to density of 25/ha and queried if they considered this to be the maximum or minimum. He queried if this was set by National Planning Framework and commented that this number seemed very low.

In response to Cllr. Maher's query, Ms. Loughane advised that both Loughrea and Gort were classified as Self-Sustaining Towns and the fact it is a Self-Sustaining Town, the percentage of people employed in town was very good. She commented on the industries that were very successful in Loughrea and were indigenous and wanted to build on that.

In relation to Cllr. McClearn's query on Residential Zoning, Ms. Loughnane agreed that this would be a completely different Plan because of introduction of RZLT. In relation to SHD that was refused, Ms. Loughnane advised that it was refused for several reasons which included the density not being high enough. Responding to Cllr. Murphy's query on density, Ms. Loughnane advised that 25/ha is the figure used for Self-Sustaining Towns in CDP's. She explained that the difficulty in putting in high densities is that less land can be zoned which leads to less choice. She did advise that there may be a small bit of room for flexibility for densities to be increased in town centres. She advised that they had to be mindful of existing residential development and had to go with what was contained in the CDP and what was part of the Core Strategy. In relation to query on inclusion of R2 lands in RZLT, Ms. Loughnane advised that guidelines have included these lands, and it was outside of their control. She commented the RZLT will possibly bring about a reduction of R2 lands going forward. She advised that the Members will have to decide if they want R2 lands in the LAP and that was the debate that will be had during the course of the LAP's. In response to Cllr. Curley's request for more recreational amenity lands/playgrounds, Ms. Loughnane stated that while everyone wants these facilities, when it comes to zoning lands for this use, it may not materialise. She advised that there will be appropriate zoning of recreational/amenity facilities as required. She advised that the Local Transport Plan (LTP) will deal with the issue of Bus Stops/Shelters which are now incorporated into LAP's and a Traffic Management Plans will fall out of LTP thereafter. In reply to Cllr. Donoghue's query

regarding the deferral of LAP, Mr. Dunne explained that it was done to tie in with the new CDP 2022-2028. Once the CDP 2022-2028 was agreed and in place, existing LAPs were required to be reviewed and new ones completed for Ballinasloe, Tuam, Loughrea, Gort and Athenry. In reply to query on RZLT and zoning of LAP's, Mr. Dunne stated that sequential approach would have come into play. They had to be mindful that the Department and OPR would be a keen interest to ensure that this was being adhered to.

Review of the Gort LAP 2013-2023 and Commencement of the new

LMD2269

Gort LAP 2023-2029

Mr. Ward gave a presentation to the Members and went through the Local Area Plan Timeframe. The following points were made:

- Existing Gort LAP came into effect on 22nd July 2013, with a Deferral of Notice (June 2018) extending the lifetime of the Plan to 23rd June 2023.
- Due to expire in 2023 and reviewing in line with the Galway CDP 2022-2028.
- Publication of the Draft LAP in Q2/3 of 2023
- Public Consultation on the Draft Plan will be six weeks
- Utilise social media platforms, contactable by phone and email; consultation portal (consult.galway.ie) is dedicated web page
- Chief Executive Report will then be prepared and presented to Members in Q2/3 2023
- The adoption of the final LAP is expected to be in Q4 of 2023
- Galway County Development Plan 2022-2028 came into effect on 20th June 2022 and assists with informing policy objectives for the Draft LAP.
- Population allocation and residential units to be delivered are set out in Chapter 2 Core Strategy, Settlement Strategy and Housing Strategy.
- Gort 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.
- Core Strategy sets out a significant level of growth in population within Gort, i.e., 800 over the plan period and a density of 25/ha. The additional population would be accommodated in 460 units provided on brownfield and greenfield sites.
- Land will be zoned in the Draft LAP to maintain and facilitate employment development.
- Two additional Land Use Zonings in new Plan, namely Residential Infill and Tourism.

Cllr. Byrne welcomed the initiation of this process and highlighted the following challenges. He referenced the recent An Bord Pleanála Decision to grant planning permission for a Bio-Gas Facility in Gort and suggested that because of this decision, the integrity of LAP was thrown into question. He queried how they would come up with a Plan the integrity of which will be maintained into the planning process. The other issue he wished to raise was in

relation to Water Supply/Wastewater Treatment for Gort Town. He stated that it was currently served by an inadequate water supply and a wastewater treatment plant that was not fit for purpose. He queried how they would address the huge increase in demand for wastewater infrastructure and stated that it was totally inadequate for the proposed increase in population over the next six years. He proposed that there would be active engagement with Irish Water for the duration of this Plan.

Cllr. Finnerty referenced the fact that a small number of landowners own a substantial amount of the lands to be zoned/developed around Gort Town and if these lands were removed/dezoned, it would leave it very fragmented. He stated that in the last LAP, there has only been 2 no. developments in the town – one on Circular Road and one on Tubber Road. He queried how would unfinished developments, such as the Tubber Road, effect the Core Strategy table. He referenced a block of land on Loughrea Road for which a planning application would be lodged shortly and again queried how this would affect the Core Strategy. Referring to earlier comments in relation to possible reduction in R2 zonings arising out of RZLT, he advised that this may add to difficulty of getting suitable developable lands. He stated that he was looking forward to working with Forward Planning Unit on the new Plan.

Cllr. Donoghue asked for an up-date on the development on Tubber Road and queried if the figure of 800 in the Core Strategy Allocation was too low. She further queried if the R2 lands will be rezoned back and would landowners be contacted/advised of proposed zoning of their lands.

Cllr. Kinane requested that a copy of the Presentation be circulated to all the Members. She welcomed the inclusion of Tourism as a new Land Use Zoning but commented that it would be hard to comprehend how tourism will exist in Gort if the Bio-Gas Plant was built in the town.

In reply to Cllr. Murphy's query on consultation process, Ms. Loughnane advised that during the six -week consultation process, members of the public would be able to make submissions on the Draft LAP. In response to Cllr. Byrne's comments on the Bio-Gas Plant, Ms. Loughnane advised that this was a decision made by An Bord Pleanala and it was not appropriate for her to comment on it. She advised that she also could not comment on the development on the Tubber Road as this was subject to a Judicial Review and would not be appropriate for her to comment on same. In relation to comments on Irish Water, Ms. Loughnane advised that Forward Planning had been in contact with Irish Water regarding LAP and would raise the issues made at today's meeting in respect to water and waste-water supply. In reply to Cllr. Finnerty's comments on R2 lands, Ms. Loughnane advised that the sequential approach would have to be applied and the difficulty was going to be in trying to balance this whole piece together. In relation to zoning, she stated that their approach would be to apply proper planning and development to Plan and if it was in an appropriate place to zone, then they would be going with that approach. In response to query on R2 lands being included in RZLT, Ms. Loughnane advised that there would be a mid-term review carried out on CDP and R2 lands could be looked at during this process. She advised that they had to abide by criteria set down by Department and R2 lands are included/subject to RZLT. In response to Cllr. Kinane's comments on tourism, Ms. Loughnane advised that tourism will now be included as a Land Use Zoning in LAP. She referred to Infill Sites and advised that

there was lots of opportunity within Gort to provide for the promotion of Tourism. She advised that the Plan would go on public display for six weeks and this was the opportunity for members of the public to make submissions. She further advised that a webinar and face-to-face consultations would be facilitated during the period of Public Consultation. In response to query from Cllr. Finnerty, Ms. Loughnane advised that once land was within scope, it was liable for RZLT irrespective of whom owns it, and the landowner could have made a submission during the consultation period appealing this.

The Members thanked the Forward Planning Unit for their presentation and were advised that any queries in relation to the Plans can be made via forwardplanning@galwaycoco.ie

Flooding update

LMD2270

Cllr. Murphy informed the meeting that Mr. Enda Gallagher was not in attendance.

Ms. Lowe confirmed that a flooding update would be presented in February by Mr. Gallagher. She further stated that she has asked Ms. Paula Higgins, Senior Executive Engineer to attend in the meeting in February to make a presentation on Active Travel and confirmed that Mr. Tom Prendergast senior Engineer for Piers and Harbours will attend in March.

Cathaoirleach's Business

LMD2271

NONE

AOB – Any Other Business

LMD2272

Cllr. Finnerty raised the issue of Irish Water. He stated that Councillors had a constructive meeting with Irish Water. Since the meeting there has been no further update. What is the future of the town's Water Treatment Plant?

Cllr. Finnerty also requested an update regarding the leasing of council lands on Georges Street from Ms. Lowe.

Cllr. Maher requested an update on works at Kilmeen Cross from Ms. Lowe. He also expressed his thanks for additional funding for the Loughrea playground to G. Haugh, SEE and John Coyle EE and staff. Mr. Coyle EE stated that he will revert regarding an update on Kilmeen Cross.

Cllr. Curley suggested that ESB are called to a meeting with GCC as they own 26% of the lighting poles and ES have expressed that delay issues are with the ESB.

Cllr. Murphy explained that GCC have no jurisdiction over the ESB

Cllr. Curley referred to a commitment of works that were to take place in the second week of November at Loughrea Playground and is still unfinished.

Cllr. Kinane referred to the tragic incident in Oranmore. She called on any persons of power in Galway County Council to help implement and install a pedestrian crossing at the location of the accident. Cllr. Kinane stated that she identified this location 4 years ago along with the Maree Rd.

Cllr. Kinane has called for as of 9th January 2023 to remove every barrier and install the pedestrian crossing.

Ms. Lowe advised that the Athenry/Oranmore MD is currently undertaking the delivery of a pedestrian crossing in Oranmore near the Lidl site, and she will request an update to be provided.

Cllr. Kinane stated that both Municipal Districts should work together on this matter.

In relation to Renville Pier Cllr. Kinane has called on the local authority to be proactive not reactive. She stated that the pier is in a treacherous condition and asked that the Local Authority address this matter and the issue of illegal dumping at the site.

Cllr. Donohue raised issues in relation to Irish Water in Gort where water pipes froze. She stated water had to be boiled and businesses that had to buy water and will not be compensated by Irish Water. Cllr. Donohue would like an Irish Water Plan of Action for the Gort Area.

Cllr. Donohue would like a letter through the Municipal District to be sent to Irish Water demanding a Plan of Action and more clarity regarding issues in this area. Cllr. Byrne enquired regarding the medium to long term actions to be followed.

Cllr. Byrne then referred to proactive proposals which issued from Mr. Haugh, SEE in the previous week requesting Members to propose 7 sites at which Salt can be stored. Cllr. Curley suggested one location at Kilnadeema Cross. Cllr. Byrne also enquired regarding localised flooding on roads and enquired if water tables can be opened to let water into lands. In Kinvara he raised a concern regarding a gully beside the castle which cannot be cleaned. He referred to communications before Christmas relating to a traffic plan which was deferred due to the commencing of the Gort Local Area Plan in Q3 2023. He sought that the traffic plan be progressed immediately as there are over 1000 children attending school in Kinvara. He highlighted that traffic speeds through the village. He requested Ms. Lowe to address this. Ms. Lowe stated that she will follow up with the consultant regarding flexibility on delivery and timing of the traffic management plan. Mr. Coyle stated that with respect to N67 flooding that there is a programme in place, and he will contact Walsh Waste in relation to the gully.

Cllr. Canning and Cllr. McClearn referred to the awful state of the roads. Cllr. Canning requested a response from the executive, he referred to the roads in Killimor. He enquired where claims should be referred to, in response Mr. Haugh advised that he forward the appropriate contact details in an email to the members. He also requested an onsite meeting with the local area office engineer and requested a survey on speed through Portumna. Mr. Haugh stated that he will revert regarding the speed survey when an update is to hand. Mr. Haugh also informed the meeting that claims from the public should be sent to IPB directly.

Mr. Haugh advised Cllr. Canning Electric Skyline reverted with a proposal for two new lights at Shannon Park and that he will be seeking NOM funding support in this regard.

Cllr. McClearn stated that there should be flexibility in the 3 Year Roads Programme. Mr. Haugh advised flexibility will be required given the damage that has recently occurred due to the severe cold spell. He confirmed that the salt deposit locations will service the entire Municipal District and supplies can be re-stocked if required, he stated that he understood the desire for this to be implemented urgently.

Cllr. Murphy enquired if the Roads Programme be addressed in the February meeting and Mr. Haugh responded that correspondence will issue to all Councillors on the Roads Programme. Councillor Murphy welcomed the funding made available for the square in Ardahan with respect to the farmer's market, he stated he is anxious to progress this as soon as possible.

In response to Cllr. Finnerty, Ms. Lowe advised she will request an update from Mr. Derek Pender, DOS, regarding Irish Water and a further update from Housing regarding the lease at George's Street/Courtney Lane.

Cllr. Curley wanted it noted that the issue regarding Grange will be revisited if required. Mr Haugh confirmed that it would.

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CLLR P.J. MURPHY
CATHAOIRLEACH, LOUGHREA MD