

**COMHAIRLE CHONTAE NA GAILLIMHE**

**MINUTES OF COUNCIL MEETING OF GALWAY COUNTY COUNCIL**

**Held at ÁRAS AN CHONTAE, PROSPECT HILL,**

**Monday 17<sup>th</sup> June 2019 at 2.00pm**

**Cathaoirleach:** Cllr. Jimmy McClearn

**I Láthair Freisin:**

**Comhaltaí:** Comh./Cllr. T. Broderick, J. Byrne, L. Carroll, J. Charity, D. Collins, M. Connolly, G. Cronnelly, D. Ó Cualáin, J. Cuddy, S. Curley, T. Ó Curraoin, Aisling Dolan, Albert Dolan, G. Donuhue, G. Finnerty, D. Geraghty, S. Herterich Quinn, M. Hoade, P. Hynes, C. Keaveney, D. Killilea, G. King, P. Mac an Iomaire, M. Maher, E. Mannion, A. McKinstry, P. Murphy, A. Reddington, P. Roche, J. Sheridan, N. Thomas, S. Walsh, T. Welby

**Oifigigh:** Mr. K. Kelly, Chief Executive (Interim)  
Ms. C. Delaney, Acting County Secretary  
Mr. G. Mullarkey, Head of Finance  
Mr. J. Cullen, Director of Services  
Ms. E. Ruane, Director of Services  
Mr. M. Owens, A/Director of Services  
Mr. A. Farrell, A/Director of Services  
Ms. M. Donohue, Senior Staff Officer  
Ms. Ú. Ni Eidhin, Oifigeach Gaeilge  
Ms. S. Elwood, Clerical Officer  
Ms. C. Walsh, Clerical Officer

**Thosaigh an cruinniú leis an bpaidir**

### **Resolutions of Sympathy**

A resolution of sympathy was extended to the following:

Sheila McGrath & Family, Demesne Cottages, Tuam, Co. Galway

John Joe Fahy & Family, Kilconnell, Ballinasloe, Co. Galway

Mary Mulkerins & Family, Lissadoill, Peterswell, Co. Galway

Mary Huban & Family, Nogro, Kinvara, Co. Galway

### **Resolution of Congratulations**

Cllr. Collins congratulated the Turloughmore Team on their recent win to retain the John West Féile na Gael Division 1 Hurling title.

### **ITEM NO.1 - CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES OF THE FOLLOWING MEETINGS:**

**(a) Minutes of Monthly Meeting held on 29<sup>th</sup> April 2019. 3449**

On the **PROPOSAL** of Cllr. Byrne, **SECONDED** by Cllr. Walsh, the Minutes of the Monthly Meeting held on the 29<sup>th</sup> April 2019, were **AGREED**.

### **Matters Arising**

In reply to Cllr. Welby, Mr. Owens advised that no response had been received from the Minister for Housing, Planning and Local Government in respect of a Motion submitted requesting that the Chairs of the SPC's be involved in the new Galway Social Housing Delivery Taskforce.

In response to Comh. Ó Curraóin, Ms. Delaney advised that no response had been received in relation to the Motion regarding the use of Motor Tax and Property Tax collected within the county.

Cllr. Killilea referred to the Minutes and to Item No. 14, page 25, "*Angel blocks*", which should read "*Angel plots*".

**ITEM NO.2 - TO CONSIDER THE DRAFT SCHEME OF PRIORITY FOR AFFORDABLE DWELLING PURCHASE ARRANGEMENTS IN ACCORDANCE WITH SECTION 85 OF THE HOUSING (MISCELLANEOUS PROVISIONS) ACT 2009 AND THE HOUSING (MISCELLANEOUS PROVISIONS) ACT 2009 (PART 5) REGULATIONS 2019, S.I. 81 OF 2019.** **3450**

Mr. Owens advised the Members this item had been considered by the Housing SPC, approved by the Elected Members of the previous Council at the April Plenary Council meeting and sent to the Minister for Housing, Planning and Local Government for review.

He advised that in accordance with legislation, there was a requirement for Galway County Council to approve a Scheme of Priority before 18<sup>th</sup> June 2019. He explained that the Scheme of Priority was just one of a number of elements that would form an Affordable Housing Scheme.

Cllr. C. Keaveney expressed concern on the adoption of a Scheme that the Minister of Housing had not yet commented upon. He explained the issue of homelessness was the biggest concern raised by people on the election campaign trail and noted that this Scheme had no scheduled plan or targets included. Mr. Owens outlined that the Draft Scheme of Priority for Affordable Dwelling Purchase Arrangements was just one element in respect of Part 5 of the Housing (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 2009, with regulations on the other elements to be made in the coming months. He explained that in the absence of these other elements, a programme or targets cannot be determined.

In reply to Cllr. Charity, Mr. Owens clarified that Part 5 of the Housing (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 2009 had commenced but explained this was only one element and other elements not limited to: assessment of eligibility of households; the form of transfer order; the form and content of a charging order and discount to be applied; would require further regulations to proceed.

In reply to queries raised by Cllrs. Cuddy, Broderick, Curley, Herterich Quinn and Byrne regarding the Draft Scheme of Priority for Affordable Housing Purchase, Mr.

Owens clarified that the Minister commenced Part 5 of the Housing (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 2009 on 18<sup>th</sup> June 2018, the effect of which is to place the new scheme for Affordable Housing on a statutory footing. He explained that in accordance with legislation, every housing authority, including those with no immediate plans to deliver affordable housing options, must make a Scheme of Letting Priority within the year, i.e. 18<sup>th</sup> June 2019.

In reply to Cllr. Killilea, Mr. Owens clarified that the advice of the Department was sought on the potential impact of failure to adopt a Scheme, and the Department advised that it would create legal doubt and uncertainty for any future Affordable Housing Scheme approved by Galway County Council. He explained that the Ministers decision not to make comment, which is discretionary, on the Draft Scheme, does not in any way invalidate the Scheme already approved by the Elected Members and consultation with the Minister on the Draft Scheme was a statutory requirement.

In reply to Cllr. Finnerty's query on funding the Scheme, Mr. Owens advised whilst currently there was no funding mechanism identified by the Department to advance Affordable Housing, the Department had provided funding under the "Service Sites Fund (SSF)". He explained Galway County was one of 19 local authorities invited to submit proposals under the Service Sites Fund and proposals for the development of lands at Station Road, Oughterard and Raheen, Athenry. He said this fund would allow for up to €50,000 per unit, which would transfer into a discount on the site after purchase.

Cllr. Cronnelly asked if there was provision under the Rebuilding Ireland Scheme, for council stock to be sold under the Affordable Housing Scheme. In response, Mr. Owens said that existing housing stock is not provided for under the Affordable Housing Scheme but the incremental Tenant Purchase Scheme affords current tenants the opportunity to purchase their house at a discount subject to eligibility criteria.

Cllr. Hoade **PROPOSED** that Mr. Owens, A/DOS provide the members with a comprehensive overview of Galway County Council's landbank outlining the steps

being made by the Council to provide housing on this landbank. Cllr. C. Keaveney **SECONDED** this proposal.

Mr. Owens advised the Meeting that the Council had a current landbank of 36 ha; of which 80% was under development or had proposals attached to provide social housing units, while 20% was constrained by different factors. He outlined that 36% of the Council's housing need was based in the Athenry area. He confirmed the was need to acquire additional lands for social and affordable housing but this would incur a financial cost. Mr. Owens advised the Meeting that Galway County Council's housing target for 2018-2021 under Rebuilding Ireland is 926 units. He confirmed that the Council exceeded their build and acquisition targets for 2018 while providing 108 new homes. He confirmed the Council remain on target to meet the targets under set out Rebuilding Ireland.

Cllr. Thomas sought clarification on the construction of a one-off house where the applicant provided the site. In response, Mr. Owens advised that under the Social Housing Capital Programme, Departmental approval is required and applications are subject to individual capital appraisal, including criteria in relation to sustainable communities and therefore generally relate to applicants with exceptional circumstances.

On the **PROPOSAL** of Cllr. Byrne and **SECONDED** by Cllr. Maher, the members **AGREED** to adopt the Draft Scheme of Priority for Affordable Dwelling Purchase Arrangements in accordance with Section 85 of the Housing (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 2009 and the Housing (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 2009 (Part 5) Regulations 2019, S.I. 81 of 2019.

**ITEM NO.3 - TO NOTE THE SUMMARY OF PROCEEDING OF CONFERENCES ATTENDED IN ACCORDANCE WITH SECTION 142 (5F) OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 2001 (AS AMENDED)** **3451**

On the **PROPOSAL** of Cllr. Maher, **SECONDED** by Cllr. Roche, and **AGREED**, to note the Summary of Proceedings at the following Conferences; Celtic Conferences Ireland and Plastic Waste, held on the 12<sup>th</sup>, 13<sup>th</sup> & 14<sup>th</sup> April, 2019, in the Four Seasons Hotel, Carlingford, Co.Louth submitted by Comh. O'Curraóin and Dundalk Chamber of Commerce – Cross Border Tourism Conference “Learn from the Best”, held on 10<sup>th</sup> April, 2019, in The Four Seasons Hotel, Carlingford, Co.Louth, submitted by Cllr. Kearney.

**ITEM NO.4 - TO CONSIDER THE MANAGEMENT REPORT – JUNE 2019 IN ACCORDANCE WITH SECTION 136(2) OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 2001 (AS AMENDED).** **3452**

On the **PROPOSAL** of Cllr. Maher, **SECONDED** by Cllr. Roche, the Management Report – June 2019 in accordance with Section 136(2) of the Local Government Act 2001 (as amended) was **AGREED**.

**Matters Arising**

In reply to Cllr. Killilea, Mr. Owens confirmed that Galway County Council are progressing the social housing development for the delivery of 40 units (approx.) at Tir an Bhuí, Tuam and no other approved housing body are involved. He said this development would consist of smaller units and explained that there are many Council properties which are currently under-occupied and it is proposed to address this going forward.

Cllr. Charity questioned the lack of houses becoming available in the Athenry/Oranmore area where the housing need was 36%. In response, Mr. Owens

advised that the Council's landbank in this area is limited but expressions of interest for lands would be sought in an effort to address this situation.

In response to Cllr. Cuddy's concern regarding to Part V agreements, Mr. Owens advised that the current requirement at 10% is the minimum to be made available. He said it is open to the Local Authority or other Housing Body to acquire units by acquisition or turnkey proposals, above the 10% minimum.

Cllr. Hynes welcomed the delivery of 68 social homes at Tullahill, Loughrea and said similar action should be taken throughout all the county. Cllr. Curley concurred but expressed concern for the need to strive for a socio-economic balance due to the large concentration of social housing already in that area.

In response, Mr. Owens advised that funding would be sought from the Department in the coming months to advance further turnkey proposals. He said turnkey acquisitions are undertaken taking cognisance of sustainable community criteria. He explained that acquisitions/turnkey are vital to allow housing units to become available under social housing whilst also contributing to employment and the economic development of an area and without this option, it would severely diminish Galway County Council's response to housing need and homelessness.

In reply to Cllr. Mannion, Mr. Owens advised that tenders have been received and final funding approval is awaited from the Department in respect of the social housing development at Roundstone. With regard to Clifden, Mr. Owens said that the Stage 2 application to allow the proposed development proceed to planning is awaited from the Department of Housing, Planning and Local Government.

In reply to Comh. Ó Cualáin, Mr. Owens said the construction of 4 social homes at Na Clocha Rua, An Cheathrú Rua, has commenced and the outcome of the development proposal via Part 8 has increased the open space in the proposed development by reducing the numbers of units proposed from 5 to 4.

Cllr. Byrne questioned the merit to hold a dedicated meeting to update the Elected Members on the delivery of social housing. A proposal by the Cathaoirleach for the briefing to be raised and considered at the next Housing SPC Meeting was agreed.

The Cathaoirleach Cllr. McClearn requested the policy re housing allocation in respect of household composition and house size be considered at a future Housing SPC meeting. Cllr. Donohue and Cllr. Herterich Quinn concurred with this request. Mr. Owens advised that the need to amend the Housing Allocation Scheme had been identified and would be a priority item on the Housing SPC work programme. He confirmed that due to the profile of the housing need for 1 and 2 bed properties and the limited stock it is necessary to urgently review the eligibility criteria for 3 bed properties.

In response to Cllr. Finnerty, Cllr. Hoade and Cllr. Roche's enquiries on the structure of the Urban and Rural Regeneration Team, Mr. Kelly advised that the opportunity to apply for grant funding in a range of areas has increased. He informed the members that a dedicated team of relevant staff to include; engineering, technical and planning, is proposed with the view to advancing proposals in consultation with community groups. This team would not replace the existing work being undertaken in sections but oversee and enhance the overall co-ordination and drive to maximise funding applications/proposals to the department for the greatest benefit of the overall county. He explained that this proposed team would require Department approval as funding is not provided for in the budget. He stressed the need to put this team in place as funding applications and requirements are now more onerous and a team is needed to ensure successful outcomes for Galway County Council's grant applications. He informed the Members that this proposal would be submitted shortly to the Department for approval.

Cllrs. Hoade and Carroll welcomed the idea of the dedicated team with Cllr. Herterich Quinn stating with the increased funding streams becoming available, it was important that the Council continue to work alongside local community groups. Cllr. Mannion concurred but said it needed to be clarified to the meeting that the Council have been very successful in securing funding and it has not missed out on any funding to date.

In reply to Cllr. Aisling Dolan's query regarding the Council's experience in applying for European funding, Mr. Kelly advised that while the Council is successful in drawing down funds for different projects, it would have limited intervention regarding European Funding Initiative. He said he believed projects needed to be 'ready to go' in order to access European funding streams, and this dedicated team should assist with the advancement of projects in order to access the different funding streams. He confirmed that staff and communities who currently work together to seek funding would still be involved, but a more co-ordinated approach is required with the increase in funds and funding opportunities now becoming available.

Mr. Kelly invited the Elected Members to advise him or Kieran Coyne, A/Senior Executive Officer, Community & Enterprise Section, of projects in their areas that might be suitable for advancement in a pro-active way and could be considered within the overall strategy across all the Municipal Districts.

Cllr. Roche asked for clarification on what would be considered eligible and said this information would be helpful to the Elected Members when considering projects.

Cllr. Collins suggested that the Municipal Districts need to consider local groups in their areas and information and criteria on funding streams should be circulated to these community groups. He encouraged the Elected Members to contact the Galway Rural Development Co. Ltd. who are very helpful in advising on the types of funding available to local communities, including funding initiatives available under LEADER.

In reply to Cllr. Cuddy's query regarding Roinn na Gaeltachta funding for roads projects, Mr. Cullen replied that project specific funding is received which is largely approved for works on Piers, Harbours and Coastal Protection.

Comh. Ó Cualáin sought clarification on the sewage scheme in An Cheathrú Rua. Mr. Cullen replied that Irish Water are proceeding to the Compulsory Purchase Order (CPO) stage and once complete, the scheme would be submitted for approval to An Bord Pleanála. Comh. Ó Cualáin asked if other sites were examined in the area.

Cllr. Thomas concurred with Comh. Ó'Cualáin, and expressed concern that Irish Water selected the site which is the most cost effective and not on the principle of the most suitable site. Mr. Cullen explained that Irish Water would have reviewed all suitable sites in the area, and following this, the optimum site, from a technical and planning view, would be selected. He said Irish Water must undertake the statutory planning process where all views and concerns can be formally submitted and must be considered before a final decision is made.

**ITEM NO.5 – CHIEF EXECUTIVE'S BUSINESS & CORRESPONDENCE.** 3453

No matters arising.

**ITEM NO.6 – CATHAOIRLEACH'S BUSINESS** 3454

The Cathaoirleach provided the newly Elected Members an opportunity to address the meeting to outline their objectives for the next 5 years.

Cllr. Herterich Quinn referred to her local town of Athenry as a historical and heritage town and stated the dereliction of community and residential developments within the town was a concern as it severely impacted the morale/pride of its community and the overall impression for visitors to the Athenry area.

In reply, Mr. Kelly explained that the state of dereliction of a property depended a lot on how a property was maintained following its vacancy. He said there was legislation/schemes in place to deal with vacant sites /dereliction with consideration to be given to the status of the property to ensure the appropriate intervention was applied.

Cllr. Sheridan expressed concern of the high cost of Insurance that is payable by Commercial Rate Payers in County Galway. He said this was a big threat to sole traders and partnerships in rural areas and was seriously affecting local/small businesses.

Cllr. Murphy said his main objective is the issue of a sewage treatment plant for Craughwell village and in line with the County Development Plan, sewage treatment plants needed to be planned for in advance of development.

In reply, Mr. Kelly advised that Council policy is that individual wastewater treatment plants are not acceptable and future development must be serviced through a public waste water treatment plant operated by Irish Water or in the case of a cluster of housing, with each unit having its own sewerage treatment plant. He said there are issues with independent waste water treatment plants in a number of locations and Irish Water, in consultation with the Environment and Planning Sections, were seeking possible solutions for these areas.

Cllr. Collins said the induction training for newly elected members was very informative and would be of benefit to him in assisting with various issues over the next 5 years.

Cllr. Geraghty said the revitalisation of our community and villages was important as businesses depend on the communities. He concurred with Cllr. Sheridan that the issue of high insurance costs posed a real issue for people in rural areas. He implored the Members to lobby TD's about this issue.

Cllr. Aisling Dolan complemented the work of the Ballinasloe Enterprise Centre and said she would work to support their aim by promoting and supporting projects that encourage investment into the Ballinasloe area. She said the development of the Dublin-Galway Greenway was needed to invigorate life into rural towns and villages and generate tourism opportunities and support existing trails - Hymany Way and Beara-Breifne Way – in East Galway. She expressed her strong focus in respect of health services and Portiuncula Hospital.

Cllr. Reddington said a lot of tourism opportunities existed within County Galway and sought an update on the filing of the post of Tourism Officer for the County.

Mr. Kelly said the post of Tourism Officer was at the Shortlisting stage of the recruitment process.

Cllr. Reddington said the provision of off-street parking in Headford needed to be progressed and expressed concern over the number of young people of need of housing.

Cllr. Donohue referred to the lack of a refuse collection in some areas and sought clarification into the options available to householders in these areas. In response, Mr. Cullen said that nationally local authorities no longer provided a refuse collection service. He advised if Members were aware of an area where there were clusters of houses who were actively seeking to avail of a collection service, this matter could be forwarded to the Councils Environment Section for consideration.

Cllr. King expressed concern regarding the impact of financial cuts on the organisation.

Comh. Mac an Iomaire sought clarification on the replacement of outdoor staff following retirement. In reply, Mr. Kelly said that it is the policy to replace outdoor staff.

Cllr. Carroll said his membership of the Audit Committee over the past five years had kept him knowledgeable of the Council's financial position and constraints and he would work with his fellow Members over this new term of office to deal with various issues.

Cllr. McKinstry said that Climate Change was among his main objectives. He referred to Project Ireland 2040 and said the Council needed to be proactive and seek expertise to assist in the delivery of making the County sustainable into the future. He said more needs to be done to encourage the use of public transport.

In response, Mr. Kelly confirmed that climate change was an important cross departmental issue and further attention and discussion would take place at the first meeting of the Corporate Policy Group (CPG).

Cllr. Albert Dolan concurred with Cllr. Geraghty's concerns regarding high insurance costs for both Commercial Rate payers and young drivers. Also, one of his main objectives is to train businesses to adapt to the trend of on-line shopping that has emerged and welcomed the opportunity to work with the Councils Local Enterprise Office (LEO) office in the provision of e-commerce training.

Mr. Kelly advised that the Council would be bringing forward a Digital Strategy in due course. He confirmed that the LEO office runs a Trading Online Voucher Scheme designed to assist small businesses, where it offers financial assistance along with training and advice to help businesses trade online.

***The following Motions were submitted:***

On the **PROPOSAL** of Cllr. Killilea, **SECONDED** by Cllr. Thomas it was **AGREED** *“that Galway County Council write to The Minister of Transport and Irish Rail to ask them to remove the gates/barriers erected to Vicar Street, Tuam and Milltown Road, Tuam in the interest of Tuam Tidy Towns clean town policy and to facilitate the safe passage of children going to schools in Tuam”.*

**Response from The Minister of Transport, Tourism and Sport to this motion is included in the “correspondence section” of the extranet. There is currently no response from Iarnród Eireann Headquarters.**

On the **PROPOSAL** of Cllr. Cronnelly, **SECONDED** by Cllr. Charity it was **AGREED** *“that Aaliagh Butler be added to the Civic Reception along with Adam Hession of Monivea Boxing Club subject to approval of the C.P.G.”*

On the **PROPOSAL** of Cllr. Killilea, **SECONDED** by Cllr. Sheridan it was **AGREED** that Cllr. Killilea allocate €500 of his Conference & Training Fund be allocated to the Corofin United Club for their ladies soccer team who are bidding for shield success.

On the **PROPOSAL** of Cllr. Byrne, **SECONDED** by Cllr. Maher it was **AGREED** that Cllr. Byrne allocate from his Conference & Training Fund, the following amounts to Community Groups:

Cruinniu na mBád -	€1,000
Forgotten Horses Ireland -	€250
Kinvara Hockey Club -	€300
Coole Music -	€300

On the **PROPOSAL** of Cllr. Thomas, **SECONDED** by Cllr. Herterich Quinn it was **AGREED** that Cllr. Thomas allocate €250 of his Conference & Training Fund to Cumann Staire Ruaidhrí Uí Fhlaitheartaigh Mháigh Cuillín.

On the **PROPOSAL** of Cllr. Finnerty, **SECONDED** by Cllr. Hoade it was **AGREED** that Cllr. Finnerty allocate €500 from his Training & Conference Fund to Burren Lowlands Group for the purpose to support the Tourism Office in Gort.

### **TO FIX A DATE AND TIME FOR THE JULY MEETING**

A discussion took place regarding the time of commencement time of the monthly meetings. Cllr. Aisling Dolan requested a family friendly approach to meeting times.

Cllr. Hoade expressed concern that if meetings ran late into the evening that a quorum would not be present.

Cllr. Welby suggested that the on-line system for submission of Motions should be utilised to achieve efficiency at the plenary Meeting, with just two topical issues to be discussed at each monthly meeting. Cllr. Keaveney concurred.

In reply to Cllr. Charity and Cllr. Killilea with regard to the reform of the Municipal Districts structure, Mr. Kelly advised that proposals for the revision of Standing Orders for the Municipal District meetings and Plenary meetings would be considered by the CPG and then taken to the full plenary meeting in September.

It was **PROPOSED** by Cllr. Killilea, **SECONDED** by the Cathaoirleach, and **AGREED** that the July Monthly Meeting of Plenary Council be held on Monday 22<sup>nd</sup> July 2019 to commence at 1.00 p.m. The Cathaoirleach advised that a Civic Reception is due to take place following the July monthly meeting to recognise sporting achievements throughout the county and this reception starts at 6pm.

Monthly Meeting of Galway County Council held on Monday, 17<sup>th</sup> June 2019

On the **PROPOSAL** of Cllr. Maher, **SECONDED** by Cllr. Roche it was **AGREED** that the finish time for the monthly meetings be 6.00pm.

***Councillors Previous Motions and Replies***

Cllr. Thomas expressed his disappointment with the response to his Motion from January 2019, received from the Minister of the Department of Communications, Climate Action and Environment, and said he felt that the Minister was not taking the matter seriously.

**Chriochnaigh an Cruinniú Ansin.**

**Submitted Signed and Approved:**

**Cathaoirleach:**

  
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**Date:**

22/07/2019

