

**MINUTES OF THE PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT, TRANSPORTATION &
EMERGENCY SERVICES SPC**

**HYBRID MEETING HELD IN
THE COUNCIL CHAMBER, ÁRAS AN CHONTAE
ON THURSDAY 26TH MARCH 2026 AT 11.30am**

I Láthair:

Baill: Comh. Pádraig Mac an Iomaire (Chairperson)
Cllr. Peter Feeney
Comh. Tomás Ó Curraóin
Cllr. Michael Connolly
Cllr. Seán Broderick
Cllr. Martin McNamara
Ms. Anne Mitchell

Baill ar Líne: Mr. Mark Green

Oifigi: Mr. Uinsinn Finn, Director of Services
Mr. Tom Prendergast, Senior Engineer
Mr. Conrad Harley, Senior Engineer
Mr. Enda Gallagher, Senior Executive Engineer
Ms. Paula Higgins, Senior Executive Engineer
Ms. Geraldine Byrne, Administrative Officer
Ms. Mary-Esther McHugh, Assistant Staff Officer

Apologies: Mr. Aodán MacDonncha
Cllr. Siobhán McHugh Ryan

Absent: Mr. Colm Ryan

Comh. Mac an Iomaire commenced the meeting and welcomed Conrad Harley to Galway County Council in his new capacity as the new Senior Engineer and the Committee introduced themselves.

Item No. 1: Minutes of the Physical Development, Transportation and Emergency Services SPC Meeting held on 10th December 2025

- On the **Proposal** of Cllr. Seán Broderick and **Seconded** by Comh. Tomás Ó Curraóin, the minutes of the Physical Development, Transportation and Emergency Services meeting of the Strategic Policy Committee held 10th December 2025 were agreed and there were no matters arising.

Item No. 2: Matters Arising

- A member requested an update on the status of parking permits for carers in the course of their duties. Galway County Council advised that the matter is currently awaiting additional staffing resources and will be brought back for consideration at the next SPC agenda. A discussion took place regarding the procedure required to implement the scheme, and it was noted that an amendment to the existing bye-laws would be required.

Item No. 3: Urban Areas (30km/h) Speed Limit Review

- Tom Prendergast provided an update on Phase 2 of the National Speed Limit Review, arising from the national introduction of 30km/h limits and updated recommendations around schools. Phase 2 relates to urban area centres and is to be operational by 31 March 2027, with Phase 3 covering national secondary roads (100km/h to 80km/h) and Phase 4 relating to rural schools, with all schools to have 50km/h limits or lower.
- Revisions to Chapter 4 on urban cores were outlined, clarifying that urban cores are roads with significant and regular interaction with vulnerable road users and that limits should be self-regulating. Examples in Galway County towns were presented, and 106 sites were reviewed by Galway County Council in relation to Urban Speed Limit Zones and urban cores, with a number selected for progression.
- Work undertaken to date includes updates to all five Municipal Districts and workshops completed in Tuam and Athenry, with Connemara scheduled and Loughrea pending. Following completion, proposals will be finalised, draft bye-laws prepared, and engagement undertaken with Transport Infrastructure Ireland (TII), noting that urban cores cannot be designated on national roads without TII approval.
- Draft bye-laws are expected to go to public consultation in June–July 2026, with submissions considered and revisions made as required. The proposals will proceed to plenary Council by the end of October 2026, with 100% funding for signage and road markings dependent on adoption of bye-laws by that date. It was reiterated that special speed limits should not be applied where inappropriate to the road environment or used to resolve other road safety issues.
- Members raised location-specific matters including the Agricultural College, schools at junctions, Ability West, and extension of limits on the Ballyforan Road (confirmed as agreed); a request for a speed limit at Woodlawn (rejected, with a request to revisit near the train station following local submissions); and ongoing concerns in Menlough village regarding traffic calming and non-compliance with signage.
- Queries were raised in relation to school speed limits (30km/h versus existing 50km/h limits and the extent of reductions on approaches), the distinction between 30km/h limits and speed limit zones, and concerns that enforcement, behaviour and road design issues continue to limit the effectiveness of speed limit changes.
- In response, it was confirmed that the Ballyforan Road extension has been agreed, that Woodlawn is not proposed for change given its location, and that in Menlough traffic calming and physical measures are considered more appropriate than speed limit reductions alone. National guidance is awaited for rural Phase 4, and

it was emphasised that compliance relies on a combination of engineering, enforcement and physical measures, with enforcement outside the Council's control and funding constraints remaining a challenge.

Item No. 4: Electric Vehicle Charging Strategy Update

- Paula Higgins gave a presentation on the development of the EV Charging Strategy 2024 - 2030 referencing the April 2024 Alternative Fuels Infrastructure Regulations (AFIR), national electrification targets, and the charging capacity required to meet them. Galway County Council has a target of approximately 21,500kW by 2030, with 6,427kW currently in place.
- The establishment of Zero Emission Vehicles Ireland (ZEVl) as a dedicated office within the Department of Transport was outlined, with responsibility for implementation and funding. In Galway, ZEVl funding supports motorway charging hubs, Shared Island sport club schemes, and pilot EV Charging schemes in various Counties, with added emphasis on tourist locations. While there are no Pilots approved for Galway County at the moment, work is continuing to identify a suitable site to submit as a pilot proposal.
- Planning and policy context was outlined, including the national statutory requirements for provision of EV charging infrastructure including those outlined in the Galway County Development Plan. Other ZEVl publications include ZEVl's national strategy 2024 - 2030 and EV Charging Universal Design Guidelines (UDG).
- There is ongoing engagement with various stakeholders which include other state bodies such as OPW and SEAI; ESB Networks and Failte Ireland.
- The wider Galway context was discussed, including the regional spread of charging infrastructure, the target of over 21,500kW capacity by 2030, and the project lifecycle approach. The project is currently at a regional and local Strategy Development stage, assessing need, location and requirements, with Systra engaged to develop a County-specific EV Charging Strategy. There will be presentations to SPC and Municipal Districts throughout the various project stages and a wider public consultation planned for 2026. Phase 2 will address infrastructure planning, followed by Phase 3 which will focus business models and a partnering approach.
- Challenges identified included availability of parking spaces, electricity grid capacity, apartment and townhouse charging, reliance on third-party data, commercial viability, and addressing geographic disparity across the county.
- Members welcomed the presentation and raised issues including requests for presentation materials, the need to align EV charging with emergency and community hubs, a lack of charging points in certain towns (e.g. Mountbellew), the suitability of Council-owned car parks, and the role of charging hubs in supporting town centres, tourism areas, and resilience during storms or outages.
- It was noted that power availability often dictates location viability, fast charging is more suited to motorways, smaller villages can be challenging for operators, and that appropriate charger types are needed for different locations. The importance of identifying economically viable sites with grid capacity was emphasised, noting that most charging occurs at home, with public infrastructure providing essential supplementary and hub-based charging.

Item No. 5: Any Other Business

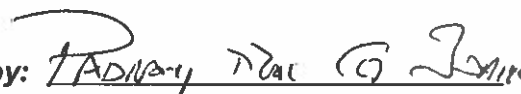
- Under Any Other Business, concerns were raised regarding rising fuel and road surface dressing costs, particular issues were noted on some roads in Connemara. It was outlined that surface dressing failures are being addressed where possible. Independent materials testing is being introduced this year as an additional quality check.
- Members requested updates on the testing of road materials and wastewater infrastructure across the county and asked that wastewater be a standing item on SPC agendas. Members were advised to submit agenda requests, which can be included as required, and it was confirmed that wastewater will be added to the next agenda.
- Traffic calming issues in Menlough and Newtown Mountbellew were highlighted. It was noted that Menlough remains on the list for consideration.
- Discussion also took place on road damage arising from forestry operations, with concerns raised about heavy vehicles associated with Coillte impacting road surfaces and the need for additional funding to repair damage. Requests were made for increased use of tarmac repairs in winter, acknowledging that this is more costly but longer-lasting. In response, it was noted that forestry operations are licensed and compliant, pothole repairs remain a priority, and while tarmac is preferable, weather, time and cost constraints apply.
- An update was provided on the transition of staff from Irish Water to Uisce Éireann, noting that staff moved to Crown Square earlier this week and that further functions are transitioning. It was advised that updates will be provided to the Oireachtas meeting scheduled for Monday 30th March 2026, including capacity details, development strategy, and the plan for Galway, which will be shared and discussed.

The meeting concluded.

Críochnaigh an Cruinniú Ansin.

Signed &

Approved by:

 Date: 15/6/2026

Comh-Pádraig Mac an Iomaire
Cathaoirleach