

COMHAIRLE CHONTAE NA GAILIMHE GALWAY COUNTY COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE CONAMARA ELECTORAL AREA MEETING HELD ON 9TH JANUARY, 2009, IN ÁRAS AN CHONTAE

ILÁTHAIR:-

Baill: Comh. S. Ó Tuairisg, Cathaoirleach
Cllr. S. Kyne
Cllr. T. Welby
Comh. S. Ó Cuaig
Comh. C. Ní Fhatharta
Cllr. S. Walsh

Oifigh: Ms. C. McConnell, Senior Planner, Planning & Sustainable Development Unit
Mr. E. Molloy, Senior Engineer, Roads & Transportation Unit
Mr. S. Groarke, Administrative Officer, Roads & Transportation Unit
Mr. T. Kelly, Senior Executive Engineer, Conamara Electoral Area.
Ms. M. McGrath, Senior Staff Officer, Planning & Sustainable Development Unit
Ms. D. Caulfield, Staff Officer, Roads & Transportation Unit

1. Minutes of Meeting of 14th October 2008

On the proposal of Cllr. Kyne, seconded by Cllr. Welby, the Minutes of the Meeting held on 14th October, 2008 were approved.

2. To further consider the Manager's Report on the submissions received on the Draft Galway County Development Plan 2009-2015 under Section 12(5)(a) of the Planning & Development Act 2000, as amended

Ms. McConnell referred to the Manager's Report previously circulated to members on the 11th December, 2008, and the Conamara Area Meeting of 19th December, 2008, and continued the consideration of the Manager's Report on the submissions received on the Draft Galway County Development Plan 2009-2015. Ms. McConnell resumed at Section 4 of the Manager's Report.

In relation to Extractive Policies, Page 54 of the Manager's Report a discussion arose and it was agreed that Policy ED14 on Page 59 should be reworded.

It was proposed by Comh. Ó Tuairisg and seconded by Cllr. Walsh that the following sentence be deleted from Policy ED14– "In this regard there shall be a presumption against any new quarry or an extension of an existing quarry in the landscape rated "unique".

In relation to Policy ED34(now37) on Page 64 of the Manager's Report, Cllr. Kyne proposed and Cllr. Welby seconded that this policy should not be removed from the Draft County Development Plan.

Ms. McConnell advised that a new Policy (policy ED40) be included using the same wording, but generic where it would not be referring to a specific development but relating to all potential ones.

It was agreed that the Policy ED 34(now37) would remain in the Draft Plan and that the Policy suggested by Ms. McConnell would also be included.

Cllr. Welby also proposed that the following be added to Policy ED34 (now 37) – “..to help to sustain their sustainability”.

In relation to Policy ED26 on Page 70 of the Manger’s Report, Comh. Ó Tuairisg proposed that the following be deleted from Policy ED26 in the Draft County Development Plan, “..where they can be integrated with existing settlements or existing tourism facilities...”

In reference to the Green Coast Award on Page 71 of the Manager’s Report, Cllr. Welby proposed that the proposed insertion regarding ‘Green Coast Award’ into the Draft Development Plan under Section 4.8.3, Blue Flag Beaches, would include a reference to “achieving a geographical spread with the Green Coast Award.

Ms. McConnell outlined the recommendations in the Manager’s Report in relation to Housing Provision. Cllr. Welby stated that “sheltered housing” referred to in the proposed Policy (new Policy HP7) should include people with disability.

Comh. Ó Cuaig enquired if the issues in relation to rural housing and the Irish language in the Gaeltacht areas and agreed and adopted in the Gaeltacht Local Area Plan were included in the Draft County Development Plan. Ms. McConnell confirmed that the policies and objectives in the Gaeltacht Local Area Plan will continue to apply. She referred to page 152 of the Manager’s Report and the proposed amendment to Policy CS2 in the Draft County Development Plan as follows: “*Implement the policies and objectives including the land use zoning objectives, of the Local Area Plan for the Gaeltacht na Gaillimhe.* Comh. Ó Cuaig stated that this was not strong enough and it was agreed to defer the issue and to raise it at the Council Meeting of 12th January, 2009.

Comh. Ó Cuaig referred to planning and development on the islands and Ms. McConnell suggested including the following objective into the Draft Plan, e.g.

‘..the planning authority will take special consideration of the unique settlement patterns on offshore islands when considering planning applications for single houses’...

It was agreed to include this objective.

Following a discussion in relation to the existing/ traditional houses on sites of less than 1/2 acre it was agreed to include a Policy that will allow renovation or extension subject to standard Environmental Protection Agency and road requirements.

In relation to the proposed amendment to section 5.3 of the Draft County Development Plan outlined in point 3 on page 84 of the Manager’s Report, it was proposed by Comh. Ó Cuaig and seconded by Comh. Ní Fhatharta to omit this proposed amendment from the Draft Plan.

Following a discussion in relation to the issue of urban generated development in areas outside the plan boundaries of Oughterard and Clifden, Ms. McConnell referred to the Ministerial Guidelines on Sustainable Rural Housing and stated that the appropriate test for any new housing development in an area where an applicant is required to substantiate their housing need is the availability of evidence of that applicants intrinsic links to the location, through family connections or as a result of their necessity for work purposes to live at that location or the establishment of exceptional medical circumstances in accordance with the Ministerial Guidelines on Sustainable Rural Housing. It should not be based on the applicant’s blood relations, relation of applicant to the property owner in the area or the length of time property is in the applicant’s/ family ownership.

Comh. Ó Tuairisg proposed that the word “abroad” be replaced by the word “away” in Policy HP 14(now 16) in issue number 3 in Section 5.3.1of the Draft County Development Plan.

In relation to Issue No.10, Vernacular Buildings on Page 85 of the Manager's Report, it was agreed that the following words should be deleted from the paragraph:

"....subject to the demonstration of housing need in areas subject to such requirements."

Comh. Ní Fhatharta advised that the Planning Authority can be restrictive in relation to keeping the façade of old buildings, etc., and wished that this be examined.

Cllr. Welby referred to Policies 10 and 11 of the County Development Plan 2003-2009 and suggested that these policies be retained.

It was agreed to defer this matter to the Council Meeting on 12th January, 2009.

In relation to Point No. 17 on Page 85 of the Manager's Report it was proposed by Comh. Ó Cuaig to amend Policy HP18 (now 19) of the Draft County Development Plan by including the following sentence;

Where *such* existing dwellings are vacated, they shall not be used for human habitation *except to accommodate the bone fide housing need of a family member of the original owner who has been accommodated by the new permitted dwelling or for tourist or related economic activity.*

Ms. McConnell referred the members to Page 84, Issue No. 8, which outlined a new HP Policy, which has regard to the Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government circular SP5/08 regarding Bone fide applicants.

It was agreed to include New Policy (Policy HP23) to the Draft County Development Plan in relation to Bone fide applicants.

Comh. Ní Fhatharta stated that there was an issue with the wording in relation to 'returning immigrants' and wished that this matter be reviewed in the Gaeltacht Plan prior to the Council Meeting on 12th January, 2009 and this was agreed.

Cllr. Kyne enquired if the Council could examine the 'landscape sensitivity' issue as some applicants are being refused on this policy alone. Ms. McConnell advised that the Landscape sensitivity issue would not be revisited during the Development Plan process.

Ms. McConnell outlined the recommendations in the Manager's Report in relation to Section 6, Infrastructure: Roads and Transportation. A discussion arose in relation to Ports and the references made to Galway Port on Pages 118 and 240 of the Manager's Report.

Comh. Ó Cuaig stated that Ros an Mhíl was the premier port in County Galway and queried if this had now changed. He added that this was the ideal place to develop with its natural features. It was also agreed to put in some reference to Ros an Mhíl in the preamble of Section 6.3.4 entitled Galway Port. It was agreed that the wording in relation to Ros an Mhíl Port be strengthened and that the issue would be deferred to the Council Meeting of 12th January, 2009.

Comh. Ní Fhatharta enquired if there were any changes in relation to wind farms and Ms. McConnell referred to Map SP4 in the Draft County Development Plan which outlines areas suitable for wind farms. She also added that care needs to be taken until such time as a wind potential map is brought forward. Ms. McConnell referred to the recommendations in relation to Section 8.3 – An Gaeltacht as outlined on pages 152 and 153 of the Manager's Report.

Ms. McConnell advised the Members that any amendments or alterations proposed at this meeting would have to be proposed again at the Council Meeting of 12th January, 2009.

Chríochnaigh an cruinniú ansin.