

## COMHAIRLE CHONTAE NA GAILLIMHE

### Ceantar Bardasach Bhaile Locha Riach *Municipal District of LOUGHREA*

#### Minutes of Briefing of the Municipal District of Loughrea held on 22<sup>nd</sup> April 2020 @ 11 p.m.

#### I LATHAIR:

**Cathaoirleach**

**Cllr. P. Hynes**

**Baill:**

Cllr's. J. McClearn, M. Maher, G. Donohue, S. Curley, PJ Murphy, J. Byrne, M. Kinane, I. Canning, G. Finnerty

**Oifigigh:**

Mr J. Cullen, Director of Services;  
Mr. G. Haugh, Senior Executive Engineer;  
Mr F. McGillicuddy, Executive Engineer;  
Mr. B. Sheehy, A/Executive Engineer;  
Ms. A. Quinn, Meetings Administrator;

Cllr Pat Hynes welcomed all to the first Teams Meeting conducted in this manner.

#### **Director's Business**

Mr. Cullen clarified that today was a briefing and not a formal Municipal District meeting. Legislation provides for MD meetings to be held in person only.

Resulting from Covid 19, Schools closed in mid March. These initial restrictions had a limited impact on Council activities within the MD. 2 weeks later brought us the current restrictions which have impacted significantly on the level of services provided by the Council.

Main areas of impact:-

**Housing** - Mainly in the area of homelessness & isolation.

**Community & Enterprise** - The Community Response Forum has been established, which is a helpdesk to respond to the needs of our community. It brings all the agencies together.

**Planning** - Statutory deadlines extended.

**Roads** - All Projects are currently suspended including the oral hearing on the Galway City Outer Bypass. Preparatory site works in advance of the Roads Programme have been impacted by the current restrictions. Essential works e.g. pot hole repairs, littering and limited grass cutting is still being provided.

Staff have continued to attend the workplace where required or work from home where possible. Redeployments to other sections within the Council or redeployments to other agencies e.g. HSE, Social Protection have also been considered.

When restrictions are lifted and Galway County Council returns to full activity, social distancing will still have to be adhered to by our Contractors, Council staff on the roads and the public accessing our offices.

Covid 19 will certainly have a negative impact on the Council's finances but the scale of that impact has not yet been determined.

### **Cathaoirleach's Business**

Cllrs Finnerty, Curley, Byrne, Canning, Kinane, Donohue, Murphy, Maher had concerns with the increase in littering and illegal dumping. Cllrs Curley, Byrne & Canning stated that dog fouling has become an issue. Cllr McClearn asked when restrictions are lifted, how do the Council deal with Fly tipping. In response, Mr. Haugh stated that they are following up on complaints regarding illegal dumping and littering by compiling a list of black spots and targeting these specific areas. Cllrs Kinane & Donohue had concerns regarding the bring banks & the CCTV footage. Clarification is required at the next Plenary Meeting.

In response to Cllrs Kinane, Donohue and Murphy, Mr Haugh advised that any specific instances of speeding on the local roads should, in the first instance, be reported to An Garda Síochána. Mr. Cullen also stated that road safety messages are up on social media and the Council will also liaise with An Garda Síochána on behalf of the MD district if required.

In response to Cllrs Finnerty and Byrne, Mr Cullen advised that road projects such as the Ballindereen/Kinvara realignment and other pavement overlay contracts would recommence, once restrictions are lifted. Procurement of this year's Road Programme work has been on-going but the Council will need to get legal advice prior to entering into contract and will also have to determine what impact the current restrictions, and possible future restrictions, will have on the Contractors, who have tendered for road projects, ability to deliver works.

The main priority is to progress works where Department funding has already been secured but extensions to the delivery timeframe may be required and discussions will be held with the relevant Departments in this regard.

Cllr's Byrne & Kinane enquired about grass cutting and in response Mr. Haugh advised that grass cutting is now taking place in a limited but targeted manner.

Cllr. Canning asked if there could be drop off points for people doing clean outs. In reply Mr Cullen stated that it was a decision for the Environment Section, but it could lead to a similar situation as the bring banks where it becomes a dumping ground. 90% of material from clean outs can go to Recycling Centres. In response to Cllr Donohue's query on waiving charges at recycling centres, Mr Cullen advised that they were privately operated.

Cllr Hynes asked if there was a list drawn up for the County for LIS. There was an allocation of €800,000. In response Mr. Cullen advised that they received notification of allocation 2

weeks ago and it was less than this figure, there were approx. 260 projects listed, in order of priority and the return is to be made to the Department by the end of April. The Department may give an extension but already time has been lost. In response to Cllr Murphy's query on the 2020 LIS application form, Mr Haugh stated that immediately prior to the current restrictions, there were changes notified to the 2020 -2021 application form. Updated forms will be distributed to all members when they are completed in the Roads Section.

Cllr Byrne asked for an update on flooding, as at last meeting he was concerned with the delay on the feasibility study.

Mr Cullen advised that for the next MD meeting which is proposed for a date in May, it may be possible to hold this meeting in County Buildings subject to full compliance with social distancing measures being achievable.

The Cathaoirleach, Cllr. Hynes thanked everyone and the briefing then concluded.