



**Comhairle Chontae na Gaillimhe**  
**Galway County Council**

**Galway County Council**  
**Monthly Management Report**  
**October 2021**

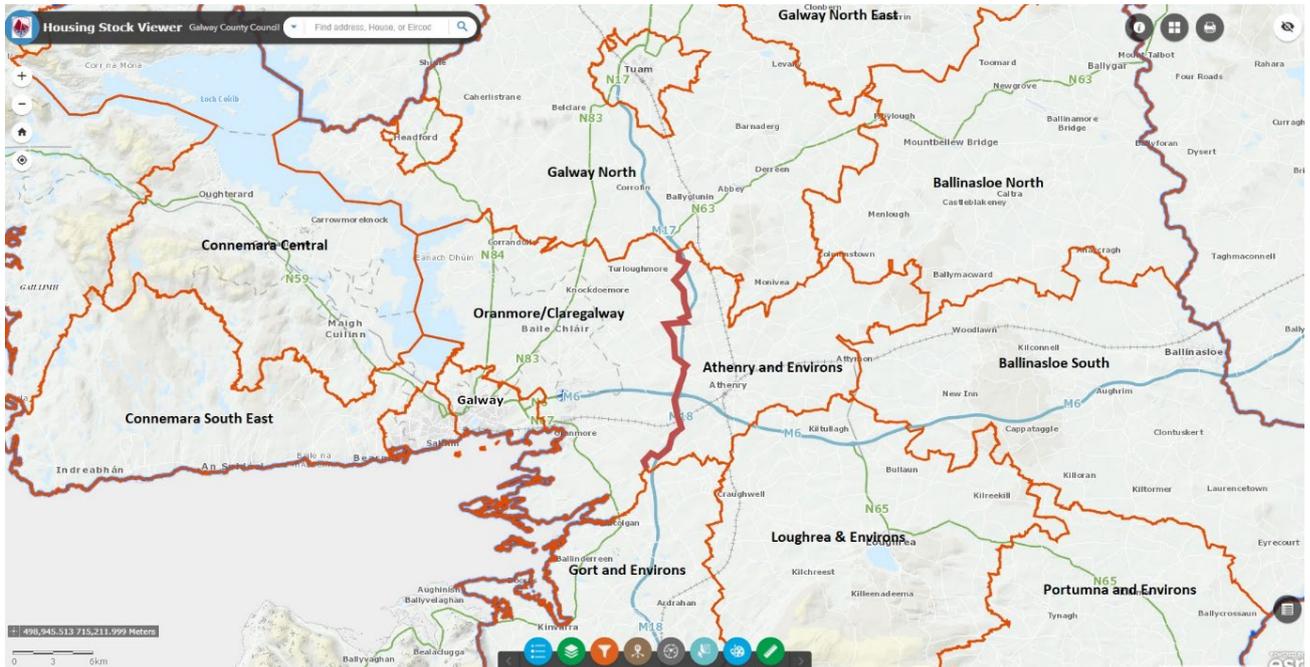
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# HOUSING & ECONOMIC, RURAL & COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

## Housing Update

### SPC Update:

The SPC met on the 15<sup>th</sup> of Sept and approved the decision to split the Area of choice of Athenry/Claregalway/Oranmore in two. This will use the townlands along the M17 as the appropriate boundary.



### Approved Housing Bodies – Workshop

A 'Pipeline' Workshop held with over 10 Approved Housing Bodies on the 15<sup>th</sup> of Sept 21. To discuss the pipelines for delivery for Housing for All and the Galway Housing Taskforce. Each AHB provided an update on their build programme in Galway County. Concern was expressed on the over reliance on Turnkey and the lack of site acquisitions by AHBs to allow for capital build projects. A full report is to be presented by the Irish Council for Social Housing to the Taskforce in November.

Tuath Housing	34 homes in County so far Future schemes in Connemara, Oranmore (Turnkey only) Taking over Mountbellow AHB via HSE supported homes
Cooperative Housing Ireland	Plans relate to Turnkeys only
Peter Triest HA	Individual properties for Brothers of Charity clients

Sophia Housing	Pipeline in place for units in Tuam & Loughrea – housing for people with intellectual disabilities (in conjunction with Council and HSE)
Respond	No pipeline in County presently
Inis	CAS acquisitions in Gort well progressed
Cluid	Large build programmes throughout the county. Healthy pipeline
Tearmann Éanna CTR	Planning approved at Eanach Mheain and projects at Rosamhil and Teach an Phosta ready.

### Update on Retrofitting:

Location	Contract	No of Units	Est Completion Date	Status
Shannon Park	EE01-2020	21	Practical Completion	Snagging
St Joseph's Ballinasloe	EE02-2020	19	Nov-21	On site
Eyrecourt, Tynagh & Killimor	EE01-2021	31	Nov-21, Jan-22 & Mar-22	On site
Roundstone	EE03-2021	8	Dec-21	Tenders due 08/10/21
The Glebe, Tuam	EE02-2021	12	Dec-21	On Site
Gort Mhaoilir & St Laurence's Fields	EE04-2021	36	Mar-22	Tenders due 24/10/21

### Estate Management

Several sections of the Council including, Housing, Environment and Sports carried out a collaborative pilot project in one of our biggest social housing estates in the County, in Hymany and Curragh Park, Ballinasloe.

The project was a joint effort between Council staff, the Residents Association and the local FAS scheme. The Residents Association put public liability insurance in place which enabled them to apply for funding through various grant streams and to actively participate in improvement works. Works included a major clean-up of the estates and particularly of 9 laneways. This was arranged and supervised by Housing staff.

The Environment Section provided informational signage on all the laneways acknowledging the efforts of those concerned and information regarding litter prevention. The Environment has engaged an expert biodiversity to provide advice and guidance on identifying suitable areas for biodiversity project which is being progressed by Environment staff and the Residents Association. The local FAS scheme and the Residents Association were involved in the general clean-up and upgrading of flower beds.

The Sports Co-ordinator is considering proposals for refurbishment to the play areas to include the installation of basketball hoops and suitable sport equipment. Further clean-up is to be arranged for the enclosed play areas in advance of the provision of sporting equipment. An environmental awareness day was held in September in the estates with information made available on responsible refuse and waste disposal. This was attended by staff from Housing and Environment. A campaign was carried out in the estates subsequent to the open day by staff from the Environment Section, which involved calling door to door and providing guidance in relation to responsible household waste disposal.

The project was particularly successful due to the cross -section and local involvement and the commitment of all involved to improve the living environment of the residents.

There are further proposals for additional projects for the area in 2022, to include the provision of an eco bin, improvements to the amenities and the façade of the common areas in the estate. The emphasis is on the continued joint involvement of all stakeholders.

### **HAP Placefinder**

195 clients helped to access HAP via the Placefinder service since its establishment in late 2018. The clients are assessed by assessments officers and then may be referred to Placefinder.

The market has become restricted since the summer due to the prolonged lock down and the use of property for holiday short term lets. Short term lets are a more popular option for landlord with less paperwork and legal obligations to meet. The result of this obvious in Connemara and Portumna areas.

There is a very tight rental squeeze in Tuam, Gort and Loughrea at present and there is no rental market available in Ballinasloe. There is an urgent need for 1 and 2 beds for singles and family size 3 or 4 bedroom. Singles are entitled to 690 max hap allowance most of the properties advertised are starting from 800 up to 950 and for a single person on €203 with a council rent of 37.60 plus a top up that makes the affordability very questionable.

Most of the applicants want to remain in their home areas or close to a large town so more property is required in those areas. Where the Placefinder service works and is successful is in getting the clients to a reference sorted (from TUS/FAS/Solas / gretb / VTOS and training centres or character reference).

The debt collection unit was suspended by Limerick during the duration of the covid level 5, this had the effect of certain clients deciding not to pay for rent – which led to terminations of tenancies. Tenants can stop the household budget and standing orders and the council are powerless to stop this happening.

Presently there are 84 referrals with approximately 30 engaged with the HAP Placefinder.

### **Capital Update:**

Construction continues on site in Kinvara, Clifden and Tuam on direct-build projects by Galway County Council. The Housing section has sought Expressions of Interest (Turnkey) from Developer for both social and affordable housing provision, with a deadline of 14<sup>th</sup> Oct for submission of proposals. The Council was successful earlier this year in receiving approval from DoHLGH to deliver two new turnkey developments; 32 units at Ballinasloe (approved in May) and 58 new units in Athenry (approved in August).

The acquisition has closed (this week) of 7 no. acres of R1 zoned lands in Tuam and proposals for bringing development forward on this site will be considered over the coming months. The Housing section wishes to work with other parties in respect of delivery on site; the Irish Wheelchair Association has expressed an interest in being involved.

### **ERCD Update**

#### **Galway County LCDC – SICAP**

At a meeting of the LCDC on 29<sup>th</sup> September 2021, the mid-term review of SICAP was discussed and the following 3 areas were agreed as priorities for the remaining 2 years of the SICAP Programme: Mental Health (including Youth), Older People & Isolation and New Communities. These will form the basis for collaborative and targeted actions to address identified issues arising for these target groups at national and local level.

#### **Age Friendly Programme:**

Following agreement at the Age Friendly Alliance Meeting, work is progressing to establish a separate Older Persons Council for the County area, with a minimum of 2 representatives of Older People per Municipal District, who will form a Committee and nominate representatives to sit on the Age Friendly Alliance.

#### **Healthy Ireland Fund:**

The Health & Wellbeing Sub-Committee of the LCDC has commenced drafting of a Healthy Ireland Plan to determine priority actions for the next 3 years across the Healthy Ireland Thematic Areas.

## Town and Village Streetscape Scheme

The Department have confirmed that the scheme completion date has been extended until the 31<sup>st</sup> Dec 21 with scope for each Council to have autonomy to allow for some works to be completed after this date where works have not been possible due to weather conditions or sourcing craftsmen. The Council must report back and finish the scheme and all claims by May 2022.

In assessing the Streetscape Scheme staff have reviewed a total of 236 applications and are recommending allocations to 173. Due to funding and other constraints (such as ineligible requests/properties not in town centres), funding was not recommended for 63 projects. The total allocation recommended is € 339,479.82 and the ERCD unit have requested additional funds from the Department to cover any additional costs if the full allocation is claimed and also sought support costs for the operation of the scheme would be based on the final expenditure.

The Grant Offer is above the initial County Allocation, as there was scope to do this within the DRCD Guidelines for Authorities and this approach has been taken in an effort to maximise direct investment in our Towns.

Details of the allocations are set out below

Loughrea	55	€	126,316.00
Headford	41	€	79,105.00
Glenamaddy	22	€	44,564.00
Ballygar	21	€	37,005.00
Oughterard	23	€	36,065.00
Oranmore	11	€	16,224.00
		€	<b>339,279.00</b>
	173		

## Tourism Update

The **Local Live Performance Scheme** continues to be rolled out through the Tourism and Arts staff in ERCD with external programming assistance. On Saturday 16<sup>th</sup> September at 8pm The Stunning played at the Town Hall Theatre in Ballinasloe.

On Friday 22<sup>nd</sup> of October, when David Kitt will entertain those lucky enough to book tickets at The Station House in Clifden

## Tourism Strategy

Following on from the presentation to and engagement with the Economic Development & Enterprise SPC the Request for Tender for the delivery of the Tourism Strategy was published on eTenders. The strategy will cover the period up to 2030 and provide the basis for the development of sustainable tourism in the County with engagement with all key stakeholders.

## Galway Sports Partnership (GSP) Update

Key highlights from August and September:

- ✓ 36 clubs received over €40,000 in Covid-19 Resilience Grants
- ✓ Applied for funding from Sport Ireland for 2022
- ✓ Club Development Grant funding of over €55,000 closed and applications are under review
- ✓ Delivered 1500 marathon packs to primary schools across city and county for upcoming initiative starting in October
- ✓ Many programmes delivered including; chair yoga and chair exercise classes for older adults, buggy buddies, mountaineering courses, autism in sport courses, cycle right training
- ✓ Bike week delivered with over 1000 people attending locally organised and hugely successful events in Ballindereen, Athenry, Kylebrack, Gort to name but a few
- ✓ Application sent for Governance Code Compliance

Programmes successfully delivered for September:

<b>Programme</b>	<b>Number of participants</b>
Women Trail Running	17
Buggy Buddies	32
Mobility Programme	21
Mountaineering Introduction 2-day course	12
Bugaí Beoga x 4	38
Women on the Move Ballinasloe	14

Courses for September:

<b>Course</b>	<b>Number of participants</b>
Safeguarding 1	35
Safeguarding 2	10
Autism online	19
Cycle Right Training	6

## Capital & Regeneration

### Bia, Athenry



The three buildings of over 23000 sq ft are well progressed and have recently hosted several ministerial visits and a visit from the new CEO of Teagasc – Prof. Frank O’Mara.

Regen Team has recently held meetings with:

Clifden Chamber of Commerce – progress on Hub & other initiatives in the town

Loughrea – meeting with LARC, Chamber and other partners held. Funding negotiations with Dept underway.

Design stage & appointment of consultants underway at Clifden and Portumna

Ballinasloe & Athenry Streetscape – less than half of the offers made to businesses have been drawn down. Closing/scheme end date to be reviewed.

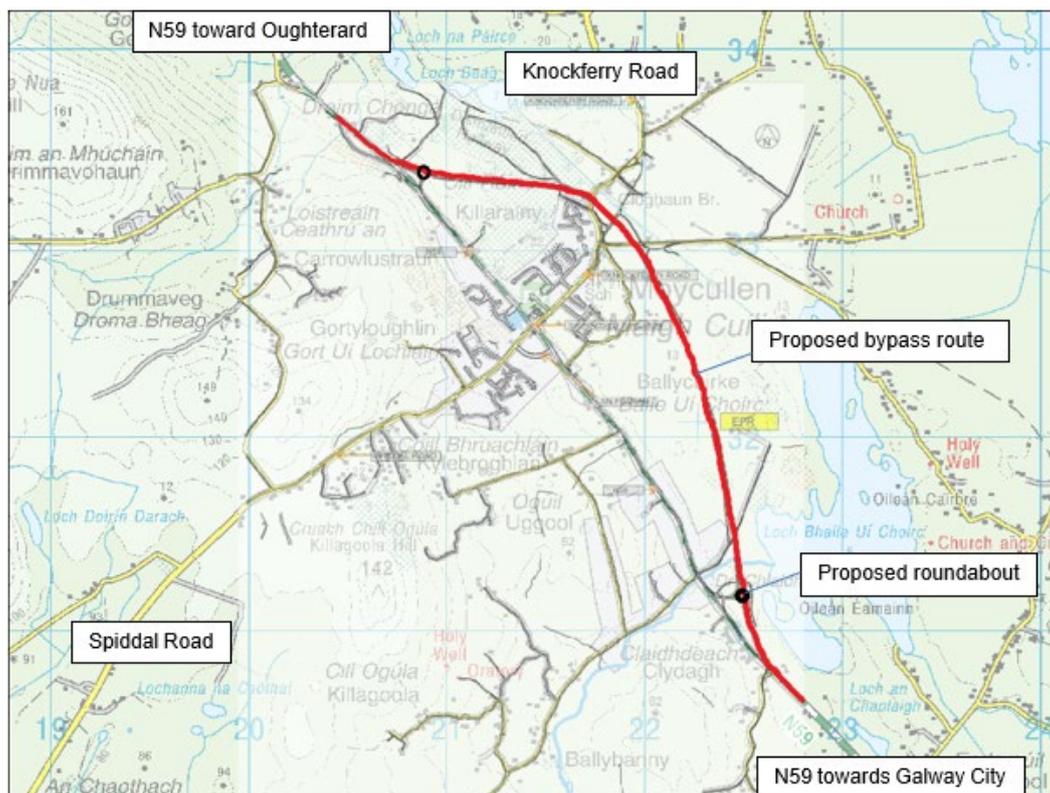
## Moycullen Bypass

The Council is pleased to announce that, following a recent tender competition, Wills Brothers Limited have been appointed to carry out the main construction contract for the N59 Moycullen Bypass.

The scheme provides an eastern bypass of Moycullen. The bypass connects to the existing N59 at two new roundabout junctions, located to the east of the existing road. Other than the roundabouts the scheme will be largely off-line, and it is intended that traffic disruption will be kept to a minimum. The scheme will consist of 4.6km of Single Carriageway Type 1 Standard cross-section. The existing N59 road will be maintained for local access but will have no connection to the bypass except at the roundabouts.

Following approval of the Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) and the Natura Impact Statement (NIS) for the scheme by An Bord Pleanála, Galway County Council together with consultants RPS prepared a business case for the scheme, which was approved by Transport Infrastructure Ireland, who have provided the funding to complete the multi-million-euro project.

Wills Brothers Limited are expected to establish their presence on site in the coming weeks and the first tasks being undertaken will be to commence the site clearance and then the provision of access to the bridge structures. It is understood that construction work will get into full swing in early 2022 with a 2-year construction program.



The main elements of the proposed road development include the following:

- 4.6 km of National Secondary Road comprising a Type 1 Single Carriageway,
- Realignment of the Knockferry road over a distance of approx. 0.85km
- 1.7km of farm/ accommodation roads.
- 2 no. at-grade roundabouts.
- 8 structures comprising 5 bridges, 2 underpasses and 1 Culvert.

### **Galway To Oughterard Greenway**

AECOM Consulting Engineers have secured the commission for the provision of Multi-disciplinary Engineering & Other Specialist Consultancy Services to bring the Greenway through the statutory planning process. The length of the commission is 30 months.

The initial kick off meeting between GCC and AECOM occurred on 2nd October last. An initial programme has been submitted indicating the first public consultation event occurring in mid Q1 of 2022. This will be in relation to the constraints of the scheme and the study area. It is intended to brief the Connemara MD before that public consultation event.

### **Galway to Athlone Cycleway Project**

Project Liaison Officers employed on the Galway to Athlone Cycleway Project have been carrying out intensive liaison work with landowners on the 5 route corridor options since May of this year, following on from the on-line Public Consultation Process held in the early months of 2021 which resulted in over 11,600 submissions being received, the vast majority of which were in favour of a Cycleway. Feedback from this landowner engagement shows that many are receptive to the idea of the Cycleway being on their lands, but some landowners would prefer not to accommodate the Cycleway and the Project Team hopes to be in a position to respect that preference. Meetings have also taken place with State Agencies including Coillte, the ESB, the National Parks and Wildlife Service, the Office of Public Works and Bord na Móna.

This phase of landowner engagement is nearing completion and the Project Team is in the process of determining the Preferred Route Corridor, taking into account also the “Five S” criteria, i.e., to be Scenic, Sustainable, Strategic, Segregated with lots to See and Do and other important factors including environmental, engineering and financial considerations

It is anticipated that the Preferred Route Corridor will be chosen by early December 2021.

### **Community Involvement Scheme 2022-2023**

In July the Department of Transport advised Galway County Council of its continuing support in the Community Involvement Scheme and requested the Council to prepare a list of priority applications for the scheme for 2022 and 2023. There are a number of changes to the CIS for 2022/2023 with regard the minimum community contribution of either 10% (reduced from 15%) or 20% (reduced from 30%) based on the criteria below.



The works are located on the N83 approx. 3km South of Dunmore and 390m long in total. The works shall include the removal of existing failing retaining walls & construction of new earth embankment, road reconstruction, lining, accommodation works and traffic management.

## **Broadband**

National Broadband Ireland (NBI), the company delivering the National Broadband Plan (NBP) on behalf of the Government, will be hosting a pop-up information stand in Gort over the weekend of the 22<sup>nd</sup> and 23<sup>rd</sup> of October.

Dates: Friday 22<sup>nd</sup> and Saturday 23<sup>rd</sup> October

Time: 10.00 am to 4.00 pm each day

Location: Market Square, Gort

These events aim to give the people of Galway an opportunity to learn more about the NBP, when high-speed fibre broadband is coming to Galway and how they can get connected. The NBI team will be on-hand to register people for future updates and notifications on when high-speed fibre broadband is coming.

## **National Road Pavement Works**

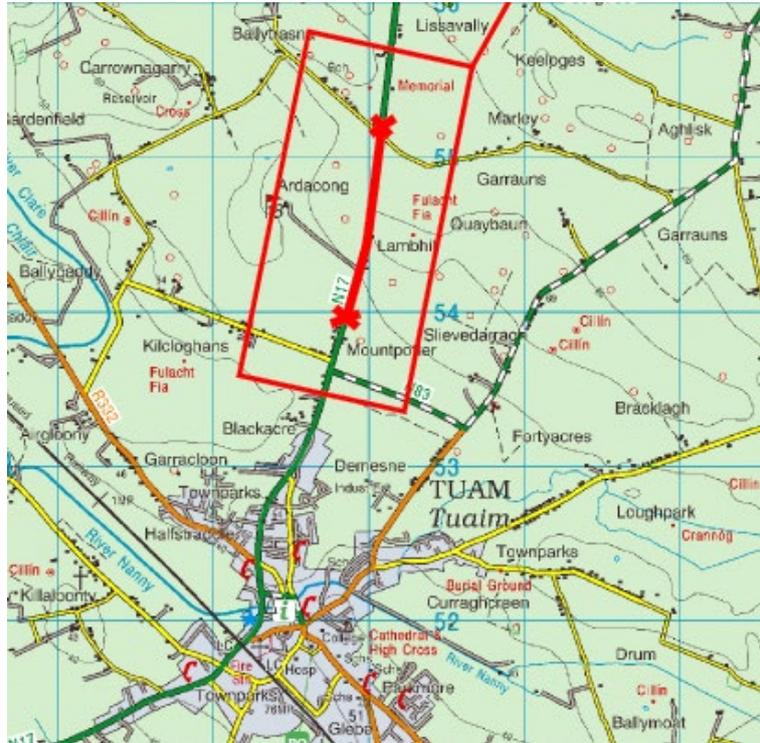
### **N59 Lettershea**

These works are now complete – length 1,200m



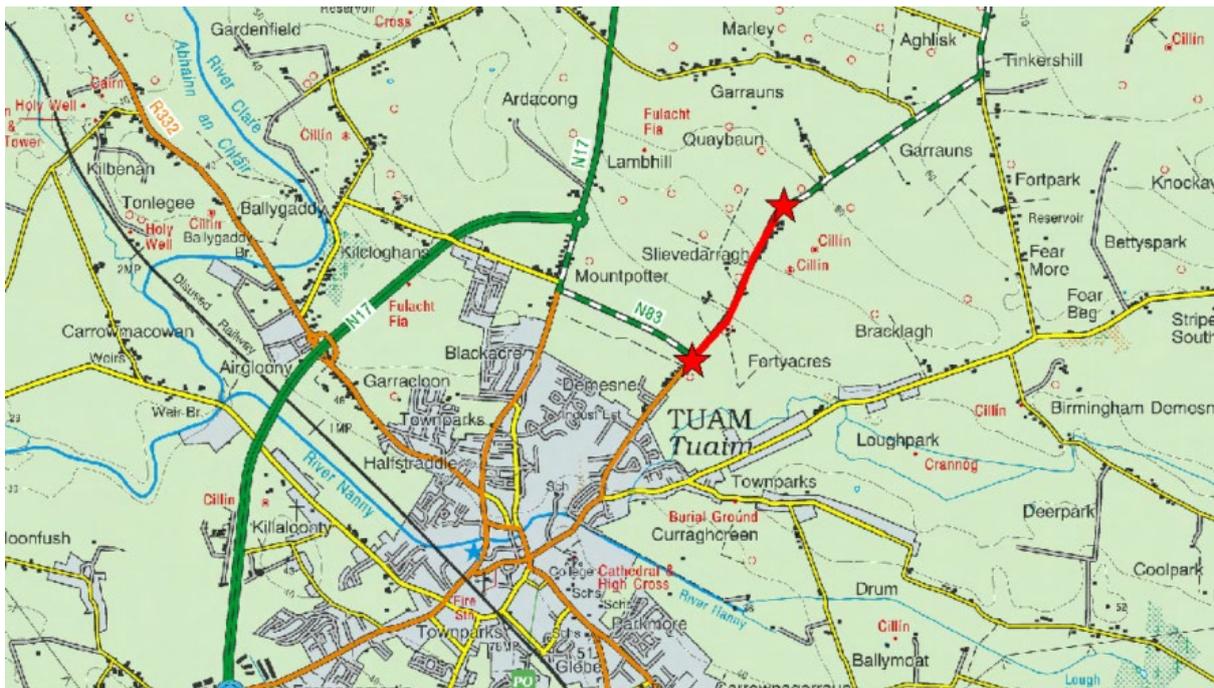
## N17 Mountpotter

To commence this week – length 1,000m



## N83 Forty Acres

Works have commenced – length 800m



## **Planning & Sustainable Development**

### **Draft Ballinasloe Local Area Plan 2022 - 2028**

The Draft Ballinasloe Local Area Plan 2022 – 2028 will be published on Thursday 21<sup>st</sup> October 2021 and will remain on public display until Friday 03<sup>rd</sup> December 2021, which is a period of six weeks.

Public consultation events are arranged for 16<sup>th</sup> November (10.00am – 1.00pm) and 18<sup>th</sup> November (2.00pm – 4.30pm) in the Shearwater Hotel, Ballinasloe.

A Webinar event has also been arranged for Wednesday 17<sup>th</sup> November at 6.00pm.

A Local Transport Plan accompanies the Draft LAP as required by the Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy.

A Strategic Environmental Assessment Environmental Report; Appropriate Assessment Stage 2 Natura Impact Report and a Strategic Flood Risk Assessment have also been prepared alongside the LAP.

The Draft LAP and associated reports will be available for inspection at the following locations:

- **Planning Office, Áras an Chontae, Prospect Hill, Galway H91 H6KX** (Monday -Friday 9am-4pm)
- **Ballinasloe Library, Society Street, Ballinasloe** (Tuesday 11.00am – 1.00pm & 2.00pm – 8.00 pm Wednesday-Saturday 11.00am -1.00pm & 2.00pm - 5.00pm)
- **Ballinasloe Area Office, Civic Offices, Ballinasloe H53 A7K7** (Monday-Friday 9.10am-5.00pm)

All documents are also available to download from Galway County Council's website <https://consult.galway.ie/>

Written submissions or observations in respect of the Draft LAP, the SEA Environmental Report, AA Natura Impact Report and Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (SFRA) for Ballinasloe made to the Planning Authority during such period will be taken into consideration before the Plan is adopted by Galway County Council. Submissions or observations are also welcome from children, or groups or associations representing the interests of children.

Submissions or observations should be made in writing and addressed to:

**'Ballinasloe Local Area Plan',**

Forward Planning Section,

Galway County Council,

Prospect Hill,

Galway,

or online by visiting <https://consult.galway.ie/>

or sent by email to [forwardplanning@galwaycoco.ie](mailto:forwardplanning@galwaycoco.ie).

**Closing Date for Submissions or Observations is Friday 03<sup>rd</sup> December 2021 at 4pm.**

**Late Submissions will not be accepted.**

### **ePlanning Project**

The ePlanning Project will develop an online system through which planning applications can be made and through which applicants will be kept updated on the progress of their application.

The project aims to improve efficiency, reduce the potential for invalid applications, and deliver on the government strategy to move more public services online.

The project is being approached on a phased basis, with development, testing and roll-out of system features and functionality to be implemented in a step-by-step manner.

The first live roll-out phase will allow for the submission of planning applications online with follow up notifications. Additional functionality will be added in further phases.

Galway County Council and Tipperary County Council will commence a 12-week in November when the system will go live, to allow for off on system functionality on behalf of other Local Authorities.

User Acceptance Testing is currently being undertaken and Planning staff are currently engaging with the Planning Agents we have on file requesting the necessary details to set them up on the system and are receiving very positive feedback.

The introduction of eplanning will result in a much faster processing of planning applications as the applications will be uploaded automatically, date stamped and sorted appropriately.

It will vastly reduce the quantities of paper being used in the making of an application, thus saving the applicant time and money, and being more environmentally friendly.

## **Library Services**

Library Services continue to reopen in line with COVID Guidelines for the Sector. Access to PC's, study desks, Local Studies Department, daily newspapers, noticeboards have been added to services available since 20<sup>th</sup> September 2021. Prior to that browsing, book issuing and returning, National Request System, printing, scanning and photocopying were all available since May. Schools Service and Mobile Service are fully operational serving a full schedule of stops for communities and Schools and all online services continue.



## **Summer Stars**

Galway Library Service took part in the Summer Stars National Reading Adventure this summer from June to August. Children were encouraged to join the adventure and to enjoy the fun and pleasure of reading and writing over the summer. Summer Stars is non-competitive and every child who reads even one book/e-book is regarded as having completed the programme – and it's all completely free!

The National Library Strategy "Our Public Libraries 2022...Inspiring, Connecting and Empowering Communities" states that enhancing reading and literacy development is one of the core functions of the public library service. This year **2,370** Galway children registered for Summer Stars, reading a total of **26,857** physical books over the Summer together with **2,760** ebooks and **4,626** eaudiobooks. As well as enjoying the amazing world of books, Summer Stars also celebrated children's imaginations by running a short story competition.

## **Healthy Ireland at Your Library**

Public libraries are currently delivering the nationwide Healthy Ireland at Your Library programme that will establish libraries as a valuable source within the community for health information. Funding granted by Healthy Ireland has enhanced health and



wellbeing book collections (digital and hardcopy), and provided for staff training, events, and promotion.

The Healthy Ireland at Your Library programme will continue to build on this and contribute to improving the health, wellbeing, and overall quality of life of communities and individuals at all life stages. All events have had to move online since the beginning of the Pandemic and have included online talks on a wide range of topics including Healthy Eating, Men's Health, Healthy Relationships, Exercise, Dementia. Talks/Sessions are for teenagers and adults of all ages. It is expected that for next year in-branch events as well as online will be the format for the Programme.



DRCD (Department of Rural and Community Development) issued a call for proposals in June under the Local Authority Resources Funding (€165,000 nationally) to allow for use of outdoor spaces for HIAYL programming or to create Health Zones in library branches where space allowed. €5,500 was secured for Galway which enabled the service to buy beanbags and gazebos to allow use of outdoor courtyard areas in Ballinasloe and Leabharlann an Spidéal for HI events. Portable CO2 monitors were also purchased to monitor air quality.

#### Some statistics on HI

- 19 videos streamed on YouTube Channel
- 202 virtual attendances at events
- An International viewing audience
- Talk on Retirement by Trish Murphy had 30 people attend full session with 421 viewing some of the talk
- Diabetes Ireland talk had 77 people attend the full session with 1,364 viewing some of the talk
- Pius Murray gave a talk on the benefits of walking which attracted 40 people for the full session with 428 viewing some of the lecture

#### **Dormant Accounts Funding**

The National Library Strategy also focuses on removing barriers to access and improving accessibility with a specific focus on communities and individuals at risk of being socially excluded, marginalised or disadvantaged. DRCD through the Dormant Accounts Fund made

€650,000 available to library authorities this year for programming to support this. Proposals for some had to be submitted by June. Library staff prepared several proposals and in July, Galway Library Service was informed that 6 projects had secured grant funding totalling just over €35,000. The grant is subject to Galway County Council meeting a minimum of 10% of total eligible costs and any additional funding required to ensure the completion of the project as set out in the proposal.

### **Online Resources**

Irish public libraries provide all users with a wide range of free online services including eBooks, eAudiobooks, eMagazines, online courses and online newspapers. The Pandemic has seen a huge increase in the usage of these Resources as while library buildings remained closed for long periods during various lockdowns patrons could still borrow and return eBooks, eaudiobooks, read magazines and newspapers online. See below the increase in users from 4,326 (2019) with total loans of 44,832 eBooks and eAudio to 8,475 (2020) with total loans of 95,383 eBooks and eAudio. Certain Local History and Archives material is also available online and staff are available at all times to guide and help users to access the various resources.

### **Other Initiatives**

- Storytime and rhymetimes for children are recorded and made available via various social media platforms regularly.
- Poetry Month in April saw a programme of Galway poets and Reciters take part in a Poetry Slam.
- Various Online Bookclubs are facilitated by staff.
- Craft sessions for adults and children are delivered online.
- Flower arranging tutorials are very well received by the public and still viewed regularly.
- Culture Night went online with numerous readings and storytellers entertaining the public.
- Galway Library Services got involved in the national Grow it Forward distribution of free growing kits in early Summer.
- Dog Safety Family Workshops in conjunction with the Dogs Trust were offered to library patrons.
- Home Energy Saving Kits have been made available for members of the public to borrow in 5 libraries throughout the County.

- Cruinniú na nÓg was celebrated by the wonderful storytelling of ‘Pat the Hat’ Speight and workshops with CURO.
- Age Friendly designated Libraries are located in An Cheathrú Rua, Portumna, Ballybane and Westside with Tuam and the Galway City Library to follow.
- The Library on Inis Mór operates as a BCP (Broadband Connection Point) for 20 hours per week over 7 days.



### Europe Direct Ballinasloe

An event was held at Europe Direct Ballinasloe on Monday the 27 September 2021 to mark a new focus for the Europe Direct centre on citizen engagement regarding the state and future of the European Union.

There are seven Europe Direct centres in Ireland - Ballinasloe, Blanchardstown, Clones, Letterkenny, Portlaoise, Sligo and Waterford. The Europe Direct centre with responsibility for Clare, Galway, Longford and Roscommon is based in Ballinasloe Public Library. Europe Direct is managed by the European Commission and the current contract runs from 2021 – 2025.

Europe Direct centres are part of a community of 424 Europe Direct centres around Europe. Their purpose is to reinforce the important connection between EU institutions and citizens, to provide timely and factual information on European matters, and to engage with citizens regarding the state and future of the European Union. In an age of misinformation, the centres will, among other things, provide accurate information on how Europe is combatting the COVID-19 pandemic, boosting recovery through NextGenerationEU, and tackling the green and digital transitions.

Europe Direct Ballinasloe will organise citizens’ dialogues and participatory events. They will offer relevant information on EU policies and priorities and will also help the Commission keep track of local sensitivities linked to EU policies. The centre will also promote active European citizenship in schools, and coordinate with other EU networks in the regions, ensuring easier local access to information for citizens, organisations and businesses.

Europe Direct Ballinasloe is based at Ballinasloe Public Library and may be contacted via email [ballinasloe@galwaylibrary.ie](mailto:ballinasloe@galwaylibrary.ie) and followed on Facebook and Twitter @BallinasloeEDIC.

### Water Safety Programme

This year the Water Safety Programme involved the recruitment of a panel of 52 trained Lifeguards to provide services at ten locations in the County and at six locations in the City as part of a Shared Service Agreement with Galway City Council. Two lifeguards are provided at all beaches in compliance with International Lifesaving Federation of Europe (ILSE). This season the Lifeguards started on the 29<sup>th</sup> of May and finished on 12<sup>th</sup> of September. City Beaches operated between 11 a.m. and 7 p.m., normal County hours are 12 p.m. to 6 p.m. this year the hours were extended by 2 hours a day with City and County beaches both operating from 11 a.m. to 7 p.m.

The upgrading of some equipment, for example rescue boards and first-aid kits and a significant review of procedures was undertaken, as well as a Hut Preparation and Repairs-Maintenance Schedule with new huts been provided at Spiddal Pier, Spiddal Road and Gurteen, Roundstone.

A Water Safety Development Officer is appointed on a part-time basis. The role includes supervision of the Water Safety Lifeguard Programme, development of the service as well as advising both local authorities on all aspects of water safety.

Galway County Council make a yearly contribution to Water Safety Ireland of €6,150. Galway County Council provided 2 lifeguards to assist with Inis Óirr Water Safety Week which assisted the Galway Water Safety Area Committee.

Beach-friendly wheelchairs are available from the lifeguard huts for people with mobility issues at Tracht and An Tra Mór, Indreabhan.

<b>Galway Lifeguard Stats 2021</b>							
<b>2021</b>	<b>Rescue without craft</b>	<b>Rescue using craft</b>	<b>1st Aid</b>	<b>Lost Child</b>	<b>Advice Given</b>	<b>Accident Prevented</b>	<b>Other</b>
<b>May</b>			22	4	411	59	17
<b>June</b>		5	45	2	1670	131	31
<b>July</b>	18	28	302	13	8536	759	185
<b>August</b>	2	11	190	11	5417	188	112
<b>September</b>			10		530	15	5
<b>Total</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>44</b>	<b>569</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>16,564</b>	<b>1152</b>	<b>350</b>

## **Lifeguard Locations**

<b>Beach Lifeguard Service Locations - Galway County &amp; City Council Areas 2021</b>			
<b>Locations – Subject to annual agreement</b>	<b>Lifeguard Operating Hours – Subject to agreement on Water Safety Programme and available resources.</b>	<b>Number of Lifeguards</b>	<b>Blue Flag</b>
<b>Galway City</b>			

Ladies Beach Salthill	Hrs – 11.00 – 7.00pm Weekends in June 7 days a week in July & August Weekends in Sept, until the 12th Sept	2 Lifeguards	 Blue Flag An Taisce
Blackrock Salthill	Hrs – 11.00 – 7.00pm Weekends in June 7 days a week in July & August Weekends in Sept, until the 12th Sept	3 Lifeguards	 Blue Flag An Taisce
Silverstrand (Barna)	Hrs – 11.00 – 7.00pm Weekends in June 7 days a week in July & August Weekends in Sept, until the 12th Sept	2 Lifeguards	 Blue Flag An Taisce
Grattan Salthill	Hrs – 11.00 – 7.00pm Weekends in June 7 days a week in July & August Weekends in Sept, until the 12th Sept	2 Lifeguards	 Blue Flag An Taisce
Palmers Salthill	Hrs – 11.00 – 7.00pm Weekends in June 7 days a week in July & August Weekends in Sept, until the 12th Sept	2 Lifeguards	 Blue Flag An Taisce
Ballyloughane Renmore	Hrs – 11.00 – 7.00pm Weekends in June 7 days a week in July & August Weekends in Sept, until the 12th Sept	2 Lifeguards	No
<b>Galway County</b>			
Tracht, Cinn Mhara	Hrs – 11.00 – 7.00pm Weekends in June 7 days a week in July & August Weekends in Sept, until the 12th Sept	2 Lifeguards	 Blue Flag An Taisce
Loughrea Lake	Hrs – 11.00 – 7.00pm Weekends in June 7 days a week in July & August Weekends in Sept, until the 12th Sept	2 Lifeguards	 Blue Flag An Taisce

**ENVIRONMENT & CLIMATE CHANGE, FIRE & MAJOR  
EMERGENCY SERVICES, HUMAN RESOURCES &  
INFORMATION & COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGIES  
DIRECTORATE**

**Environment:**

## **Decarbonising Zones**

Galway County Council are still awaiting related guidance from the Department's Decarbonizing Zone Advisory Group. A draft Guidance Document for Local Authorities has been developed by SEAI - Sustainable Energy Authority of Ireland and is currently being reviewed by the Department. The document is expected to focus on how the Local Authorities could manage the process rather than getting into the technical details of baselines, energy monitoring etc.

In anticipation of the Guidance Document being published in October/November 2021, the Climate Action Regional Office will establish a Regional Group to share ideas, leverage resources etc. Galway County Council will be represented on this Working Group

## **Climate Action Plan**

The Climate Action and Low Carbon Development (Amendment) Bill 2021 was enacted in July 2021

### **Key points to note include:**

- Each Local Authority shall prepare a Climate Action Plan which shall specify the mitigation measures and the adaptation measures to be adopted by the Local Authority.
- The Local Authority Climate Action Plan shall relate to a period of 5 years.
- The Minister must direct Local Authorities to develop their Climate Action Plans within 18 months of the enactment of the Bill.
- Local Authorities must develop their Climate Action Plans with 12 months of such a direction.
- Plenary Council to approve Local Authority Climate Action Plan.
- Local Authorities are awaiting direction from the Minister on this matter.

## **SEAI Sustainable Energy Community (SEC) Program**

Under SEAI's Sustainable Energy Communities (SEC) Program, the Environment Department have engaged with a number of Sustainable Energy Communities throughout the County to support them develop their own Energy Master Plans (EMP). To date, SEAI have approved applications from 5 Sustainable Energy Communities for 100% funding:

- Headford SEC (€15,000)
- Athenry SEC (€15,000)
- Ballinasloe SEC (€15,000)
- Milltown SEC (€15,000)
- Dunmore SEC (€15,000)

Following Tender Competitions, Galway County Council have issued the following Letters of Acceptance for the development of Energy Master Plans (EMP):

- o **ORS** – Development of an EMP for Ballinasloe Town Team SEC (05 Aug 2021)
- o **Plan Energy Consulting** – Development of an EMP for Headford SEC (23 Sept 2021)
- o **ORS** – Development of an EMP for Athenry SEC (24 Sept 2021)
- o **Plan Energy Consulting** – Development of an EMP for Dunmore SEC (07 Oct 2021)

Galway County Council plan to issue a Letter of Acceptance in the coming week re. the development of an EMP for Milltown SEC.

### **Litter Fine Application**

There will be a new application for issuing of fines and this will be installed on the Community Warden mobile telephones.

The application works as following:

The application consists of three components:

1. Mobile App that is used by wardens to record all the details of a fine. Currently the application can issue litter, dog and environment fines but other fine types will be added to the app in the future. We will be using the litter element of this. This application will work on any android phone or tablet. The app is used to document the incident details, address of offender, GPS co-ordinates of incident and any pictures of offense. This information is automatically synced with the cloud and is stored in Amazon Web Services.
2. Web portal for staff in County Hall to view all fines issued by the wardens. The details can be edited and updated in this portal. For example, when the warden issues the fine, they might not know address of offender until the information is received from the VLU. The web portal is used to issue the physical fixed penalty notice, issue reminder letters, record date fine is sent to court. There is also a facility to record the details of any phone calls with customers and store any email or letters that they send in.
3. Website for allowing offenders to make payments online. The payment will then be interfaced automatically into Agresso. The website is also available in Irish and English and is optimised to work on a mobile phone.

### **'Picker Pals' Programme for Primary Schools (Tackling our national litter problem)**

Ten primary school classrooms across Galway County will this year join the litter-picking 'Picker Pals Programme', learning about how to make the world better and have fun doing it. The programme is run by environmental NGO VOICE (Voice of Irish Concern for the Environment) motivates and equips children with 'Picker Packs' containing everything children need to go litter-picking. The *Department of the Environment, Climate and*

Communications will fund an extra 41 classrooms through VOICEIRELAND giving a total of 51 classrooms in Co. Galway participating in the programme.

'Picker Pals' is a unique primary school programme that gives children the tools and motivation to become the next generation of environmentalists. The programme works through song, storybooks, activity books and real-world action, as Picker Pals lead litter-picking adventures with their families, sharing their stories and inspiring others to join the movement.

The Picker Pals programme highlights the litter problem but more importantly it shows how the problem can be reduced and hopefully eliminated through continued education and action and the support of everybody.

### **An Taisce GREEN SCHOOLS Programme**

There are 90% of schools involved in the Green Schools programme. They are all at various stages and this changes slightly year on year as some schools drop out and others join or re-join. The year 2020/2021 was a difficult year for schools but since September there has been a lot of renewed activity. All schools in the County have been invited to online seminars organised by An Taisce in November.

### **Anti- Litter Poster and Slogan competition**

In April 2021 all schools were invited to take part in an Anti- Litter Poster and Slogan competition. While uptake was low, we are developing a calendar from the applications and there was great interest from those that did apply.

### **National Tree Day**

In conjunction with The Tree Council of Ireland details of National Tree day were sent to all schools where schools could get free saplings to plant and take part in many activities.

### **UPCYCLE CHALLENGE**

Students in Secondary schools were invited to take part in the UPCYCLE CHALLENGE during October. This competition allows students to look at waste as a resource and to consider managing waste better. See <https://www.mywaste.ie/upcycle-challenge21/>.

## **LAPN – Local Authority Prevention Network - Funding for water fountains in schools**

In October 2021 funding was granted to grant aid 10 water fountains in Secondary schools. We are working in collaboration with the schools to part fund the installation of water fountains which will allow students and teachers to consider using reusable water bottles and therefore reduce the use of single use plastic bottles.

### **Biodiversity Report:**

The following gives an insight into biodiversity initiatives that have been undertaken or are planned by Galway County Council:

#### **1. Rodenticide awareness and best practice rodent control training for Galway County Council Staff online 19<sup>th</sup> October 10am – 12 noon**

The aim of this course is to increase awareness of the risks associated with the use of rodenticides and to improve understanding for the requirement and capacity for best practice rodent control. This course will be relevant for anyone who is responsible for rodent control (either directly undertaking rodent control or responsible for the staff or contractors who undertake rodent control) as well as those who are responsible for premises or grounds where rodent control is required.

This course will provide an overview of commensal rodents in Ireland, including their ecology and behaviour and the situations in which their control is necessary. The environmental implications of the use and misuse of rodenticides will be discussed through a range of locally relevant examples of how these compounds enter the food chain, the pathways of contamination to non-target wildlife species with a focus on our current knowledge of exposure of rodenticides to Irish Wildlife. The legislation regarding the control of rodents and use of rodenticides will be provided and an overview of the methods for best practice rodent control including the requirement for an Integrated Pest Management approach to achieve effective rodent control while minimising the environmental risks.

It is also hoped to roll out training for community groups in the future as well as creating a brochure on the rodenticides. This initiative is being funded by National Biodiversity Action Plan and Galway County Council.

#### **2. Upcoming Biodiversity Online Training for Council Staff & Communities**

Dr Amanda Browne, Ecologist will deliver a series of 6 recorded online presentations that will primarily be aimed at community groups who would like to get a better understanding of the biodiversity of their local area as well as ways in which they can enhance it. In addition to this she will also deliver a series of 6 recorded online presentations for local authority staff to

assist them in dealing with biodiversity issues and support them in finding opportunities to enhance biodiversity of towns and villages in the county. This initiative is being funded by National Biodiversity Action Plan and Galway County Council.

### 3. Invasive Species

The Invasive Species working group of Galway County Council has established a system to record details of invasive species that are submitted by members of the public and staff with regards to invasive species on Council property. Targeted Gunnera and Japanese Knotweed control measures are taking place in several places in the ownership of Galway County Council. It is also hoped to undertake invasive species management plans for a small number of areas of the county. In addition to this advice and guidance is given to members of the public with regards to invasive species. This initiative is being funded by National Biodiversity Action Plan and Galway County Council.

### 4. Audit of Wetlands in North East Galway.

This desktop audit is currently being undertaken and it is envisaged that it will be completed by the beginning of November 2021. The development of StoryMaps will be an output of this initiative. This project is being funded by National Biodiversity Action Plan and Galway County Council.

### 5. Biodiversity StoryMaps

The following is a list of Biodiversity StoryMaps that have been developed to date by Galway County Council and its partners which includes Galway Rural Development and NPWS: [Galway Biodiversity Storymaps](#):

Collection link: <https://arcg.is/1i1jDC0>

Name	Individual Link
<b>Carrownagappul Bog</b>	<a href="https://arcg.is/1KLiba">https://arcg.is/1KLiba</a>
<b>Knockma Woods Loop</b>	<a href="https://arcg.is/1D4DGT0">https://arcg.is/1D4DGT0</a>
<b>Williamstown Bog</b>	<a href="https://arcg.is/1vn00K">https://arcg.is/1vn00K</a>
<b>Monivea Demesne</b>	<a href="https://arcg.is/1SS5OH0">https://arcg.is/1SS5OH0</a>
<b>Derrycrag Woods</b>	<a href="https://arcg.is/nGzqa">https://arcg.is/nGzqa</a>
<b>Glenamaddy Turlough</b>	<a href="https://arcg.is/mv9jD">https://arcg.is/mv9jD</a>
<b>Rahasane Turlough</b>	<a href="https://arcg.is/1HT0j8">https://arcg.is/1HT0j8</a>

**6. Signage for Pollinators:** Signs have been distributed to each Municipal Districts as well as some community

# Pollinator-friendly Zone

## Áit oiriúnach do Phailneoirí

Plean Uile-Éireann um Pailneoirí

All-Ireland  
Pollinator Plan



National  
Biodiversity  
Data Centre  
A Heritage Council Programme

Comhairle Chontae na Gaillimhe  
Galway County Council

[www.pollinators.ie](http://www.pollinators.ie)

Arna bhainistiú ar  
son an fhiadhúlra  
Managed for Wildlife



National  
Biodiversity  
Data Centre  
Coimisiún na hÉireann o' Bheathaíocht  
Incorporating Ireland's Wildlife

  
Comhairle Chontae na Galillíne  
Galway County Council

[www.pollinators.ie](http://www.pollinators.ie)

Ná lom é (fós)



*Arna bhainistiú ar  
son an fhiadhúlra*  
Managed for Wildlife



[www.pollinators.ie](http://www.pollinators.ie)



## **7. People and Nature: Galway County Biodiversity Project Website and Facebook Page**

The website and Facebook page are used to disseminate biodiversity information to the public. Biodiversity information such as Local Biodiversity Action Plans, information on dealing with invasive species, advice, guidance can be found on the website. The Facebook page is used to promote various events and biodiversity initiatives. <https://biodiversity.galwaycommunityheritage.org/>

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### **Fire and Emergency Services**

There are currently 2 Capital Projects which are ongoing.

The details as follows:

1. **New Athenry Fire Station** – Request for permission to proceed to request for tender for the construction of the new station sent to the National Directorate for Fire and Emergency Management on the 24<sup>th</sup> September.
2. **New Loughrea Fire Station** – Request to appoint a design team sent to the National Directorate for Fire and Emergency Management on 4<sup>th</sup> Feb 2021. Further information in support of the request sent to the National Directorate for Fire and Emergency Management on the 17<sup>th</sup> Sept 2021.

Mise, Le Meas,

**Mr. Jim Cullen**  
**Chief Executive**  
**Galway County Council**

**14<sup>th</sup> October 2021**