

## COMHAIRLE CHONTAE NA GAILLIMHE

### MINUTES OF THE TUAM AREA COMMITTEE MEETING HELD IN ÁRAS AN CHONTAE ON Tuesday July 8<sup>th</sup> 2008

#### I LATHAIR:

**Baill:** Cllr. T. McHugh, Chairman.  
Cllr. T. Reilly, Cllr. T. Walsh, Cllr. M. Connolly, Cllr. S. Canney.

**Oifigigh:** Mr. F. Gilmore, Director of Services Housing, Mr. P. Ridge, Director of Services Planning, Ms. C. McConnell, Senior Planner, Mr. M. Dolly, Senior Engineer, Mr. J. Leahy, Senior Executive Engineer, Mr. J. Flesk, Executive Engineer, Mr. M. Lavelle, Senior Engineer, Mr. Denis Hurney, A/A.O., Ms. M. Cunningham, S.O.

The minutes of the last meeting held on 21<sup>st</sup> May 2008 were approved on the proposal of Cllr. T. Reilly and seconded by Cllr. S. Canney.

#### **1. Briefing for Elected Members regarding the Inner Relief Road for Tuam.**

Mr. Lavelle presented the preliminary design draft for the Inner Relief road to be constructed in Tuam. The members were briefed on the route the road would take and access points were highlighted. Mr. Lavelle proposed that the design be put forward through Part 8 at the September meeting of the full Council.

Cllr. Reilly enquired as to whether landowners at the junction of the Weir Road had been approached and whether a roundabout would be put in place there. Mr. Lavelle replied that he could not say whether landowners had been approached but that a roundabout would be put in place that was designed to meet traffic volumes. Cllr. Reilly also enquired as to whether the road would be realigned. Mr. Lavelle stated that there were no proposals for the Weir Road other than for the junction.

Cllr. McHugh asked whether the road would be going through Mart Property. Mr. Lavelle confirmed that it would but that the Mart Committee had not been approached as landowners were not normally approached in advance of a Part 8. Cllr. McHugh proposed that the Mart Committee be notified of the proposed design and this was seconded by Cllr. Reilly. Mr. Lavelle said that he would notify the Mart Committee.

Ms. McConnell stated that a report would be required under Part 8 as some parts of the route were in a zone of archaeological potential. Details regarding the streetscape and layout would also be required.

Mr. Gilmore stated that the Members were in agreement with plans for the lower quadrant of the route subject to discussions with the Mart Committee and Iarnród Eireann, however it would not be possible to finalise how the town interacts with the bypass until the preferred route for the Claremorris bypass has been decided. Cllr. Reilly stated that the plans should be brought before the committee again once the preferred route was known.

Mr. Lavelle stated that there should be something decided as regards the route in case of future planning applications that might impact on the route. Mr. Gilmore enquired as to whether there was a planning embargo on the bypass route. Ms. McConnell confirmed that there was.

## **2. Speed Limit Review**

Mr. Michael Dolly stated that the Speed Limit Review was underway and asked the Members whether they felt that the issue needed to be discussed at area level before the Review was brought before the full Council. The Members raised concerns regarding speed limits in different areas and confusion due to the change over from the Imperial system to the Metric system. Mr. Dolly clarified that only speed limits in towns and villages were under review and stated that there were numerous submissions from Councillors, and local Gardaí already received. Cllr. Reilly proposed that each limit proposed be presented at Area Meeting level. This was seconded by Cllr. Canney. Mr. Dolly stated that while this would delay the process it would be worthwhile.

## **3. Draft County Development Plan**

Mr. Ridge briefed the Members on the proposal to create a new town in Ardaun in the Eastern environs of the city and outlined the options available to the Members in relation to the plan. Cllr. Connolly raised concerns surrounding the funding of the plan and whether it would be allowed to cut into other resources and thus impact on development in other areas of the County. Mr. Ridge stated that if the County did not get involved, the City would still press on with the development of the part of the area within the City would be ring fenced to protect the Council.

Cllr. Walsh enquired as to whether the City could build outside the traditional boundaries. Mr. Ridge said that this would not happen. Cllr. Connolly asked whether lands had already been bought by developers. Mr. Ridge stated that this was not the case. Mr. Ridge then stated that

while it was certain that Ardaun was needed, it was less certain when it was needed and that the option of more fully utilizing other densities such as Claregalway should also be considered.

Mr. Gilmore stated that the County is providing the population that is creating the wealth for the city and Ardaun is the County's chance to gain from that wealth. He added that Ardaun was part of a long term strategy and that planning ahead was vital

Ms. McConnell then gave a presentation on the major points in the Draft County Development plan. The plan focuses on tailoring the development and economic policies to different areas and builds on the Settlement Strategy of the last plan.

Mr. Gilmore asked whether there would be upper limits put on areas as part of the Settlement Strategy. Ms. McConnell stated the plan would concentrate less on limiting population and more on redirecting overspill and preventing unsustainable development. She added that the plan was moving away from designating certain parts of small settlement as Settlement Centres.

Cllr. Reilly stated that Settlement Centres were not working and that the levels of density allowed were not sufficient. Ms. McConnell stated that putting in minimum and maximum density doesn't allow the flexibility that Settlement Centres were created for.

Ms. McConnell stated that the Development Plan would be more open to Economic Enterprise and a lot more flexible as regards the type and scale of what will be allowed in rural areas. Cllr. McHugh stated that it was still too narrow and that having a list of enterprises was not to be recommended unless it was a full list. He added that he would be looking for a broad policy in relation to rural enterprise centres. The Members raised their concerns regarding the enforcement procedure. Ms. McConnell stated that while a blind eye cannot be turned to unauthorised development, the Council will be positively disposed towards businesses seeking to regularise their position and towards new businesses that heretofore may not have been approved.

Cllr. Canney asked why it was not possible to deal with unauthorised development in the same way that unauthorised quarries were deal with, in that such developments be given a timeframe within which to register. Ms. McConnell stated that this was not possible as the Council has to operate within statutory principles.

Ms. McConnell stated that since there was no Retail Strategy in place, a policy needed to be put in place to prepare a strategy in conjunction with the City. Cllr. Connolly raised the issue of floor space limits on petrol stations and the issue of larger supermarkets selling petrol and putting pressure on smaller businesses. Ms. McConnell stated that the issue of floor space for petrol stations was set out in Ministerial Guidelines and therefore could not be changed. The Members stated that a submission to the Minister regarding this issue should be made.

Cllr. Canney raised the issue of proximity of quarries to existing dwelling houses and asked if there was anything in the plan stating how close they should be. Ms. McConnell stated that there was no figure in the plan relating to this but Development Management Standard 36 sets out the standards in place for quarries. The Members queried if it would be possible to build something into the plan for restricting the activities of quarries. Ms. McConnell stated that enforcement is only possible where quarries have applied for planning permission.

With regards to the Housing Strategy, the Members raised their concerns regarding the Urban Fringe and restrictions on building as a result of this and asked for a more flexible approach. Ms. McConnell stated that the 15 km restriction zone and the G.T.P.S. were now the same.

Cllrs Canney and Connolly raised the issue of the planning condition requiring natural stone walls and queried whether they were necessary. Ms. McConnell stated that this condition was put in place in order to preserve the character of North East Galway.

Cllr. Canney requested that a master plan be prepared for Tuam so that transportation and land use problems were dealt with in an integrated fashion. Ms. McConnell stated that would be done.

Ms. McConnell stated that the Energy Policy would be positively disposed towards new networks and that the Wind Energy Strategy would have to be revisited so as to come up with a way of balancing environmental concerns with wind energy possibilities. Cllr. Connolly stated that he was very opposed to putting a high development charge on turbines. Ms. McConnell stated that a submission could be made in this regard to the revised Development Contribution Plan.

Cllr. Canney asked whether the Development plan should state an opposition to nuclear power stations. Cllr. McHugh stated that the plan should not include negative objections.

Ms. McConnell stated that the Draft Plan would promote the Health Service particularly in Tuam Hub town. Mr. Gilmore stated that the need for an Ambulance Base in Tuam should be included in the Plan.

Cllr. Reilly asked whether there was anything that could be done to prevent the decline of Protected Structures

Ms. McConnell briefed the Members on the S.E.A to be included in the plan. She stated that it would not be possible to carry out everything asked under the Habitats Directive but that it would be demonstrated through the Development plan and the S.E.A that there is a plan in place to avoid impact on the Environment. The S.E.A will be reworded substantially following consultation with S.E.A consultants.

Cllr. Connolly stated that the Planning department was dealing with inland water and ground water issues in an extreme way and asked when this would be changed. Ms. McConnell stated that standards had to be kept to and there was a need to have regard to the Study of the Vulnerability of Aquifers. Cllr. Connolly then stated that the planners were not using the information on the Geological Survey of Ireland. Ms. McConnell stated that this was not the case and that the G.S.I information was on the G.I.S. System used by the planners.

Ms. McConnell stated that the Development Standards & Guidelines will be giving more detail to those planning future developments. Cllr. Reilly stated that there was confusion regarding design guidelines and asked was there a booklet available that showed what was allowed. Ms. McConnell stated that there was one in place but that a booklet was not going to clear up confusion and clearer communication with the Planning Office was the solution. The Members raised some concerns regarding house types not being allowed. Ms. McConnell stated that the principles of good design were set out in the guidelines and at all times this was what was being worked towards.

Cllr. Reilly enquired as to the situation with Taking in Charge Policies and how long was it before the Council could take in charge a development that was not going to be finished Ms. McConnell stated that a Taking in Charge Policy has been adopted. Cllr. Connolly raised the issue of Friars Walk in Dunmore and stated that there was a need for enforcement there.

Cllr. Connolly enquired regarding sight distances to local roads and problems with planning not being granted due to hedging on the site. Ms. McConnell stated that the problem in most cases was not to do with biodiversity and preservation of hedges but to do with the fact that if sight distance can't be achieved at a reasonable level, it is not an appropriate site.

### **3. Palace Ground Tennis Courts**

. The matter is to be discussed at next meeting.

### **4. Any Other Business**

Cllr. Tom Reilly stated that the road at Aiglooney in Tuam continued to be in a poor and dangerous condition.