

COMHAIRLE CHONTAE NA GAILLIMHE

MINUTES OF SPECIAL MEETING OF GALWAY COUNTY COUNCIL HELD AT ARAS AN CHONTAE, PROSPECT HILL, ON MONDAY, 9TH MAY, 2005.

CATHAOIRLEACH:

Cllr. Willie Burke

ILATHAIR FREISIN:

Baill:

Cllrs. S. Canney, C. Cannon, S. Connaughton, Comh. S. O’Cuaig, Cllrs. J. Conneely, D. Connolly, M. Connolly, J. Cuddy, M. Fahy, P. Feeney, F. Healy Eames, M. Hoade, P. Hynes, J. Joyce, C. Keaveney, S. Kyne, T. Mannion, J. McDonagh, T. McHugh, M. Mullins, Comh. C. Ni. Fhatharta, S. O’Tuairisg, Cllrs. T. Reilly, J. Tierney, S. Walsh, T. Walsh, T. Welby, B. Willers.

Oifigigh:

Mr. P. Gallagher, County Manager, Messrs. J. Cullen, K.Kelly, F. Gilmore, P. Ridge, Directors of Services, Mr. Frank Dawson, Director of Community & Enterprise, Mr. G. Mullarkey, Head of Finance, Messrs. D. Barrett, A. Comer, Senior Executive Officers, Messrs. L. Kavanagh, L. Gavin, M. Timmins, Senior Engineers, Mr. P. O’Neachtain, Irish Officer, Mr. J. O’Donnell, Planner, Ms. M. McGrath, Senior Staff Officer, B. Donnellan & R. O’Boyle, Staff Officers.

Thosnaigh an cruinniú leis an paidir

RESOLUTION OF SYMPATHY

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A Resolution of Sympathy was extended to the following:-

Mr. John Joe Kelly, Stoolpark, Glenamaddy, Co. Galway.

Mrs. Mary Kennedy & Family, Tullira, Ardrahan, Co. Galway.

The Mayor and the Members congratulated the Galway Under 21 Team on their Victory over Down in the All Ireland Under 21 Football Final. Congratulations were also extended to Michael Donnellan winner of the RTE "Best Sporting Moment", and also to the Galway Hurlers celebrating their Silver Jubilee of the 1980 All Ireland victory. Congratulations were extended to the Senior Camogie Team on reaching the National League Final. Congratulations were extended to Mr. Bernard Duffy who won the Galway Person of the year Award.

PRESENTATION TO MESSRS. NOEL COUGHLAN, VINCENT COMMONS, BKG ARIYADASA, IN RECOGNITION OF THEIR RECENT TRIP TO SRI LANKA TO AID tSUNAMI VICTIMS.

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The Mayor, on behalf of the Members, extended a warm welcome to Mr. Noel Coughlan, Mr. Vincent Commons, and Mr. BKG Ariyadasa and acknowledged the wonderful work they had carried out in Sri Lanka. He said he was delighted that they were going back again to continue on with their work. He then invited Mr. Coughlan to give a brief outline of their recent visit. Mr. Coughlan outlined the work that was taking place and thanked the people of Galway for their generosity which, he said, was vital to the rebuilding programme in the devastated areas. The Mayor made a presentation of Galway Crystal to each of the three men. It was agreed to adjourn with the Meeting for a few minutes for photographs.

On behalf of the Members, the Mayor welcomed Mr. Kevin Kelly, the new Director of Services for the Corporate Affairs and Cultural Unit and also Ballinasloe Electoral Area. He said he wished him well on his new appointment.

The Mayor stated that as the Agenda for the Council Meeting to be held on the 23rd May in the Shannon Oaks Hotel, Portumna was quite full, he suggested it would commence at 2.30 p.m. This was agreed.

Cllr. D. Connolly referred to road safety arising from the development of the Landfill at Kilconnell and in particular the number of trucks using the road. Cllr. Mannion stated that he had received representations on this also, and Cllr. Mullins stated that while some road improvement works had been carried out the matter still required attention. Mr. Morgan stated that it was a condition of the grant of Planning Permission that lorries would not use the regional road, but would, instead use the N6. He said road improvement works had been carried out to facilitate this and that he would look into the matter of road improvements on the regional road from the junction of the regional road to the entrance.

Mr. Ridge referred to the second document circulated at the meeting, "Pre-planning information report and Guidance Notes" and stated that the purpose was to simplify the Cllr. Joyce inquired about the remediation of old landfill sites arising from a recent EU Judgement and Statement by the Minister for the Environment. Mr. Cullen said that the Council is expecting to receive direction from the Department as to what will specifically be required, but he expected it would involve an audit of old landfill sites to establish what remediation would be needed.

CONSIDERATION OF THE MANAGER'S REPORT PREPARED IN ACCORDANCE WITH SECTION 20 OF THE PLANNING & DEVELOPMENT ACT 2000, AS AMENDED, ON THE SUBMISSIONS RECEIVED IN CONNECTION WITH THE MAIGH CUILINN (MOYCULLEN) DRAFT LOCAL AREA PLAN 439

It was proposed by Cllr. McDonagh seconded by Cllr. Keaveney, and agreed that this on the Agenda be deferred to the next Council Meeting.

SUSTAINABLE RURAL HOUSING – GUIDELINES FOR PLANNING AUTHORITIES 440

Mr. Ridge referred to the documents circulated at the meeting entitled "Progress report on Galway County development Plan 2003-2009" and "Pre-Planning Information Report and Guidance Notes to Assist Applicants Considering submitting a Planning application, on a particular Site". He referred to Page 15 of the Progress Report on the Galway County Development Plan 2003-2009 prepared in accordance with Section 15(2) of the Planning & Development Act 2000 which outlined the achievements of the objectives of the Plan since its implementation. He stated that 60% of the 73 objectives in the Plan had been achieved over the first two years of the Plan and while this was a considerable achievement it needed to be built upon. He referred to page 16 and stated that since the adoption of the Plan a number of issues have arisen which needed to be focused on now. These included, the finalization and adoption of the retail planning guidelines, review of settlement strategy, inclusion of a policy on the strategic development zone for the Oranmore/Athenry economic corridor, development of stronger more focused policy for industrial expansion, inclusion of Regional Planning Guidelines, inclusion of Tuam's hub status, and inclusion of the Sustainable Rural Housing Guidelines. These issues will all contribute further to the sustainable development of the county. He also stated that the issue of single one off rural housing had dominated the planning debate and it was necessary to reduce the amount of time it absorbed and shift the focus to broader sustainable planning issues especially the promotion of settlement centres as alternatives for residential development. Mr. Ridge also referred to the DOEHLG Document on Sustainable Rural Housing Guidelines for Planning Authorities, in particular section 3, "Rural Housing and the Development Plan" and stated the County Galway Development Plan is very much in line with these guidelines except for a few issues that can be dealt with at the review stage of the County Development Plan.

Mr. Ridge referred to the second document circulated at the meeting, "Pre-planning Information report and Guidance Notes" and stated that the purpose was to simplify the process of applying for planning permission by explaining the factors that the Planning Authority takes into account in processing an application for planning permission and to alert people of the issues that may arise in the process. He explained that this will operate as follows, the potential applicant for planning permission will submit an OS map identifying the site in question and Galway County Council will issue a Pre-planning report under various headings. Using this pre-planning report and by referring to section 2, page 6 of this document and the various other guidelines the potential applicant will then have the full range of information necessary before embarking on the costly process of applying for planning permission and be in a better position to decide if it is worthwhile applying. Mr. Ridge pointed out that this would allow the Planning Authority to provide a quality of service far superior to that currently been provided but it will have implications on resources in the Planning Department. It will be necessary to look at how these resources are deployed at present. Mr. Ridge made reference to various sections of the document including the purpose of report (page 2) and the role of the Planning Department (page 4). In relation to the role of the Planning Department Mr. Ridge pointed out that planning is a complex legal process involving three main parties, the planning authority, the applicant and the general public and that each must be treated equally in the process based on the written content of the file at all times. Verbal submissions or issues outside of the planning process could not be taken into account. Mr. Ridge stated that if the new process is put in place there should be an improvement in the quality of the planning service to the public but that it could only be put in place subject to the availability of resources. If a potential applicant still requires a pre-planning meeting with a planner they will be accommodated but only if they have gone through this document and acquired the pre-planning report.

Mr. Ridge further added that 1100 prior notices were received by the Planning Office in the first 3 months of this year and that a very substantial amount of time was spent on the prior notice system. He said that he was proposing an alternative system whereby an EOT will automatically be requested from the applicant for each proposed refusal of a single rural house. The applicant will be given the planner's report allowing an opportunity to make written submissions to deal with the difficulties identified. The application will then be processed. This should reduce member's anxiety about refusing applications. Mr. Ridge stressed that this system could not operate indefinitely and so after an initial 3-4 month period it would apply only to applicants who had gone through the pre-planning process. Otherwise it would be misused by the submission of poorly prepared applications. He stated that this system should in time reduce the number of refusals, the waiting time for pre-planning meetings and provide a better service all round.

Cllr. Ní Fhatharta stated that she had expected that the subject under discussion would be the "Sustainable Rural Housing – Guidelines for Planning Authorities" but that in fact what was being discussed was a different matter. With regard to the arrangements proposed she queried how potential applicants would be made aware of this new system as their first port of call would normally be an agent. She acknowledged that a lot of

unnecessary mistakes are made when planning applications are being prepared and that agents had a responsibility to their clients to ensure a planning application was in order before lodging it. She also expressed grave concerns about losing the prior notice system and felt that it had worked well.

Cllr. Canney noted that he had problems with this process. He stated that there was a lack of dialogue and consultation between the Planning Department and the agent/applicant during the planning process. He further stated that there are many inconsistencies in planning from site to site and that applicants request prior notices because they do not know what's going to happen. He stated that pre-planning meetings should be documented and that a written report should be sent to the applicant or agent. He also stated that the pressure areas should be mapped and made available to the public. He acknowledged that sometimes agents do not perform well and that the prior notice system is an important part of the planning process. He suggested implementation of the guidance notes and examine their progress after 2-3 months.

Cllr. Mannion stated that his initial response was disappointment with this new procedure and also that the document wasn't circulated prior to the meeting. He expressed disappointment with the approach which he felt implied that the problem seemed to be the fault of the applicants, the agents or the Councillors. He referred to inconsistency in the application of the EPA guidelines on septic tanks and treatment plant requirements. He also stated there were inconsistencies with planning decisions. He acknowledged that there were problems outside of the planning dept but that there were also problems within the system. He pointed out that if the agent and the Councillor were removed from the equation that the problems would not be solved and that this was an attempt to remove the elected members from the planning process. He stated that the report referred to the settlements centres but added that there was no prior consultation with the elected members in relation to the settlement centres. He added that applications were being refused in the settlement centres because there are no sewage treatment plants. He made a proposal "that Galway County Council engage experts within 2 months to do an analysis of the Rural Housing Guidelines, National Spatial Strategy as compared to the County Development Plan and the Settlement Strategy to ensure compliance with National Policy and to make appropriate the amendments to the County Dev. Plan. That on receipt of this report that the Council will then propose the appropriate amendments to the Co. Dev. Plan to ensure the development of rural areas in accordance with government Policy" Cllr. S. Walsh seconded this proposal.

Cllr. M Fahy stated that Prior Notice is the only influence that the Elected Representative has in the Planning application process. He also stated that there is great expectation among the general public that it will now be easier to get planning permission following the Department of the Environment's Sustainable Rural Housing Guidelines for Local Authorities.

Cllr. S Walsh suggested that if the Prior notice is taken as an intent by Councillors to stop a refusal on a planning application, then instead, every Prior Notice that is received by the Planning Authority should be accompanied by a signed EOT form in the eventuality

that it might be required. He also stated that, as a result of the EPA guidelines waste water treatment test have to be carried out which cost €600 to €1200. He suggested that if an applicant is willing to put in a waste water system then a report from the company confirming the suitability of the site should be acceptable, otherwise the EPA test should be carried out. He also stated that it was not the policy agreed by the elected members that single one off houses in settlement centres in the Gaeltacht should provide a language impact assessment and have enurement clauses attached to their planning permissions.

He also stated that it was very unfair on sons/daughters of landowners whose land accesses onto National routes to be bound by the sight lines requirements.

Cllr. T Walsh asked Mr. Ridge was it the case that when the Prior Notice arrangement stops that all applications for single rural houses likely to be refused would get an opportunity to go on extension of time to give the applicant a chance to deal with the reasons for the refusal. He said that if that was the case it would be an improvement and the applicant would not be disadvantaged with the introduction of this proposed system.

Cllr. O'Cuaig stated that there was a lot of emphasis being placed on the agents and requested a list of the agents that deal with the planning authority and how they rate, to be made available. He also stated that the settlement centre system was not working and stated that some of the circles must be lifted as they include parts of Lough Corrib and he requested some prior consultation before a new system is being put in place.

Cllr. Healy Eames stated that it was a very complex report but suggested that a simplified version need to be made available. She welcomed the format of the report in terms of guidance. She asked who the experts were that Cllr. Mannion referred to in his earlier proposal.

Cllr. Hynes stated that he was not in favour of abolishing the prior notice system but said there was merit in Mr. Ridge's proposal. He stated that there was a lot of publicity and raised expectations in relation to the Sustainable Rural Housing Guidelines and yet the legislation has not changed.

Cllr. Hoade stated that she would expect that Mr. Ridge's proposal would be a greater burden on the officials. She also stated that she was concerned that if the Prior Notice System is abolished for 3-4 months that after this period it might happen that they would have neither Prior Notice nor EOTs.

Cllr. McHugh welcomed proposal for the pre-planning report but stated that it was a bit complex. He pointed out that it is necessary to work with the agents as this is where the applicant will go first and he suggested organising meetings with the agents on an area basis. He also enquired if implementing the proposal was an executive or a reserved function.

Cllr. Cuddy referred to the question of what constituted Local for the purpose of planning applications. He proposed "that the term local be defined in the context of a planning

application as being from within 8km. of the family home" this was seconded by Cllr. Welby. He also stated that Nursing homes should be allowed in other locations not just confined to the settlement center areas and that the development pressure areas be identified on a map. He enquired if An Bórd Pleanála can override the County Development Plan and the Settlement Strategy and also stated that planning permissions should not be granted on floodplains or in SAC Areas.

Cllr Connolly stated that he was not in favour of changing the present system of prior notices and added that it would create a huge workload for the Planning Office. He stated that settlements centres will take off if handled more proactively and welcomed the use of waste water treatment plants where necessary. Referring to page 35 of the guidelines he stated that health circumstances should be taken into account when adjudicating planning applications and that nursing homes should be permitted in rural areas.

Cllr. Joyce stated that the service to applicants needs to be improve and acknowledged that the guidelines to planning applicants proposed was a good development but hoped that the service to councillors would not suffer due to the new arrangements. He requested that the prior notice system be retained. He acknowledged the work done in achieving 60% of the objectives of the County Development Plan. He also noted that the lack of sewage systems in the settlement centres is a major problem and stated that Galway County Council was lacking in progress as regards sewage systems for smaller towns and villages. Cllr. Joyce also supported Cllr. Mannion's earlier proposal.

Cllr. O'Tuairis referred to the pre-planning meetings and requested that they be held locally and that Irish speakers would be facilitated. He said there were particular difficulties with the settlement areas and areas of high scenic amenity. He was concerned if Councillors would have any role in the future in planning under the new arrangements.

Cllr. Feeney stated that as public representatives they are obliged to put in place the best facility for the public. He welcomed the new pre-planning process as it is good for the applicant provided that the all applicants/agents are contacted in the event of a proposed refusal. He also stated that the settlement centres were not working and that the circles should be lifted. He stated that he did not agree with spending County Council money to employ consultants to analyse the Sustainable Rural Housing Guidelines.

Cllr McDonagh stated that he was impressed with the level of debate and it showed the pool of information and experience that existed among the council. He also stated that he was not in favour of employing consultants and felt that there was adequate expertise within the Council itself to enable it to solve the problems and inconsistencies that do exist. He proposed that "we set up an all party working group comprising two Councillors from each electoral area with 3 planning officials and the County Manager to examine all aspects of Planning including prior notices - and that the group report back to this council on or before the 15 July. This proposal was seconded by Cllr. Healy Eames.

Cllr Connaughton agreed that the process of applying for planning permission needs to improve for the applicant but stated that the new procedures outlined in the report were

dependant on the availability of resources. She stated that she was in favour of the change but stressed that there should be a review after a specific length of time.

Cllr. Cannon stated that the only new issue in the rural housing guidelines is the special consideration for people with special health needs and disabilities. He enquired if it was possible for the elected members to make policy changes to the County Development Plan at any stage during the life of the Plan and also whether the Prior notice was an executive or reserved function of the Council. He expressed tentative welcome for Mr. Ridge's proposal but questioned the time saving aspect of it.

Cllr. Willers stated that the press coverage of the Sustainable Rural Housing Guidelines has given rise to false expectation to the public. She welcomed Mr Ridge's proposal but stressed that the applicant was still very dependant on the agent and that is was of paramount importance to brief the agents. She also stated that the power of the prior notice is over estimated and that there is an over dependency on it. She also pointed out the settlement centres will struggle in the absence of adequate infrastructure especially sewage systems.

Cllr. Reilly expressed disappointment with Mr. Ridge's Report and the fact that there was no mention of the returning immigrant and the health ground issues as outlined in the Sustainable Rural Housing Guidelines. He accepted that there were problems with the agents and that there should be some sort of training for them. He also stated that he did not wish the prior notice system to be removed but also that it should not be abused.

Cllr Welby stated that there were major problems with the interpretation of the County Development Plan and requested clarification on the local rule. He also stated that there should be a separate chapter in the County Development Plan to deal with Conamara as such a large part of Conamara is in the high scenic amenity area.

Cllr Mullins agreed with the proposal of an all party group being set up to examine all aspects of planning and also suggested that the review of the CDP should get underway quickly. He suggested that a question be inserted on the planning application form indicating if the applicant wants an EOT in the event of a refusal and that this would eliminate some of the paperwork. He also agreed with organising a seminar for the agents and welcomed any proposal to improve the level of service to the public. He also suggested examining the settlements centres under the review of the County Development Plan.

Cllr Canney enquired if there were sufficient resources to put Mr Ridge's proposal in place and suggested that there be a review in 6 months.

Cllr. Cannon stated that he did not see the point of another committee when there is a planning SPC. He suggested that it would be straight forward if each electoral area examine their own needs and bring them back to the SPC.

The County Manager stated that it is important that the principle of equity be kept in mind in relation to the use of Prior Notices and Extension of Times and at all times in the planning process. Referring to the motion of Cllr Mannion he stated that it was timely to review the County Development Plan. He pointed out that arising from the Sustainable Rural Housing Guidelines, regional Planning guidelines, and the role of Tuam as a hub town in the context of the national Spatial Strategy and a whole range of other equally important items, a review of the County Development Plan was timely now. Following the circulation of the Progress Report, the process of the review of the County Development Plan will commence forthwith. Where necessary external consultants will be used to supplement the work of the members, the SPC and the planning section and a realistic timescale would be to complete the review by the end of the year.

Mr. Ridge stated that the Planning Dept is trying to provide a better service for the applicants and that quality of service is one of the important issues in the Sustainable Rural Housing Guidelines. He added that the new procedure outlined may appear to involve more work but in reality it doesn't. He agreed to check if accepting pre-approved EOTs could be done legally. He also stated that this document constitutes a simplification of the planning process for the applicant and couldn't be simplified further. It would also help to provide a better service for the agents. The issue of consistency would always be a problem, due to the subjective nature of planning. The Pre-Planning process should make the overall process easier for the applicant. He agreed that it would be appropriate to review the new process and evaluate how effective it is. He stated that it was the role of the executive to provide the council with the necessary professional advice for the review of the plan and that where necessary the County Manager can engage consultants. He stated that he could not say what the position would be in 3 months but he stressed that the existing system could not continue and the planning department was unable to continue it. He also stated that it was not his intention to reduce the level of service available to the applicants or the elected members. He feared that by giving automatic EOTs indefinitely, the quality of applications would suffer but accepted the concerns raised by the councillors.

He outlined that he had discussed the mapping of the pressure areas with the IT Section and that they were working on it at present. He accepted that there were problems in relation to the EPA guidelines but that he was not in a position to give guarantees, but would look at developing a policy to give a better balance. He stated that there were about a hundred or so agents, but he had been advised in the past that rating them would not be appropriate. He stated that the draft policy on nursing homes would be brought before the SPC. In relation to settlement centres he pointed out that people should cluster in these centres as an alternative rural choice, they are not urban centres. He stated that the circles are individual and not inflexible and stressed that a good quality application outside the circle would not be refused automatically. He pointed out that the Rural Housing Guidelines are been addressed at the meeting, particularly the issue of service quality.

He stated that the new process could be in place immediately, but stated that it would not possible to run it and the Prior Notice system simultaneously. Although putting the

system in place is an executive function he stated that he would not put it in place without the approval of the Councillors.

He suggested that Councillors have an important role in the pre-planning, because the applicant seeks advice from the elected members. He stated that the pre-planning process would be provided in the local area offices, hopefully by the end of the year depending on the IT communication improvements and broad band. In relation to the language enurement clause, he stated that people born, bred and reared in the Gaeltacht do not have to be able to speak Irish, but if an applicant wants to move into the Gaeltacht a language enurement clause will apply. In relation to the issues of health grounds and the returning emigrant in the rural housing guidelines, he pointed out that the County Development Plan dealt with these more favorably, but added that the health grounds is more difficult for the Council to assess.

Mr. Ridge said that the proposals for Preplanning and the use of extensions of time as put forward were far reaching and aimed specifically at providing an improved planning service to the applicants. He believed that concerns about files being refused for reasons that could be overcome were fully addressed. There was no need for the prior notice system and that the automatic EOT would not be dropped, without reverting back to the council with the outcome of the new system. If Councillors wanted notification of a decision, this can be done a day or two later by email. Mr. Ridge strongly recommended that the Councillors give this new system a go.

Cllr Mannion stated that consultation through area committee meetings was necessary to deal with the settlement centres. He also requested a commencement date for the review of the County Development Plan. He did not see a problem with employing consultants.

The County Manager stated it was now timely to commence the review of the County Development Plan following the circulation of the Progress Report document. He further added that it will be necessary to take on board other documents such as the Sustainable Rural Housing Guidelines and those mentioned on page 16 of the Progress Report in the review. He pointed out that the best practice was to use the expertise of the executive, the elected members, the SPC and where necessary external expertise and the objective is to complete the process by the end of the year.

Cllr Cannon asked if the elected members can amend the County Development Plan. He also requested if the planning report as shown in the document was adequate for a more complex application.

Mr. Ridge stated that it was possible for the elected members to amend the Plan at any stage. In relation to applications for more complex developments, Mr. Ridge stated that it would be relatively simple to expand on this when we have the resources.

The County Manager stated that in light of the commitment to review the plan and to involve consultation with area committees, SPCs and the maximum internal resources of the planning office, he requested that the motions proposed earlier be withdrawn.

Cllr Mullins requested that there be no change in the new proposal without first reverting back to the Council.

Mr. Ridge stated that he cannot commit to returning back to the old system if the new system does not work because of the questionable legal basis of the Prior notice and EOT system currently in place but he will revert back to the Councillors in 3-4 months if the new system is not delivering and before making any further decision on the matter.

Cllr Mannion agreed to defer earlier proposal in relation to the issue of employing consultants. He requested written confirmation of the new arrangements and a timeframe for the development plan review.

Cllr McDonagh agreed to withdraw his earlier proposal in relation to setting up a working group.

Cllr Cannon enquired as to the procedure for the review of the County Development Plan.

Mr. Ridge stated that in relation to the review of the plan, that it will begin with meetings with the electoral area committee and then to the SPC group and so on and that there will be a timetable and methodology set out for this.

Cllr. Cuddy referred to his earlier proposal to define the term "Local" and said that it had been seconded.

Mr. Ridge said that it could not be taken as for it to have effect it would have to be included as a policy in the Plan and be subject to the statutory process for the review of the plan.

The mayor indicated that as there was not full agreement it would be necessary to take a vote on the recommendation of Mr. Ridge with regard to the new arrangements to replace the Prior Notice system. Mr. Ridge clarified that the recommendation was to replace the current system of Prior Notice and that all applications that are going to be refused will be subject to a request for an Extension of time. This request will issue from the planning department. The new system would be reviewed in four months to see how it was working.

It was proposed by Cllr. McHugh and seconded by Cllr. McDonagh to accept Mr. Ridge's proposal.

A vote was taken on the proposal and the result was as follows:-

ARSON:

Cllr. W. Burke, S. Canney, C. Cannon, S. Connaughton, D. Connolly, P. Feeny, F. Healy Eames, P. Hynes, S. Kyne, J. Mc

Donagh, T. Mc Hugh, M. Mullins, S. Ó Cuaig, J. Tierney, T. Walsh, T. Welby, B. Willers (17)

IN AGHAIDH:

Cllr. J. Conneely, M. Connolly, J. Cuddy, M. Fahy, M. Hoade, J. Joyce, T. Mannion, Comh. C. Ní Fhatharta, S. Ó Tuairisg, Cllr. T. Reilly, S. Walsh (11)

GAN VOTÁIL: (0)

The Mayor declared the resolution carried.

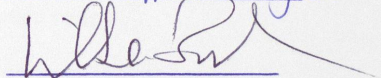
MANAGERS BUSINESS

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Mr. Morgan circulated a document entitled "NRA Toll Roads Scheme for the N6 Galway to Ballinasloe". He advised the Members that there was an opportunity for the Council to make submissions on the Draft Scheme. He explained that the making of submissions by a Local Authority was a reserved function and accordingly it would be on the Agenda for the next Council Meeting.

CRIOCHNAIGH AN CRUINNÍÚ ANSIN

Submitted Approved & Signed



FINANCIAL REPORT FOR PERIOD ENDED 31ST MARCH 2005

Report was already circulated to each Member

27.06.05

Date

The Mayor asked Mr. Mullarkey to outline the Financial Report for the period ended 31st March, 2005 to the Members.

Mr. Mullarkey stated that, with a quarter of the year having elapsed, both actual expenditure and income were in line with expectations and he then summarised the financial position under each of the Programme Groups. With regard to Programme Group 1, Housing & Building, Programme Group 5, Environmental Protection and Programme Group 6, Recreation & Amenities, he stated that both expenditure and income were in line with expectations. With regard to Programme Group 2, Road Transportation & Safety, he stated that the shortfall between expenditure and income was because the majority of grant funded works took place from March to October and he said that income would increase as works progressed on grant funded projects. With

COMHAIRLE CHONTAE NA GAILLIMHE

**MINUTES OF FINANCE MEETING HELD AT ÁRÁS AN CHONTAE,
PROSPECT HILL, ON MONDAY, 25th April, 2005.**

CATHAOIRLEACH: Mayor W. Burke

ILATHAIR FREISIN: **Baill:**
Cllrs. S. Canney, C. Cannon, S. Connaughton,
Comh. S. O’Cuaig, Cllrs. J. Conneely, D. Connolly,
M. Connolly, J. Cuddy, M. Fahy, P. Feeney, F.
Healy Eames, M. Hoade, P. Hynes, J. Joyce, C.
Keaveney, S. Kyne, T. Mannion, J. McDonagh, T.
McHugh, M. Mullins, Comh. C. Ni Fhatharta, S.
O’Tuairisg, Cllrs. M. Regan, T. Reilly, S. Walsh,
T. Walsh, T. Welby, B. Willers.

Oifigigh

Mr. F. Dawson, Deputy County Manager, Messrs.
J. Cullen, J. Morgan, Directors of Service, L.
Gavin, A/Director of Service, G. Mullarkey, Head
of Finance, T. Murphy, County Secretary, C.
Wallace, Senior Executive Officer, G. Healy, Staff
Officer.

Thosaigh an cruinniú leis an paidir

FINANCIAL REPORT FOR PERIOD ENDED 31ST MARCH, 2005 436
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Mr. Mullarkey stated that, with a quarter of the year having elapsed, both actual expenditure and income were in line with expectations and he then summarised the financial position under each of the Programme Groups. With regard to Programme Group 1, Housing & Building, Programme Group 5, Environmental Protection and Programme Group 6, Recreation & Amenity, he stated that both expenditure and income were in line with expectations. With regard to Programme Group 2, Road Transportation & Safety, he stated that the shortfall between expenditure and income was because the majority of grant funded works took place from March to October and he said that income would increase as works progressed on grant funded projects. With

regard to Programme Group 3, Water Supply & Sewerage, he stated that water charge bills would issue shortly and the associated income would be reflected in the next financial report. With regard to Programme Group 4, Development Incentives & Control, he stated that income was slightly lower than budgeted levels at the end of the first quarter and reflected lower than anticipated numbers of planning permission applications. With regard to Programme Group 7, Agriculture, Education & Health, he stated that included in this programme were Higher Education Grants where the bulk of the payments were made in three tranches, January, March and September. Therefore, this explained the high percentage of expenditure to date and he stated that, as this expenditure was recouped from the Department of Education, the corresponding income also reflected a similar high percentage to-date figure.

He also stated that rate demands had issued for 2005 and whilst the first moiety was technically due on demand, he had, for the purposes of the report, only accrued the first quarter as income.

Cllr. McHugh stated that it was obvious from the Financial Report that the Council was keeping a tight reign on expenditure. However, he stated that specialised work such as the fixing of reinforced concrete was being carried out in some instances by direct labour and he suggested that it might be more economical to hire contractors to carry out such specialised work.

Cllr. Ní Fhatharta stated that many businesses on the Islands were experiencing difficulty in paying their rates. She stated that the Islands could not be compared with the mainland, as businesses on the mainland had a steady income whereas business on the islands was seasonal. Mr. Mullarkey stated that the rate was applied on a county-wide basis and was based on the valuation of property. He stated that the valuation of property on the islands would not be as high as on the mainland, but that there was an opportunity to appeal valuations to the valuation office at their next valuation review.

Cllr. Joyce stated that the cost of rates and development charges were high and could not be sustained and that local government should investigate new sources of funding.

Cllr. M. Connolly thanked Mr. Mullarkey for the Financial Report. He stated that, as a large portion of the overall budget was being spent on roads, the Council should seek increased funding from the Department of the Environment from the income received in respect of motor tax fees.

Cllr. Keaveney stated that the Council must ensure that developers pay their bonds as the Bond system was the only means of ensuring that developers completed housing estates to an acceptable standard.

Mr. Gavin stated that before the Council return the bond to the developer, a Council Engineer inspects the property to ensure that the work is completed to a proper standard.

